

# Sample Interview Questions

## General Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Where do you want to be in the next five years?
3. Why do you want this position?
4. Why this position and why now?
5. When were you most satisfied in your job?
6. Why are you leaving your present job?
7. Do you have any questions for me?
8. What's your ideal job?

## Academic:

1. Describe your research. What are you currently working on? What is your five year plan?
2. What are your plans for publishing?
3. Can you give me examples of your ability to work effectively with a variety of students?
4. What courses would you be willing and eager to teach?
5. What course, not currently in our catalog, would you like to develop?
6. What are some of the things that you have done in your teaching career particularly well or in which you have achieved the greatest success?
7. What has been your greatest frustration or disappointment in teaching?
8. Describe how you use technology in teaching.
9. Tell us about your educational experiences. What attracted you to this discipline and what do you hope to contribute to the field?
10. What motivates you? How would you motivate students?
11. If a student approached you and asked about majoring in \_\_\_\_\_, what would you say to them?

## Adaptability:

1. Describe a major change that occurred in a job that you held. How did you adapt to this change?
2. Tell us about a time when you had to adjust to changes over which you had no control. How did you handle it?
3. How have you had to adapt your work style to fit the needs of others?
4. How often has your work been interrupted by unforeseen circumstances? What do you do when this happens?
5. Have you ever worked hard on something and then had your priorities change mid-stream? How did it make you feel? What did you do?

## **Ambition:**

1. There are times when we work without close supervision or support to get the job done. Tell us about a time when you found yourself in such a situation and how things turned out.
2. Tell us about a time when you were particularly effective on prioritizing tasks and completing a project on schedule.
3. Give two examples of things you've done in previous jobs that demonstrate your willingness to work hard.
4. What projects have you started on your own recently? What prompted you to get started?
5. When you disagree with your manager, what do you do? Give an example.

## **Analytical Thinking:**

1. Tell us about a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation. What kind of thought process did you go through? What was your reasoning behind your decision?
2. Developing and using a detailed procedure is often very important in a job. Tell about a time when you needed to develop and use a detailed procedure to successfully complete a project.
3. Tell us about a job or setting where great precision to detail was required to complete a task. How did you handle that situation?
4. Relate a specific instance when you found it necessary to be precise in order to complete the job.
5. Describe the project or situation which best demonstrates your analytical abilities. What was your role?

## **Building Relationships:**

1. What, in your opinion, are the key ingredients in guiding and maintaining successful business relationships? Give examples of how you made these work for you.
2. Give a specific example of a time when you had to address an angry customer. What was the problem and what was the outcome? How would you assess your role in diffusing the situation?
3. It is very important to build good relationships at work but sometimes it doesn't always work. If you can, tell about a time when you were not able to build a successful relationship with a difficult person.
4. Tell us about a time when you built rapport quickly with someone under difficult conditions.
5. Tell me about a time when you had to work closely with a coworker whom you disliked or with whom you had trouble working. What did you do to make the relationship work so you could succeed for your company?

### **Caution:**

1. Have you ever worked in a situation where the rules and guidelines were not clear? Tell me about it. How did you feel about it? How did you react?
2. Tell us about a time when you demonstrated too much initiative.
3. Can you tell me about a time when you backed off in a meeting because you felt someone else should speak or have an opportunity?

### **Communication:**

1. Describe a situation where you felt you had not communicated well. How did you correct the situation?
2. Tell us about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get an important point across.
3. Describe a situation in which you were able to effectively “read” another person and guide your actions by your understanding of their individual needs or values.
4. Describe a situation when you were able to strengthen a relationship by communicating effectively. What made your communication effective?
5. How do you keep subordinates informed about information that affects their job?

### **Conflict Resolution:**

1. Describe a time when you took personal accountability for a conflict and initiated contact with the individual(s) involved to explain your actions.
2. Are there any times where you had a conflict with a superior? If yes, how did you handle it and resolve it?
3. Describe a time when you had a disagreement with a colleague at work. How did you manage to work it out?
4. Tell me about a situation where you were aware of a serious mistake made by a colleague and what did you do about it?
5. How do you manage to work with people whom you are not comfortable with? What do you do in such situations?

### **Customer Orientation:**

1. How do you handle problems with customers? Give an example.
2. How do you go about establishing rapport with a customer? What have you done to gain their confidence? Give an example.
3. What have you done to improve relations with your customers?
4. Can you tell me about a time when you did something extra, which was not part of the routine activities assigned to you, but you did it for the benefit of the customer?
5. How do you handle negative feedback from very angry clients? How do you respond to him/her?

## **Decision Making:**

1. What was your most difficult decision in the last 6 months? What made it difficult?
2. Everyone has made some poor decisions or has done something that just did not turn out right. Has this happened to you? What happened?
3. How do you involve your manager and/or others when you make a decision?
4. Tell us about a time when you had to defend a decision you made even though other important people were opposed to your decision.
5. Discuss an important decision you have made regarding a task or project at work. What factors influenced your decision?

## **Delegation:**

1. Do you consider yourself a macro or micro manager? How do you delegate?
2. What was the biggest mistake you have had when delegating work? The biggest success?
3. Tell us how you go about delegating work?
4. What are some examples of tasks, etc. that you consider inappropriate to delegate?
5. Who is in charge of your area when you are gone?
6. Describe a situation where you had the option to leave the details to others or you could take care of them yourself.

## **Detail-Oriented:**

1. Have the jobs you held in the past required little attention, moderate attention or a great deal of attention to detail? Give me an example of a situation that illustrates this requirement.
2. Tell us about a situation where attention to detail was either important or unimportant in accomplishing an assigned task.
3. Tell us about a difficult experience you had in working with details.
4. Do you prefer to work with the "big picture" or "details" of a situation? Give me an example of an experience that illustrates your preference.
5. Some people are "big picture people" and others are "detail oriented." Which are you? Give an example of a time when you displayed this.
6. Tell us about a situation when it was important for you to pay attention to details. How did you handle it?

## **Diversity**

1. Tell us about your experience working with first generation, underrepresented students.
2. What do you think is the biggest challenge facing underrepresented individuals who are pursuing higher education today?
3. Tell us about a time that you successfully adapted to a culturally different environment.
4. Tell us about a time when you made an intentional effort to get to know someone from another culture.
5. What have you done to further your knowledge/understanding about diversity? How have you demonstrated your learning?
6. Give a specific example of how you have helped create an environment where differences are valued, encouraged and supported.
7. Tell us about a time when you had to adapt to a wide variety of people by accepting/understanding their perspective.

## **Employee Development:**

1. Tell us about a training program that you have developed or enhanced.
2. What are the key issues that should be addressed in the design, conduct, and evaluation of training programs?
3. How would you go about training a new employee?
4. Under what circumstances, might you recommend computer-based training instead of instructor-led training?
5. What is the impact on the organization of inadequate employee training?

## **Evaluating Alternatives:**

1. What are some of the major decisions you have made over the past (6, 12, 18) months?
2. What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you? Describe one.
3. Have you ever had a situation where you had a number of alternatives to choose from? How did you go about choosing one?
4. When a number of different people come to you with ideas about solving a problem, how do you do about using their information? Please give an example.

## **Flexibility:**

1. How have you adjusted your style when it was not meeting the objectives and/or people were not responding correctly?
2. Tell me about a specific time when you were given new information that affected a decision you had already made.
3. Have you ever had a subordinate whose performance was consistently marginal? What did you do?
4. What do you do when you are faced with an obstacle to an important project? Give an example.
5. When you have difficulty persuading someone to your point of view, what do you do? Give an example.

## **Follow-up and Control:**

1. How do you evaluate the productivity/effectiveness of your subordinates?
2. How do you keep track of what your subordinates are doing?
3. How did you keep track of delegated assignments?
4. How do you get data for performance reviews?
5. What administrative paperwork do you have? Is it useful? Why/why not?

## **Initiative:**

1. Give me an example of when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
2. Give me an example of projects/tasks you started on your own.
3. How did you get work assignments at your most recent employer?
4. What sorts of projects did you generate that required you to go beyond your job description?
5. Give some instances in which you anticipated problems and were able to influence a new direction.

## **Interpersonal Skills:**

1. Tell us about the most difficult or frustrating individual that you've ever had to work with, and how you managed to work with them.
2. Describe a situation in which you were able to effectively "read" another person and guide your actions by your understanding of their needs and values.
3. Describe a recent unpopular decision you made and what the result was.
4. What have you done in past situations to contribute toward a teamwork environment?
5. Tell me about a time when you worked on a project that required you to interact with different levels within the company.

## **Innovation:**

1. Describe a situation when you demonstrated initiative and took action without waiting for direction. What was the outcome?
2. Describe a time when you came up with a creative solution/idea/project/report to a problem in your past work.
3. Sometimes it is essential that we break out of the routine, standardized way of doing things in order to complete the task. Give an example of when you were able to successfully develop such a new approach.
4. There are many jobs in which well-established methods are typically followed. Give a specific example of a time when you tried some other method to do the job.
5. What new or unusual ideas have you developed on your job? How did you develop them? What was the result? Did you implement them?
6. Give an example of a time when you created or found a more efficient way to complete a task at work.

## **Integrity:**

1. On occasion we are confronted by dishonesty in the workplace. Tell about such an occurrence and how you handled it.
2. Tell us about a specific time when you had to handle a tough problem which challenged fairness or ethical issues.
3. Trust requires personal accountability. Can you tell about a time when you chose to trust someone? What was the outcome?
4. If you can, tell about a time when your trustworthiness was challenged. How did you react/respond?
5. Describe a time when you were asked to keep information confidential.

## **Introducing Change:**

1. Have you ever had to introduce a policy change to your work group? How did you do it?
2. Have you ever met resistance when implementing a new idea or policy to a work group? How did you deal with it? What happened?
3. When is the last time you had to introduce a new idea or procedure to people on this job? How did you do it?
4. You need information, and access to it is being denied to you. What steps do you take to acquire the information?
5. What if there was a person you intensively disliked within your work team, yet you sense that this person is going to be the most creative in bringing the assignment to an effective conclusion. What steps do you take to nurture their contribution and demonstrate that you value their input?

## **Leadership:**

1. Have you ever been a member of a group where two of the members did not work well together? What did you do to get them to do so?
2. What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from?
3. Give an example of a time in which you felt you were able to build motivation in your co-workers or subordinates at work.
4. Have you ever had difficulty getting others to accept your ideas? What was your approach? Did it work?
5. Give an example of your ability to build motivation in your co-workers, classmates, and even if on a volunteer committee.

## **Listening:**

1. What do you do to show people that you are listening to them?
2. Give an example of a time when you made a mistake because you did not listen well to what someone had to say.
3. Relate an occasion when you withheld your own opinion, and tried to obtain the opinion of others, and why was this action important?
4. How often do you have to rely on information you have gathered from others when talking to them? What kinds of problems have you had? What happened?
5. Are you capable of getting to the bottom of a situation, when someone is incapable of communicating what they really mean? If so how do you achieve this?

## **Motivating Others:**

1. Have you ever had a subordinate whose work was always marginal? How did you deal with that person? What happened?
2. Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the actions of others.
3. How do you deal with people whose work exceeds your expectations?
4. How do you manage cross-functional teams?
5. Tell me about a time when you and your whole team were demoralized for some reason. What do you do to raise spirits?

## **Motivation:**

1. Tell me about a time when you willingly volunteered for a task. Also, why were you so interested in this specific task?
2. How would you describe "success" in your chosen career?
3. Tell us about an important goal that you set in the past. Were you successful? Why?
4. Tell me about a goal you achieved which at some points seems hopeless? Why did you keep going on?
5. Can you tell me at least three things that you have done in the past year to improve yourself, both business-wise and competency wise?



## **Negotiating:**

1. When your credibility is compromised, what steps do you take to rectify the situation?
2. Tell us about the last time you had to negotiate with someone. What was the most difficult part?
3. Describe the most challenging negotiation in which you were involved. What did you do? What were the results for you? What were the results for the other party?
4. Have you ever been in a situation where you had to bargain with someone? How did you feel about this? What did you do? Give an example.
5. What skills do use when you need to influence the way other people think?

## **Organizational:**

1. How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time?
2. Give me an example of a project that best describes your organizational skills.
3. When it is your responsibility to organize and plan a project what steps do you take?
4. What do you do when your schedule is suddenly interrupted? Give an example.
5. Describe a time when you had to make a difficult choice between your personal and professional life.

## **Performance Management:**

1. Tell us about a time when you had to tell a staff member that you were dissatisfied with his or her work.
2. How do you coach a subordinate to develop a new skill?
3. Give an example of how you have been successful at empowering either a person or a group of people into accomplishing a task.
4. How do you handle a subordinate whose work is not up to expectations?
5. When do you give positive feedback to people? Tell me about the last time you did. Give an example of how you handle the need for constructive criticism with a subordinate or peer.

## **Personal Effectiveness:**

1. When you have been made aware of, or have discovered for yourself, a problem in your work performance, what was your course of action? Can you give an example?
2. Tell us about a time when you took responsibility for an error and were held personally accountable.
3. Give an example of a situation where others were intense but you were able to maintain your composure.
4. It is important to maintain a positive attitude at work when you have other things on your mind. Give a specific example of when you were able to do that.
5. Tell us about a recent job or experience that you would describe as a real learning experience. What did you learn from the job or experience?

## **Persuasion:**

1. Describe a situation where you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
2. How do you get a peer or colleague to accept one of your ideas?
3. Describe a time when you were able to convince a skeptical or resistant customer to purchase a project or utilize your services.
4. Tell us about a time when you used facts and reason to persuade someone to accept your recommendation.
5. In selling an idea, it is sometimes useful to use metaphors, analogies or stories to make your point. Give a recent example of when you were able to successfully do that.

## **Planning and Organization:**

1. How do you schedule your time? Set priorities? How do you handle doing twenty things at once?
2. What have you done in order to be effective with your organization and planning?
3. Describe how you develop a project team's goals and project plan?
4. What do you do when your time schedule or project plan is upset by unforeseen circumstances? Give an example.
5. Give me an example of a situation when you had to follow through on work being done by others. How did you do it?

## **Presentation:**

1. What kinds of oral presentations have you made? How did you prepare for them? What challenges did you have?
2. How would you describe your presentation style?
3. How do you prepare for a presentation to a group of technical experts in your field?
4. Tell us about the most effective presentation you have made. What was the topic? What made it difficult? How did you handle it?
5. Tell me about a stressful time that you had delivering a presentation. How did you handle it?

## **Problem Solving:**

1. Describe the most difficult working relationship you've had with an individual. What specific actions did you take to improve the relationship? What was the outcome?
2. Give me an example of a situation where you had difficulties with a team member. What, if anything, did you do to resolve the difficulties?
3. What steps did you take on the last occasion that you detected the cause of a company operating error?
4. When faced with a work-related problem, what steps do you take to address the issue?
5. What steps do you take when a colleague is impeding your progress at work?

## **Project Management:**

1. Tell us about a time when you influenced the outcome of a project by taking a leadership role.
2. Tell me about a time when you had two key stakeholders with opposing views. How did you handle that?
3. What's the most important thing for a project manager to do?
4. When was the last time you didn't delegate and what happened?
5. What creative problem solving techniques do you use?

## **Relate Well:**

1. Describe a situation where you had to use confrontation skills.
2. Tell us about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
3. Describe a situation where you had to use conflict management skills.
4. Give me an example of a time when a company policy or action hurt people. What, if anything, did you do to mitigate the negative consequences to people?
5. How do you typically deal with conflict?

## **Removing Obstacles:**

1. What have you done to help your subordinates to be more productive?
2. What do you do when a subordinate comes to you with a challenge?
3. Have you ever dealt with a situation where communications were poor? Where there was a lack of cooperation? Lack of trust? How did you handle these situations?
4. What have you done to make sure that your subordinates can be productive? Give an example.
5. Tell me about a challenge you overcame

## **Resolving Conflict:**

1. Tell us about a time when you had to help two peers settle a dispute. How did you go about identifying the issues? What did you do? What was the result?
2. Have you ever had to settle conflict between two people on the job? What was the situation and what did you do?
3. Have you ever been in a situation where you had to settle an argument between two friends or people you knew? What did you do? What was the result?
4. How do you cope with conflict in the workplace?
5. Are there any times where you had a conflict with a superior? If yes, how did you handle it and resolve it?

## **Resource Management:**

1. Tell us about a time when you organized or planned an event that was very successful.
2. Describe a time when you made your resources stretch beyond the point that you or others thought was realistic.
3. Describe your approach to making decisions and solving problems. Why do you do it this way?
4. What operating systems do you use to monitor and maintain control of your area of accountability?
5. How useful have you found written procedures and guidelines in helping you manage your area?

## **Scheduling:**

1. How do you go about making job assignments?
2. Describe the most difficult scheduling problem you have faced.
3. How did you assign priorities to jobs?
4. When all have been over-loaded, how do you people meet job assignments?
5. Describe a situation that required a number of things to be done at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?

## **Self-Assessment:**

1. If there were one area you've always wanted to improve upon, what would that be?
2. Give me an example of an important goal that you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
3. Can you recall a time when you were less than pleased with your performance?
4. Give me a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
5. In what ways are you trying to improve yourself?

## **Selecting and Developing People:**

1. What have you done to improve the skills of your subordinates?
2. What was your biggest mistake in hiring someone? What happened? How did you deal with the situation?
3. How do you coach an employee in completing a new assignment?
4. What have you done to develop your subordinates? Give an example.
5. What was your biggest success in hiring someone? What did you do?

## **Setting Goals:**

1. What were your annual goals at your most current employer? How did you develop these goals?
2. How do you involve people in developing your unit's goals? Give an example.
3. What were your long-range plans at your most recent employer?
4. Tell me about an important goal that you've set in the past and what you accomplished.
5. What company plans have you developed? Which ones have you reached? How did you reach them?
6. If I told you that we are looking for someone to stay in this position for a "long time", what would you consider a "long time" to be?

## **Social Media**

1. What is your experience with social media and what types of media have you created/managed in the past? How were they successful?
2. What is your policy on moderating comments?
3. What social sites do you use personally?
4. How does your personal social media presence impact your employer?
5. How do you measure success on social media?

## **Sound Judgment:**

1. When have you had to produce results without sufficient guidelines? Give an example.
2. Give me an example of when you were responsible for an error or mistake. What was the outcome? What would you do differently?
3. Describe a situation when you had to exercise a significant amount of self-control.
4. Give me an example of when you were able to meet the personal and professional demands in your life and still maintained a healthy balance.
5. We work with a great deal of confidential information. Describe how you would have handled sensitive information in a past work experience. What strategies would you utilize to maintain confidentiality when pressured by others?

## **Strategic Planning:**

1. How do you see your job relating to the overall goals of the organization?
2. Tell us about a time when you anticipated the future and made changes to current responsibilities/operations to meet future needs.
3. Describe what steps/methods you have used to define/identify a vision for your unit/position.
4. In your current or former position, what were your long and short-term goals?
5. How should you go about identifying allies as part of any good business or organizational strategy plan?

## **Stress Management:**

1. People react differently when job demands are constantly changing; how do you react?
2. What was the most stressful situation you have faced? How did you deal with it?
3. How did you react when faced with constant time pressure? Give an example.
4. What kind of events cause you stress on the job?

## **Supervision**

1. Please describe your supervisory experience and style.
2. Tell us about the most difficult situation you have had when leading a team. What happened and what did you do? Was it successful? What was the single most important thing you did?
3. Tell me about a time when an employee made a significant mistake. What action did you take?
4. Describe a time you had to manage conflict within your department/group.

## **Teamwork:**

1. Describe a team experience you found disappointing. What would you have done to prevent this?
2. Please give your best example of working cooperatively as a team member to accomplish an important goal. What was the goal or objective? To what extent did you interact with others on this project?
3. Think about the times you have been a team leader. What could you have done to be more effective?
4. What is the difficult part of being a member, not a leader, of a team? How did you handle this?
5. What are your expectations regarding your co-workers? Supervisors?

## **Time Management Schedule:**

1. Describe a situation that required you to do a number of things at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
2. How do you typically plan your day to manage your time effectively?
3. How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give an example.
4. Of your current assignments, which do you consider to have required the greatest amount of effort with regard to planning/organization? How have you accomplished this assignment? How would you assess your effectiveness?
5. We've all had times when we couldn't complete everything on time. When has this happened to you, and how did you handle it?

## **Toughness:**

1. On many occasions, managers have to make tough decisions. What was the most difficult one you have had to make?
2. Tell us about setbacks you have faced. How did you deal with them?
3. What has been your major work related disappointment? What happened and what did you do?
4. What is the most competitive situation you have experienced? How did you handle it? What was the result?
5. What was your most major disappointment?

## **Variety:**

1. When was the last time you were in a crisis? What was the situation? How did you react?
2. How many projects do you work on at once? Please describe.
3. When was the last time you made a key decision on the spur of the moment? What was the reason?
4. Which of your jobs had the most rapid change?
- 5.

## **Salary Questions:**

1. What salary are you seeking?
2. What's your salary history?
3. If I were to give you this salary you requested but let you write your job description for the next year, what would it say?
4. What kind of salary do you think you are worth?
5. What kind of salary do you believe you will be earning in say, five years?