Interview for the Position of: _____

These sample interview questions are to help interviewers to select a Configuration Management Database (CMDB) consultant or CMDB business analyst involved in the ((implementation)) project. A different set of interview questions should be used for a Configuration Librarian or a Configuration Manager responsible to manage the process operation. These sample interview questions assumes that a tool has been chosen. For additional information see What are sample interview questions for a Configuration Management or CMDB consultant

The questions should be modified according to the context and the work to accomplish. Disclaimer

Candidate's Name: _____

Interview Date: _____

Interviewer's Name: _____

| Pass ☐ |
| Fail ☐ |

Overall Impressions

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Strengths

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1. What kind of assets should we have in our CMDB?
Tips:
- *Often the answer contains: "it depends", "anything you care to manage" and, "for reporting."*
- *The content of the Configuration Management Database should enable impact analysis and track service management records (e.g. ((incidents)), ((service requests)), ((problems)) and ((changes))).*
- *A distinction should be made between an asset and a Configuration Item (I.e. IT Asset Management (ITAM) vs Configuration Management).*
- *Did the candidate seek clarification about the organization's context, business needs and drivers under which it is undertaking to implement a CMDB?*

Optional follow up question:
1.a. What is the difference between an asset and a CI?
Tips:
- *An asset and a Configuration Item is not the same thing. While a CI is an asset, an asset is not necessarily a CI.*
- *An asset is a record for accounting. A CI is an asset in context.*
- *Did the candidate to provide a concise answer?*

Optional follow up question:
1.b. What happens if we care about everything?
Tips:
- *An approach to define business priorities and to progressively populate CIs and related data management processes should be mentioned (See Which CIs to load first in the CMDB).*

2. This question is a follow up to: "What kind of assets should we have in our CMDB?" The question is: Would your answer be different if it was based on ITIL® v2 or ITIL® v3 (2007 or 2011 Editions)?
Tips:
- *In ITIL® v2 the focus of the CMDB and Configuration Management was on providing " a logical model of the infrastructure or a service by identifying, controlling, maintaining and verifying the versions of Configuration Items (CIs) in existence." ITIL® Service Support, 2001 p.121*
- *ITIL® v3 expanded the scope of Configuration Management to "Service Assets and Configuration Management"*
- *How did the candidate handle the situation when they do not know the answer?*

3. We use, or plan to use, this ITSM Tool. What is the role of the CMDB in this tool?
Tips:
- *Typically the CMDB is used for impact analysis (e.g. ((Incident Management)), ((Problem Management)), ((Change Management)), or any other ((ITIL® process)) and for reporting.*
- *Some ITSM tools cannot operate without some form of a CMDB since every service record must have a CI. The CMDB may also be a core element of the tool's administration (e.g. to apply access rights and permissions, SLA's. determine event assignment). Thus, the candidate should generally understand the tool's dependencies on the CMDB.*
- *If an opinion was voiced about this tool, was it done in an appropriate business and professional manner?*

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Optional follow up question:
3.a. What has been your experience with this tool and what would you say are the 3 things we should be careful about?
Tips:
- *Ideally, the 3 things are related to the topic of the interview (e.g. CMDB and Configuration Management).*
- *If an opinion was voiced about this tool, was it done in an appropriate business and professional manner?*

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Optional follow up question:

3.b. What did you personally do to address these 3 things?

Tips:

- *The answer must be related to those 3 points.*
- *Did the candidate mention team work?*
- *Would their choice of escalation/communication methods and approach be appropriate in your organization?*
- *Would their leadership and style of interpersonal interaction (e.g. collaborative vs. confrontational, autocratic.) fit with your organization's culture?*

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4. How many levels can we have in our CMDB and what are they called?

Tips:

- *Was the candidate able to:*
  - *Give an accurate answer?*
  - *Provide a concise answer to a close ended question (i.e. they either know it or not).*
  - *Able to admit that they did not know.*
  - *Answer both parts of the question.*

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5. Is it important for us to have a naming convention for our CMDB?
Tips:
* *Typically a naming convention is advisable.*
* *In some ITSM tools the CI naming convention can make it easier or more difficult to use (e.g. labels are limited to 15 characters, listed alphabetically in drop downs).*
* *A consistent CI name can make it easy for IT technicians to identify what it is, its location or its function.*
* *The need for the naming convention should be related to a business or user benefit, not simply because it is a good thing to do.*

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Optional follow up question:
5.a. Have you developed and implemented a CI naming convention in the past and how did you do it?
Tips:
* *Were stakeholder and CI owners engaged or was it imposed?*
* *Many groups has some naming method thus, it should be leverage to avoid re-inventing the wheel and to ease potential resistance.*
* *Processes, controls, owner of the naming convention are required to maintain this CI naming convention.*
* *Were the two parts of the question answered: 1. development and 2. Implementation.*
* *Did the candidate mention how they transitioned from the existing method to the new format?*

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6. Who should update the CMDB?
Tips:
- *There are a multitude of answers like, the Configuration Librarian, the Configuration Manager, or even everyone (e.g. centralized or distributed), automation.*
- *An organized and controlled approach is required to avoid a free-for-all leading to data accuracy issues.*
- *See Should everyone be allowed to create CIs*

7. It is typical for an organization to have multiple sources of CI data. If we approach the owners of one of these data source to replace their tool, one-third typically would welcome you since they hate their current tool. Another third would cautiously accept as long as specific conditions are met. The last group would flatly refuse since it is their data.
Can you talk to us about an experience where you had to deal with these types of individuals and what you did?
Tips:
- *If the candidate has no experience, ask how they would handle such a situation.*
- *A different approach should be used for each group.*
- *Was the candidate able to absorb complex information from this lengthy question?*
- *Did the candidate mention the methods used to address each group`s needs and concerns?*
- *Does the candidate's approach matches your organization's culture and would be effective with your stakeholders?*

Answers to ITIL® questions and its implementation

8. How will you ensure that people actually update the CMDB and follow the process?
Tips:
- *Was any of the following mentioned?*
  - *Clear roles and responsibilities are communicated to all involved (see ((When is a good time to create a RACI Matrix for it to be most useful))).*
  - *Training/Coaching (see ((Do people need training if the ITSM tool is easy to learn))).*
  - *Documentation (e.g. User Guide, FAQ, Quick Reference Card).*
  - *Inform users how-to get help.*
  - *Mechanisms, controls, audits, processes to monitor and address data accuracy issues.*

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9. Should every organization use auto-discovery to populate their CMDB? Why or Why Not?
Tips:
- *One size does not fit all as it depends on the goal and approach.*
- *See Should we automatically import auto-discovered CIs in the CMDB.*
- *Did the candidate take a position?*

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10. What needs to be in place before we import auto-discovered CIs in our CMDB?
Tips:
- *Process, procedures and business rules must be determined and documented. Specifically: who, what when and how CIs are created. It is also critical to have a process in place to address discrepancies between the CMDB and what was found in the live environment.*
- *The answer must not strictly be ((technology)) focused. It should also include the ((people))'s readiness and ((process)) elements.*

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11. Here is a scenario. You are working with an organization that creates CIs in the ITSM tool outside of the Change Management process. My question is: Do you consider this organization compliant to the ITIL® standard?
Tips:
- ITIL® is a framework, not a standard. Therefore, the concept of compliance does not apply.
- There is no right or wrong answer to this questions since ITIL® is a book of practices to be adapted.
- Was the candidate able to provide an opinion?
- Did the candidate take a dogmatic position using ITIL®? (e.g. "ITIL® says…")

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12. Do you have references of previous work you have done with this ITSM tool or CMDB?

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