

Values interviewing at Atlassian

At Atlassian, we want to hire people who embody our values and are excited to work alongside others who do the same. We know this helps us not only hire the very best talent, but also builds teams that work together effectively, regardless of their backgrounds and personalities. It ensures that our values are ingrained in our day-to-day work because individuals find them meaningful.

That's why as part of our hiring process, we run an interview focused on the Atlassian values (it's one of the most important elements of the final hiring decision!). The interview itself involves a set of structured behavioural interview questions designed to assess our candidates on how their mindset and actions align with our five core values. It's about delving into motivations, goals, and the ability to collaborate with others and manage conflict, rather than specific skill sets or role attributes.

Our decision to hire for “values fit” instead of “culture fit” is intentional. When companies hire for “culture fit,” they tend to attract people who look, speak, and think just like them. But great teams are built with diversity in mind. Alignment on values is what brings us together more than any other characteristic.



Tips for creating values-driven interviews

- **Make sure your company's values are articulated and understood internally**

Ensure everyone understands the values and how they influence everyday collaboration and decision-making. At Atlassian, our values are part of our internal recognition system and factor into our performance assessments.

- **Talk about your values externally**

By sharing values content externally, candidates and customers have visibility into what's driving company direction and what to expect internally.

- **Outline your values interview process**

Map out the process – beginning to end – including expectations, what questions will be asked, scoring, and how a candidate's values rating will impact their eligibility.

- **Train your people to be values interviewers**

Everyone conducting values interviews needs to be in sync, asking similar questions, and assessing for the same things. Ensure interviewers are consistent by creating a values interview training.

- **Listen to your candidates and interviewers**

Create a structured process for collecting candidate feedback and catalog those ideas, themes, and perspectives.

The structure of the values interview

Our values interviews are 45-minute conversations and are typically completed at the final stage of the candidate assessment process. Values interviews are run by our “values interviewers,” Atlassian employees that are internally recognized as champions of our values and not necessarily part of the hiring team for a particular role. Values interviewers provide an impartial judge in the interviewing process, and their sole goal is to assess the candidate for values fit at Atlassian.

Here’s an example of how we introduce our candidates to the interview:

Hi, I’m [NAME]. I’ll be taking you through our Values Interview, which we give to all of our candidates. Our goal is to get to know you and understand better how you like to work and solve problems. For any of the questions, you’re welcome to use examples from any type of experience (e.g., work, clubs or teams you’ve been a part of, etc.), and I’m happy to give you an overview of the Atlassian values if you’d like before we get started.

You’ll also have time at the end to ask any questions you might have. I’m a member of our [X TEAM] and can answer questions on [X TOPICS]. If you have questions on anything I can’t answer, I’m happy to pass them along to a member of our Recruiting team who can help get answers for you.



Values questions library

To make sure we are interviewing candidates in a way that will help them demonstrate alignment with Atlassian values, we have developed a questions library that all interviewers pull from. Here are some sample behavioural questions from that library:

PLAY, AS A TEAM

Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise with someone to move a project forward.

Tell me about a time you were working on a project where your co-collaborators were holding back the process.

BUILD WITH HEART AND BALANCE

Tell me about a time that you had to balance competing business, team, or project priorities. Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you needed.

OPEN COMPANY, NO BULLSHIT

Tell me about a time your first impression of a person or situation was incorrect. Tell me about a time you had a different point of view about how to solve a problem with someone on your team.

BE THE CHANGE YOU SEEK

Share an example of a time when you were able to turn around the performance of an individual or team. Tell me about a time that you supported your team / a teammate to manage a major change.

DON'T #@!% THE CUSTOMER

Tell me about a time when you had to make a tradeoff that involved potentially causing pain for a user or customer. Tell me about a time when you advocated for the customer, despite opposition.

Debriefing after the interview

Once all the interviews have been conducted, the hiring team, including the values interviewer, meet to debrief and make a hiring decision. Alongside the other interviewers on the panel, the values interviewer weighs in with an overall summary of how the values interview went, providing an assessment of the candidate against each of the values, with examples.

The values interviewer may also provide growth areas for the candidate against the values and contributes their overall recommendation for hire.

Hire for values, build your culture

Hiring for values takes effort, but in our experience, it has provided the greatest long-term impact in building a company that works well together, among our teams, and for our customers.

Culture is a thing that can't be manufactured, it's a combination of the characters of all the people that work in the building.

MIKE CANNON-BROOKES

Atlassian Co-founder and Co-CEO

