

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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If you are involved in the interview process, it is important to understand that there are questions that can and cannot be asked of applicants. Below is a listing of such questions.

**Note:** If you have questions regarding interviewing techniques and best practices, please contact your human resources department.

### Questions You *CAN* Ask During an Interview

#### INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

- What five adjectives describe you best?
- How would you describe your character?
- Why should I consider you for this position?
- What can you do for us that someone else can't?
- Tell me about a work achievement in which you take pride.
- Tell me about a bad decision you have made on the job.
- What personal qualities do you think are necessary to be successful in this job?
- What would you say are the major qualities this job demands?
- How would you describe your ideal job?
- What are your top three strengths?
- What are your top three weaknesses?

#### NEW GRADUATE QUESTIONS

- What extracurricular activities were you involved in?
- Did you hold any leadership positions in student organizations?
- What classes did you enjoy the most? The least?
- Why did you choose your major?
- If you could start again, what major would you choose?
- Why are you applying for a job in a field other than your major?
- What did you learn from your summer jobs?
- In what courses did you get the worst grades? Why?
- Are your grades a good measure of your ability?
- Give me an example of a problem you've had at school and how you solved it.
- Tell me about an educational achievement in which you take pride.

## GENERAL PAST JOB PERFORMANCE

Tell me about your last position—what you did; people you worked for; etc.

Tell me about the last time you made a mistake at work.

Tell me about the last time you made a good decision at work.

Did you develop or implement new procedures in your previous positions? Tell me about them.

Of all the work you have done, in what areas have you been most successful?

Give me an example of when you've demonstrated your customer service skills.

Tell me about a time that you had a difficult situation with a coworker.

## TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

Tell me about the types of computer programs you used in your last job.

What would you say are the major technical skills needed for this position?

What was more important on your job, written or oral communication?

What types of equipment do you think you will need to do this job?

What kind of on-the-job training did you receive at your last job?

What certifications/classes have you completed this last year?

Describe the types of documents you deal with on a daily basis.

What software programs do you use most often in your current position?

What software programs are you familiar with and how would you rate your skill levels on a 1-10 basis?

## GOALS

What do you want to be doing five years from now?

Tell me what "success" means to you.

What does "failure" mean to you?

What was your favorite job? Why?

You've stayed with the same organization for years. Why have you decided to leave?

What do you do when you have a difficult job task?

What do you know about our company/organization?

What interests you most about this position?

What kind of job-related professional development are you engaged in? (books, articles, organizations, seminars/training, etc.)

What would you change about your current job?

What do you like best about this job? Like least?

What do you consider your greatest strength?

How do you set goals for yourself?

Why do you want this job?

What motivates you to do your best at work?

## SUPERVISORY QUESTIONS

Tell me about the people you have supervised in the past.

How do you motivate people?

Have you ever fired anyone? Why?

Have you ever hired anyone? Why did you choose that person?

What do you do when you're having trouble with your employees?

Have you ever had to make unpopular decisions? How did you communicate it to your workers?

What type of supervisory training have you completed in the last two years?

Tell me about a difficult situation that you have had with an employee. How did you handle it?

## PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

What were your most memorable accomplishments at your last job?

What is the biggest failure you've had in your career?

How do you go about making important decisions?

Give me an example of a time you found a unique solution to a problem.

Tell me about the last time you found a cost-effective solution to a problem.

What aspects of your job do you like the least? The best?

What kinds of things bother you most about your job?

What were your three most important responsibilities in your last job?

What was the most important project you worked on in your last job?

Tell me about a time you worked on a difficult project.

## FLEXIBILITY

Tell me about the last change that occurred in your office. How did you handle it?

I'm interested in hearing about the last time you took a work related risk. Was it the right decision?

How important was communication and interaction with others on your job? How many departments did you deal with? What problems occurred?

What level of management are you most comfortable with?

Tell me about a time when an emergency caused you to reschedule your work/projects.

When did you go above and beyond the call of duty to get your job done?

This job occasionally involves overtime and weekend work. Can you be available if necessary?

This job occasionally involves travel. Would you be able to meet this requirement?

## STRESS

Tell me about a deadline you had to meet. How did you plan for it?

Tell me about the last time pressure led you to a poor decision or mistake on the job.

How do you generally handle conflict?

What do you do when you're burned out?

You have worked in a fast-paced environment. How do you handle the stress?

You work in a "customer is always right" environment. How do you handle the stress?

What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you?

What is the most difficult work situation you have faced? What stress did you feel?

What do you do when you have a great deal of work to accomplish in a short period of time?

What is the most frustrating thing about your current position?

## ORGANIZATION/TIME MANAGEMENT

Tell me about the last time you failed to complete a project on time.

What do you do when you're having trouble solving a problem?

What do you do when things are slow?

What do you do when things are hectic?

What do you do when you have multiple priorities?

Tell me about your typical day. How much time do you spend on the phone? In meetings? Etc.

Your supervisor left you an assignment, and then left for a week. You can't reach him and you don't fully understand the assignment. What would you do?

What aspects of your job would you consider the most critical?

How do you organize and plan for major projects?

How many projects do you like handling at one time?

Describe a project that required a high amount of energy over an extended period of time.

How do you organize yourself for day-to-day activities?

Tell me about a task you started but just couldn't seem to get finished.

## COOPERATION WITH CO-WORKERS

Tell me about the types of people you have trouble getting along with.

What types of people have trouble getting along with you?

Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others?

Tell me about the last time you had a conflict with a coworker.

How would your coworkers describe you?

What do you see as your role as a group member?

What kind of people did you have contact with on your previous jobs?

What kind of person do you get along with the best?

What difficulties have you had to tolerate on your previous jobs?

Tell me about an occasion when, in difficult circumstances, you pulled a team together.

What do you find most challenging in working with coworkers?

Please provide at least one example of a time when you altered or changed your practice because of the diversity of the group with which you were working. What change did you make? What did you learn from this experience?

## MANAGEABILITY

Tell me about your best and worst bosses.

What do you do when you're having trouble with a boss?

What do supervisors tend to criticize most about your performance?

Your supervisor tells you to do something in a way you know is dead wrong. What do you do?

If your supervisor unfairly criticized you, what would you do?

Would you like to have your boss's job? Why or why not?

How does your boss get the best out of you?

Tell me about a time when your manager was in a rush and didn't give you enough attention.

What are some of the things about which you and your boss disagreed?

What are some of the things your boss did that you dislike?

In what areas could your boss have done a better job?

I would be interested to hear about an occasion when your work or an idea was criticized.

How well do you feel your boss rated your performance?

Describe the best manager you ever had. The worst.

## **NEVER Ask These Questions in a Job Interview!**

### **QUESTIONS ON AGE**

How old are you?

When did you graduate from high school? College?

How much longer do you plan to work before you retire?

### **QUESTIONS ON PERSONAL LIFE**

Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?

Are you married?

Do you intend to get married?

Do you have children?

Are you a single parent?

Do you practice birth control?

Do you live by yourself?

How many people live in your household?

Do you have someone who can take care of your children when they are sick?

What's your sexual orientation?

Are you straight?

Do you have a maiden name?

Where does your spouse work?

What community organizations do you belong to?

### **QUESTIONS ON ETHNIC ORIGIN/RACE**

What's your nationality?

Where are you from?

Where are your parents from?

What languages do your parents speak?

Are you bilingual? (unless job-related)

What language do you speak at home?

What's the origin of your name?

## QUESTIONS ON RELIGION/POLITICAL BELIEFS

What church are you a member of?

Can you work Sundays? Saturdays?

Are you a member of a religious group?

With what political party are you affiliated?

Are you involved in political activities?

## QUESTIONS ON DISABILITIES

What health problems do you have?

Do you have any back problems?

When were you in the hospital last?

How much sick leave did you take at your current/last job?

Have you ever taken FMLA?