



CANDIDATE \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_

### SESSION FLOW & INTERVIEW SCRIPT

RUN IN ORDER · LET THEM TALK

The chips are your reminders of *what* to cover; the questions below are ready to ask so you can listen more than you talk. The bar practical is the heart of it — give it room.

#### 1 · Work History (brief)

10 MIN

ASK ABOUT: why coffee why now why here

? Walk me through your last coffee job — the bar setup, the volume, and your role on it.

? What pulled you into specialty coffee specifically, rather than just any café?

? Why are you looking to make a move right now?

? What do you know about Black Fodder, and what made you apply *here*?

#### 2 · Availability & Logistics

5 MIN

ASK ABOUT: days & hours opening shifts commute conflicts

? What does your weekly availability look like — which days, what hours?

? We open early (around 6:30–7am) — can you reliably take opening shifts and weekends?

? How will you get here, and how long is the commute?

? Any planned time off, school, or other commitments I should know about up front?

### 3 · Bar Practical

35–40 MIN

**Menu read (start here):** hand them our menu — what’s **familiar**, what’s **new**? Have them describe a few drinks in their own words. You’re gauging how well they know specialty coffee and how fast they’d learn our offering.

**Make these four, and talk me through each one as you go.** Listen for intent — grind, dose, ratio, why — not just clean execution.

DRINK	WHAT IT TESTS
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Doppio</b>	Dial-in & extraction read — can they taste a shot and tell you what to change?
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cortado</b>	Ratio & microfoam at small volume — precision, not just pouring.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Flat White</b>	Full milk steaming, texture, and latte art under control.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Espresso Tonic</b>	A built/layered drink — menu knowledge, sequence, and presentation.

**Live orders:** have them take **2–3 real orders** from actual customers — watch rapport, recall, and composure with a stranger, not just with you.

**Curveball:** hand them a shot pulling fast & sour, or under-textured milk — “what’s happening, and how do you fix it?”

#### Solo task — hand them this list, say “I’ll be back in 10,” and step away

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restock cups & lids at the bar           | <input type="checkbox"/> Wipe down & reset steam wands and bar top |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Top up the bean hopper; check the grind  | <input type="checkbox"/> Load the dishwasher                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restock milk in the under-counter fridge | <input type="checkbox"/> Face & tidy the pastry case               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brew a fresh batch of drip if it’s low   | <input type="checkbox"/> Wipe counters                             |

**Watch:** what they tackle first, whether they ask smart questions, what they miss — and what they do when the list is done. Do they find the next useful thing, or wait?

### 4 · Conversation / Culture

20–25 MIN

**ASK ABOUT:** pressure service recovery downtime instinct growth taste

? Tell me about your worst rush — what happened, and how did you handle it?

? A customer says their drink tastes off or isn’t what they ordered. What do you do?

? It’s dead quiet and everything’s already clean — what do you do next?

? What’s something at the bar you’ve actively worked to get better at?

? What do you order at other cafés? What are you brewing at home?

? **COFFEE IQ** Your shot’s pulling fast and tastes sour — what’s wrong, and what do you change?

? **COFFEE IQ** How would you dial a bright Ethiopian differently from a chocolatey Colombian?

**What a good answer sounds like:** brighter, lighter-roasted coffees are denser and harder to extract — go **finer, hotter (94–96°C), longer ratio (~1:2.2–2.5)** to round the acidity. Chocolatey, darker coffees are more soluble — go **coarser, cooler (91–93°C), tighter ratio (~1:2)** for body. The tell: they adjust by *taste* (sour → finer/hotter; harsh or bitter → coarser/cooler), not by memorized numbers.

## 5 · Their Questions

5 MIN

? “What can I answer for you?” — good questions are a signal, not a formality. Note what they’re curious about.

### SCORING DIMENSIONS

1 = NEEDS WORK · 5 = EXACTLY WHO WE WANT

#### Speed & Efficiency

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

1 — Hurried but flustered; wasted motion, backtracking, drinks pile up.      5 — Economical and unhurried; no wasted movement, steady output, never frantic.

NOTES

#### Warmth / Rapport

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

1 — Flat, transactional; the room stays cold.      5 — Easy and genuine; the room warms up, you'd want them serving your regulars.

NOTES

#### Curiosity

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

1 — Only answers what's asked; no questions of their own.      5 — Asks sharp questions, digs into the why, clearly wants to get better.

NOTES

#### Composure Under Pressure

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

1 — Rattled by the curveball; freezes, spirals, or blames the gear.      5 — Diagnoses the problem calmly, recovers cleanly, maybe even with a smile.

NOTES

#### Self-Direction / Initiative

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

1 — Stalls on the solo task; waits to be told the next step.      5 — Reads the situation, prioritizes well, fills downtime without prompting.

NOTES

#### Coffee Knowledge

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

1 — Surface-level; shaky on origins, dial-in, or basic ratios.      5 — Real intuition — reasons about grind, extraction, and flavor, not just recites.

NOTES

#### Communication / Storytelling

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

1 — Hard to follow; can't narrate what they're doing or own a story.      5 — Clear, engaging; narrates the bar naturally and tells a story you remember.

NOTES

**Culture Fit**

1 2 3 4 5

1 – Values or energy clash; hard to picture on the team.

5 – Takes ownership, brings warmth and calm; a clear add to the room.

NOTES

**OVERALL RECOMMENDATION**

OVERALL IMPRESSION 1 2 3 4 5

**Advance to trial shift**     **Hold / discuss**     **Decline**

WHY – STRENGTHS, CONCERNS, WHAT TO WATCH ON THE TRIAL

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# Black Fodder Coffee

RIVER FOREST, ILLINOIS

## Trial Shift Evaluation

Shift 1 of 3 · mid-week, moderately busy

CANDIDATE \_\_\_\_\_ POSITION \_\_\_\_\_ SHIFT DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 SHIFT # 1 of 3 SHIFT TYPE \_\_\_\_\_ EVALUATOR \_\_\_\_\_

Shift type:  Opening  Closing  Catering

Shift 1 · mid-week, moderately busy — Baseline and first impression — how they navigate an unfamiliar setup at a manageable pace.

### SCORING DIMENSIONS

1 = NEEDS WORK · 5 = EXACTLY WHO WE WANT

#### Pace

1 2 3 4 5

1 — Dead time or panic; loses the rhythm, falls behind, or rushes sloppily.

5 — Moves with purpose; reads the rush, stays ahead, never frantic, no idle gaps.

NOTES

#### Bar Skills

1 2 3 4 5

1 — Inconsistent shots/milk; messy station; technique falls apart under load.

5 — Consistent, clean, and dialed; holds technique and a tidy bar even when slammed.

NOTES

#### Customer Interaction

1 2 3 4 5

1 — Waits to be approached; minimal, transactional, forgettable.

5 — Initiates warmly; reads people, makes it personal, leaves them remembered.

NOTES

#### Attitude (when it goes sideways)

1 2 3 4 5

1 — Sours, deflects, or shuts down when things break or get hard.

5 — Stays light, owns mistakes, supports the team, gets better under stress.

NOTES

#### Self-Direction

1 2 3 4 5

1 — Stands around when not told what to do; needs constant direction.

5 — Finds the next useful thing — prep, restock, clean — without being asked.

NOTES

**OVERALL RECOMMENDATION – SHIFT 1**

SHIFT OVERALL (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

**Advance / hire**     **Hold – needs another shift**     **Decline**

WHY – STANDOUT MOMENTS, RED FLAGS, AND WHAT TO TEST NEXT SHIFT

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# Black Fodder Coffee

RIVER FOREST, ILLINOIS

## Trial Shift Evaluation

Shift 2 of 3 · Saturday peak rush

CANDIDATE _____	POSITION _____	SHIFT DATE _____
SHIFT # <b>2 of 3</b>	SHIFT TYPE _____	EVALUATOR _____

**Shift type:**  Opening  Closing  Catering

**Shift 2 · Saturday peak rush** — Real pressure, real pace — the truth serum. This is where the polish wears off and you see who they actually are.

### SCORING DIMENSIONS

1 = NEEDS WORK · 5 = EXACTLY WHO WE WANT

#### Pace

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

**1** — Dead time or panic; loses the rhythm, falls behind, or rushes sloppily.

**5** — Moves with purpose; reads the rush, stays ahead, never frantic, no idle gaps.

NOTES

#### Bar Skills

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

**1** — Inconsistent shots/milk; messy station; technique falls apart under load.

**5** — Consistent, clean, and dialed; holds technique and a tidy bar even when slammed.

NOTES

#### Customer Interaction

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

**1** — Waits to be approached; minimal, transactional, forgettable.

**5** — Initiates warmly; reads people, makes it personal, leaves them remembered.

NOTES

#### Attitude (when it goes sideways)

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

**1** — Sours, deflects, or shuts down when things break or get hard.

**5** — Stays light, owns mistakes, supports the team, gets better under stress.

NOTES

#### Self-Direction

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

**1** — Stands around when not told what to do; needs constant direction.

**5** — Finds the next useful thing — prep, restock, clean — without being asked.

NOTES

**OVERALL RECOMMENDATION – SHIFT 2**

SHIFT OVERALL (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

**Advance / hire**     **Hold – needs another shift**     **Decline**

WHY – STANDOUT MOMENTS, RED FLAGS, AND WHAT TO TEST NEXT SHIFT

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# Black Fodder Coffee

RIVER FOREST, ILLINOIS

## Trial Shift Evaluation

Shift 3 of 3 · slower period (optional)

CANDIDATE _____	POSITION _____	SHIFT DATE _____
SHIFT # <b>3 of 3</b>	SHIFT TYPE _____	EVALUATOR _____

**Shift type:**  Opening  Closing  Catering

**Shift 3 · slower period (optional)** — Downtime behavior — self-directed prep, cleaning, and what they reach for when nobody's telling them what to do.

### SCORING DIMENSIONS

1 = NEEDS WORK · 5 = EXACTLY WHO WE WANT

#### Pace

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

**1** — Dead time or panic; loses the rhythm, falls behind, or rushes sloppily.

**5** — Moves with purpose; reads the rush, stays ahead, never frantic, no idle gaps.

NOTES

#### Bar Skills

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

**1** — Inconsistent shots/milk; messy station; technique falls apart under load.

**5** — Consistent, clean, and dialed; holds technique and a tidy bar even when slammed.

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#### Customer Interaction

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

**1** — Waits to be approached; minimal, transactional, forgettable.

**5** — Initiates warmly; reads people, makes it personal, leaves them remembered.

NOTES

#### Attitude (when it goes sideways)

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

**1** — Sours, deflects, or shuts down when things break or get hard.

**5** — Stays light, owns mistakes, supports the team, gets better under stress.

NOTES

#### Self-Direction

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

**1** — Stands around when not told what to do; needs constant direction.

**5** — Finds the next useful thing — prep, restock, clean — without being asked.

NOTES

**OVERALL RECOMMENDATION – SHIFT 3**

SHIFT OVERALL (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

**Advance / hire**     **Hold – needs another shift**     **Decline**

WHY – STANDOUT MOMENTS, RED FLAGS, AND WHAT TO TEST NEXT SHIFT

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# Black Fodder Coffee

RIVER FOREST, ILLINOIS

## Trial Event Evaluation

Catering / off-site event · one sheet per trial event

CANDIDATE _____	POSITION _____	EVENT DATE _____
EVENT TYPE _____	VENUE _____	EVALUATOR _____

### Why events are different —

Events are off-site, higher-stakes, and less supervised. At an event, the barista is Black Fodder to the host and every guest. There's no familiar setup to lean on and no manager two feet away. You're evaluating brand representation, adaptability, and autonomy as much as bar skill.

## SCORING DIMENSIONS

1 = NEEDS WORK · 5 = EXACTLY WHO WE WANT

### Setup & Breakdown

1 2 3 4 5

1 — Slow and disorganized; needs hand-holding to build the bar or pack out.

5 — Sets up and tears down fast and systematically; leaves the venue spotless.

NOTES

### Pace & Throughput

1 2 3 4 5

1 — Bottlenecks the line; falls behind at event volume.

5 — Keeps the line moving; batches smartly; no backup even when slammed.

NOTES

### Guest Interaction & Brand Representation

1 2 3 4 5

1 — Flat or unpolished with guests and host; doesn't represent us well.

5 — Warm, polished, professional; makes Black Fodder look great off-site.

NOTES

### Adaptability / Problem-Solving

1 2 3 4 5

1 — Thrown by an unfamiliar venue or missing gear; stalls.

5 — Improvises calmly; solves problems on the fly without losing composure.

NOTES

### Professionalism & Autonomy

1 2 3 4 5

1 — Needs constant direction; shaky on punctuality or appearance.

5 — Punctual, presentable, owns the station with minimal oversight.

NOTES

### Teamwork & Logistics

1 2 3 4 5

1 — Doesn't pitch in on load-in/out; poor coordination with the team.

5 — Jumps on loading and transport; works seamlessly with team and event staff.

NOTES

## OVERALL RECOMMENDATION – THIS EVENT

SHIFT OVERALL (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

**Advance / hire**     **Hold – needs another shift**     **Decline**

WHY – STANDOUT MOMENTS, RED FLAGS, AND WHETHER THEY'RE READY TO RUN EVENTS

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