



Interview preparation questions

Whether it be a highly experienced interviewer or a complete novice, the interview process is designed to give the employer an insight into your personality, experience and ability to fit into the role and organisation you're interviewing for.

Your responses to the questions being asked with either take you one step closer to securing the position, or will unfortunately mean the interview process won't go beyond that conversation.

Below we have captured some of the more generic interview questions that employers have asked in interviews. When preparing for an interview, think about how you would respond if that question was asked of you. They have been grouped under the areas the question is assessing in your skillset.

A great way to really solidify your response is to use a real workplace example, which will bring your response to life and bring authenticity to it. These questions can also be used to interview your own candidates as a hiring manager.

Planning and organising

(Priorities; sets stretching but realistic targets and deadlines; plans ahead and has structured approach to the work)

- Describe a project you have managed / been responsible for: - How did you plan your time? (And others time?) - How did you deal with obstacles?
- Have you ever managed a project that you knew would run over the timescales? - What did you do? - What could you do differently next time?
- In your current job, how do you schedule your time and set priorities?
- How did you prepare for this interview?
- When was the last time that you had to take on extra work at short notice?
- How do you manage your own time and objectives?
- When was the last time that you had to work to a particularly tight deadline?
- How do you determine your priorities?
- How do you monitor the progress of projects or tasks? Team skills (The ability to work with other people constructively to improve the effectiveness of the team)
- How do you galvanise your team into action?
- When has your own self-motivation rubbed off on others from whom you work?
- When has your own self-motivation rubbed off on others from whom you work?
- Describe an occasion when you chose not to work as part of a team
- Have you ever had to work in a team where you felt other members of the team were lacking in commitment / ability?
- When has a colleague let you down and how did you react?
- Tell me about the last time that you had to work as part of a team to achieve a specific outcome.
- Whilst part of team has there ever been a time where you witnessed conflict?
- Describe a time when a colleague or friend has annoyed you.
- Have you ever had to modify your approach to take account of someone else's views?
- Can you recall a time when where you have needed to offer constructive feedback to a friend or colleague?



Professional knowledge and judgment:

(Has an extensive knowledge of his / her own field or department; understands the business and uses this to provide credible advice)

- What examples are there during the past 3-6 months where you have made an important decision that turned out to be correct?
- Have you ever made any poor decisions in the past 6 months?
- Tell me about it / them?
- How do you gather information on clients?
- How have you used that information to influence a client or candidate?
- When did a client last ask you for advice (other than re a live assignment)?

Leadership:

(Takes control of situation and events; recognizes and rewards others performance; motivates; coaches and develops others)

- When was the last time you disciplined a member of staff? - How did you handle the situation? - What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you have set goals for an individual or for your team? - How did you go about it? - Were they achieved?
- Tell me about sensitive or difficult staffing issues you have dealt with - What did you find most difficult about it? - What was this so? - What was the outcome?
- How have you introduced change to your team?
- How do you ensure your team gets feedback on its performance? Describe a situation in which you coached a team member Confidence
- Tell me about a time when your work was criticised?
- What was your reaction?
- Can you tell us about a time when you made a particularly good decision? What was the situation? What decision did you make and how did you make it? How did others respond? How did you determine that it was a particularly good decision?

Communication skills:

- Please describe the ways in which you ensure that your audience has appropriately received a message you are communicating and give examples of how you would deliver that same message to different people
- Can you tell me about a time when you have had difficulty in communicating with someone and how you overcame those difficulties?
- Can you tell us about a time when you exceeded a customer's expectations? - What were their expectations? - How did you determine their expectations? - How did you exceed them and why? - How did they respond?

Influencing skills:

- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a superior. - How did you handle the situation?



- Can you tell us about a time when you dealt with conflict in a team? - Who was involved in the conflict? - What was the extent of the conflict and how was it caused? - How did you determine the cause of the conflict? - What did you do? - How did others respond? - What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something with which you disagreed - How did you handle it?

Motivation:

- What is the greatest challenge or obstacle to success that you have faced at work and how did you overcome it? - What effect did this have in your longer-term motivation skill?
- Can you tell us about a time when personally developed a new skill? - How did you identify that you needed the new skill? - How did you go about obtaining your new skill? - What obstacle did you encounter? - What was the outcome? Drive for results:
- Talk me through a time when you have had to work towards a challenging, ambitious objective
- Has there ever been a time where you have had to work harder and longer to ensure that a time deadline was met?
- When was the last time that you were called upon to do more than would normally be expected of you?
- What do you like least about your current role?
- What do you feel is the greatest challenge in your current role?

Sales ability / persuasiveness:

- Can you give an example of a time that you sold an idea, concept or product by identifying a particular need, issue or concern in the mind of the person you are selling it to?
- Can you talk me through the last occasion on which you presented a persuasive argument to another person or can you describe the last sales call that you made?
- Was there ever a time, whilst selling a product or idea, where you adapted your approach to suit the person you were selling to?
- Describe a time when you could not persuade someone to your point of view?
- What is the most difficult sales situation that you have ever encountered?