Master Interview Guide: Core Job & Job Map Deconstruction

Interviewer: _____

Participant: _____

Date: _____

Objective: To define the Core Functional Job, map the step-by-step workflow using the Universal Job Map framework, and provide questions to help uncover the specific needs within each job step.

Part 1: Defining the Core Job (The "North Star")

Goal: Identify the high-level scope before diving into the steps. (Chapter 4)

1. The Context: "Focusing on [Topic/Problem Domain], complete this sentence: 'I hire this product/service to help me specifically _____'."

2. The Solution Removal: "If [Current Solution] vanished tomorrow, what functional goal would you still need to achieve?"

3. The Scope Check (Abstraction Ladder):

- *Too Vague?* "How exactly do you do that?" (Moves down)
- *Too Specific?* "Why is that step important? What is the bigger goal?" (Moves up)

4. Consensus Statement: "So, would you say the main job you are trying to get done is **[Verb] + [Object] + [Context]**?"

Part 2: Mapping the Job (The "Middle-Out" Method)

Goal: Deconstruct the job into granular steps. We start at the "Execute" phase to anchor the user's memory.

A. The Anchor Point: Execution

Start here. This is the moment the value is created.

5. The "Heart" of the Job:

"Let's skip the planning for a second. Take me to the specific moment you are actually doing the core work. What is the one central task you are performing?"

- *Probing:* "What are you physically doing or interacting with at this exact moment?"

B. Working Backward: The "Pre-Job"

Now that we know the core action, ask what happened before it.

6. Confirm (The Final Check):

"Right before you hit 'Go' on that core step, did you have to double-check anything?"

- "How did you know you were ready to start? What did you validate?"

7. Prepare (The Setup):

"Stepping back further, what did you have to organize or set up to make that execution possible?"

- "Did you have to format data, clear a workspace, or configure a setting?"

8. Locate (The Gathering):

"To do that preparation, what inputs did you need to have in front of you?"

- "What files, items, or people did you have to retrieve or locate?"

9. Define (The Plan):

"Let's go all the way back to the start. What triggered this whole process?"

- "What did you have to plan or decide before you lifted a finger?"
- "Did you have to set specific objectives or requirements first?"

C. Working Forward: The "Post-Job"

Return to the execution phase and move forward.

10. Monitor (The Watch):

"While you were executing the job, what were you keeping an eye on?"

- "What data or visual cues tell you that things are going well (or poorly)?"

11. Modify (The Fix):

"What happens if you see [Signal from Monitor step] going wrong?"

- "What specific adjustments do you make to get back on track?"

12. Conclude (The Finish Line):

"How do you know you are completely finished?"

- "What is the very last thing you do to 'close the loop' (e.g., save, share, invoice, clean up)?"

Part 3: Pressure-Testing the Map (Validation)

Goal: Ensure the steps are distinct, chronological, and complete.

13. The Gap Analysis:

"You mentioned moving from [Step A] to [Step B]. Is there anything—even a small mental check—that happens in between those two?"

14. Input/Output Check (Crucial for completeness):

"For the step where you [Step Name]:

- What specific **input** did you need to start that step?
- What specifically was the output produced by that step?"
  (If they can't define an output, it might not be a distinct step).

15. The "So What?" Test:

"What could go wrong at this specific step? If you skipped this step, what would happen?"

(If the answer is "nothing much," the step is likely too granular).

Part 4: Complexity & Variations

Goal: To capture edge cases and emotional context.

16. Frequency vs. Importance:

"Which of these steps do you do every single time, and which do you only do in complex situations?"

17. The Pain Point Overlay:

"Looking at this map we just built, at which step do you feel the most anxiety or frustration?"

18. Collaborative Handoffs:

"Do you do all of these steps yourself, or do you have to wait for someone else at the [Locate/Confirm/Conclude] stage?"

Facilitator Cheat Sheet: The Universal Job Map

Use this reference to categorize their answers in real-time.

Step	Definition	Key Question to Ask
1. Define	Determine objectives and plan resources.	"What are you planning?"
2. Locate	Gather items/info needed to do the job.	"What are you gathering?"
3. Prepare	Organize inputs/setup environment.	"What are you setting up?"
4. Confirm	Verify readiness to execute.	"What are you verifying?"
5. Execute	**(START HERE)** Perform the core action.	"What is the core action?"
6. Monitor	Assess progress against the plan.	"What are you tracking?"
7. Modify	Make adjustments based on monitoring.	"What are you adjusting?"

8. Conclude	Finish the process/verify output.	"How do you close it out?"

Job Map Synthesis Area (Post-Interview)

- **Core Job Statement:** [Verb] + [Object] + [Context]
- **Trigger:** _____
- **The "Execution" Step:** _____
- **Definition of "Done":** _____
- **Identify any "Hidden" Steps:** (e.g., Did they skip the "Confirm" step? Is that why they fail?)

Part 5: Uncovering needs within the job step

Prioritization (The Filter)

Goal: We cannot deep-dive into every single step. We must identify the "Constraint Steps" first.

1. The Job Map:

"Looking at the process map we just created, which 3 steps are the most:

- Time-consuming?
- Unpredictable (variable)?
- Frustrating?"

2. The Selection:

"Let's focus specifically on the step where you [Insert Problematic Step Name]. I want to zoom in on this specific moment."

Uncovering Functional Outcomes (The Metrics)

Goal: To translate "it's hard" into a measurable outcome statement (Minimize the time/likelihood).

3. The Friction Point:

"What exactly makes this step slow, frustrating, or difficult?"

- "What part of this requires the most manual effort?"
- "What causes this step to go off track?"

4. The Success Metric (Crucial for ODI):

"Imagine you executed this step perfectly. How would you measure that 'perfection'?"

- "What specifically would you be **minimizing**? (e.g., time, waste, likelihood of errors?)"
- "What specifically would you be **maximizing**? (e.g., accuracy, speed?)"

5. The Consequence:

"If you mess up this step, what is the downstream impact on the rest of the job?"

Emotional & Social Needs

Goal: To understand the psychological drivers (Internal) and reputation drivers (External).

6. Internal Feelings (Personal):

"When you are in the middle of this step, how do you want to feel?"

- "What gives you anxiety or stress specifically at this moment?"
- "If you had a magic wand and this step was instant, how would that make you feel about your own ability?"

7. External Perception (Social):

"Does anyone else see the result of this step?"

- "How do you want to be perceived by [Boss/Peers/Family] when you do this job?"
- "What specifically would prevent you from feeling judged, embarrassed, or criticized at this stage?"

Financial Needs (Economic Drivers)

Goal: To uncover hidden costs, waste, and financial risks.

8. The Cost of Doing Business:

"Aside from the price of the product, what are the hidden costs of doing this step?"

- "Do you lose materials? Do you have to pay for extra help? Is there wasted time that costs money?"

9. The Risk Factor:

"If this step fails, is there a financial penalty or a lost opportunity?"

- "How much does an error at this stage typically cost to fix?"

Complexity Factors (Context)

Goal: To understand why the job is hard sometimes, but easy other times.

10. The Context Switch:

"Walk me through your 'worst case scenario' for this step. What was different about that day?"

- "What made that specific time so much harder than a 'normal' day?"

11. Systemic Barriers:

"Are there rules, regulations, or technology limitations that consistently act as a barrier here?"

12. Skill Gap:

"Does this step require a 'superpower' or specific skill? Why is it hard for a beginner to do this?"

The Consumption Chain (The Solution Lifecycle)

Goal: To identify friction associated with the SOLUTION, not the CORE JOB. (Buying, Learning, Maintaining).

Transition: "Now I want to ask about the tool/product you use to do this job, rather than the job itself."

13. Acquisition & Setup:

"Think back to when you first got this solution. What was the hardest part about purchasing, installing, or setting it up?"

14. Learning Curve:

"Did you have to learn new behaviors? What was the hardest thing to 'figure out'?"

15. Maintenance:

"What do you have to do to keep this solution running? (e.g., cleaning, updating, data entry)?"

16. Disposal:

"When you are finished with the product, is there any work required to dispose of it, store it, or transfer data away from it?"

Facilitator Cheat Sheet: Translating Answers to Needs

Use this table to translate interview answers into ODI statements in real-time.

User Says...	You Write (The Need Statement)	Type of Need
"I hate waiting for the page to load."	**Minimize the time** it takes to access the data.	Functional
"I'm scared I'll delete the wrong file."	**Minimize the likelihood** of deleting necessary files.	Functional
"I want to look smart in front of my boss."	**Avoid** looking incompetent to leadership.	Social
"I hate feeling unsure if it worked."	**Feel** confident that the step was completed.	Emotional
"I have to buy extra cables."	**Minimize the cost** of ancillary equipment.	Financial
"I struggle to clean the filter."	**Minimize the time** required to maintain the device.	Consumption