

PROFESSIONAL / TECHNICAL

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

FOR YOUR INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

Select only the questions that are most useful in screening for your open position

Work Experience

1. Please describe the major responsibilities of your current (last) job.
2. Tell me about your primary job challenges.
3. What was the most difficult aspect of your last job?
4. What would you like to do more in your current (last) position? Less?
5. Tell me about your best (worst) boss.
6. Why are you seeking other employment?

Technical/Functional Skills

1. What experience, skills or education do you consider most helpful in contributing to your success on the job?
2. Can you think of work you completed recently that best reflects how you apply new techniques to solve practical problems? Please describe the problem, the new technique you used and the outcome.
3. Tell me about your last performance appraisal. What were your strengths? What was your developmental plan?

Education

1. Why did you choose the college you attended?
2. What determined your choice of major?
3. What were your best and worst subjects? Please describe them.
4. Were you responsible for a major project, comprehensive exams or a thesis? If so, please describe your approach to planning, preparation and execution. What was the result?
5. Tell me about your extracurricular activities. Why did you choose those activities?
6. What were your long-term and short-term goals upon leaving school?

Communication Skills

1. Describe the most significant piece of writing you recently completed. How did you plan and organize it? Who was the audience? How was it presented?
2. Tell me about your most highly visible oral presentation. How did you prepare for it? What were your objectives? What kind of feedback did you get?
3. Describe a recent time that you were unexpectedly in a position of orally promoting or defending something. Please describe the situation, your approach, and the outcome.
4. What kind of standard reporting do you perform in your current position? Please describe the content, frequency and format of these reports.

Planning/Organizing

1. Tell me how you planned and executed your most important programs or projects.
2. How did you determine your long-term and short-term goals? How have you responded to unanticipated difficulties that arose in carrying out your plan?
3. Tell me about the period of time when work has been most hectic. What did you do to keep it under control? What led to your being pressed for time? What steps would you take to avoid this situation in the future?
4. Describe a time when you were delayed in completing a project. What caused the delay? How long did the task actually take as compared to the plan? What was the outcome?
5. What systematic processes or tools have you used to plan, organize and monitor/control a project? How effective have those tools/approaches been? Why or Why not?

Creativity/Innovativeness

1. What have you done that was innovative in your present position; what action did you take to implement this? What was the outcome?
2. Can you think of a situation you had to handle in which old solutions didn't work? What did you do to handle it? What role did you play? What was the end result?

Interpersonal Skills

1. Tell me about a time when you tried to anticipate how someone would react, and possibly even object, to a conversation you were going to have with them.
2. Describe a time your listening skills were really put to the test. (That is, it was hard to sit through someone's communication with you.)
3. Give me an example of a time when you had to work with a group of people who you didn't know very well. How did it go?
4. Describe a time when you needed to sell someone else on your idea or recommendation.

Judgment/Decision Making

1. Give me two examples of good decisions you have made in the last 6 months. Why were they good decisions? What were the alternatives? Did anyone disagree with you? Why?
2. Describe a time when you involved subordinates in an important decision: To what extent did you involve them? What alternatives did you consider? What was the outcome?
3. What kind of decisions do you make rapidly, and on which ones do you take more time? Please give specific examples and describe the steps you followed in making decisions.

Drive for Results

1. What are the standards for success in your job? What have you done to meet these standards?
2. In which areas do you feel you would like to develop yourself further? What steps have you taken?
3. What was the most difficult task or project you have been assigned? What made it so difficult? How did you go about performing it and making adjustments to unforeseen problems? How long before or after your deadline did you get it done?
4. Describe your best achievement and how you accomplished it. Tell me about the obstacles you encountered, the effort you put in, and the end result.

Personal Organization

1. Have you ever had an experience when you were responsible for coordinating several tasks to accomplish a large job? Please give me an example.
2. How do you keep track of your own paperwork, schedules, etc.? Please be specific.
3. In your last job, if something wasn't due for several weeks, when and how did you approach getting it done?
4. Describe a busy day at your last job. How did you organize a day like that?

Conflict Management

1. Think of a time when you were on a team that was experiencing conflict. What could have been done, in retrospect, for things to work better?
2. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an extremely difficult internal customer. How did you go about minimizing the conflict, yet manage the customer's expectations?
3. Describe a time in which you helped facilitate the resolution of some kind of conflict.
4. Give an example of a time when a disagreement with an internal customer didn't sit right with you, and you asked someone else's opinion on how you handled the situation. What feedback did they give you?

Cooperation and Collaboration

1. Think of a time when you partnered with someone outside of your group in order to get something done. How did you go about this?
2. What kinds of networking do you do inside the organization? What is the benefit, and why is it important?
3. Tell me about a time when you had little to no authority to get something done, but you were able to get others to mobilize toward your goal anyway. How did you do it?

Teamwork

1. Tell me about a time when you played an active role on a team. What did you do?
2. Describe a time when you were part of a team and everyone had their own agenda, including you, yet you pushed for consensus.
3. Tell me about a time when you encouraged someone else to contribute an idea in a group. Why did you do this?
4. Give me an example of a situation when you were required to be a part of a team and it did not agree with their ideas. What did you do?

Influencing Others

1. Describe a time when you set out to influence someone to go with your idea, but your first approach didn't work. What did you do then?
2. Tell me about a time when you had more than one reporting relationship to deal with. What issues were involved?
3. Give me an example of a time when you had your own idea about what should be done, but you remained open and receptive to others' ideas, as well. What was the benefit?
4. Tell me about a time when you did a favor for someone and later you called upon them to do a favor for you. What happened? Is this typical?

Initiative

1. Give me an example of a project you were responsible for starting. What did you do? How did it work out?
2. How much information do you need to get started on a new project or assignment?
3. When have you had to produce results without sufficient guidelines or information? What did you do?

Problem Solving/Analytical Skills

1. When was the last time you made a decision or solved a problem, which required a lot of hard thinking and careful analysis on your part? What alternative solutions did you consider? Why? What additional information would you like to have had before deciding? Describe the outcome, including particular difficulties you had to overcome.
2. What problems are you currently working on that came as a surprise to you? How much advance notice did you have? Why? What steps did you take? What is the current status?
3. Describe the time you were most resourceful in solving some problem or in coming up with an improvement. Where did your ideas originate? How and with whom did you check your ideas as you proceeded? What was the result?

Professional/Technical Interest

1. How do you keep informed of the latest developments in your field?
2. Describe the magazines and newsletters you read. What useful information have they provided recently?
3. What job-related seminars, conferences, workshops or meetings have you recently attended? Can you give some examples of new techniques or processes you learned and have implemented?
4. Tell me about the last time you were surprised by some development in your area of expertise. Describe the finding, its impact on your position and your opinion of its benefits and shortcomings.

MANAGERIAL / SUPERVISORY

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

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Work Experience

1. Please describe the major responsibilities of your current (last) job.
2. Tell me about your primary job challenges.
3. What was the most difficult aspect of your last job?
4. What would you like to do more in your current (last) position? Less?
5. What was the title of the person you reported to? Please describe your department's organization chart.
6. Tell me about your best (worst) boss.
7. Why are you seeking other employment?

Technical/Functional Skills

1. What experience, skills or education do you consider most helpful in contributing to your success on the job? Can you think of work you completed recently that best reflects how you apply new techniques to solve practical problems? Please describe the problem, the new technique you used and the outcome.
2. Please describe your budget responsibilities.
3. Tell me about your last performance appraisal. What were your strengths? What was your developmental plan?

Education

1. Why did you choose the college you attended?
2. What determined your choice of major?
3. What were your best and worst subjects? Please describe them.
4. Were you responsible for a major project, comprehensive exams or a thesis? If so, please describe your approach to planning, preparation and execution. What was the result?
5. Tell me about your extracurricular activities. Why did you choose those activities?
6. What were your long-term and short-term goals upon leaving school?

Communication

1. Describe the most significant piece of writing you recently completed. How did you plan and organize it? Who was the audience? How was it presented?
2. Tell me about your most highly visible oral presentation. How did you prepare for it? What were your objectives? What kind of feedback did you get?
3. Describe a recent time that you were unexpectedly in a position of orally promoting or defending something. Please describe the situation, your approach, and the outcome.
4. What kind of standard reporting do you perform in your current position? Please describe the content, frequency and format of these reports.

Planning/Organizing

1. Tell me how you planned and executed your most important programs or projects.
2. How did you determine your long-term and short-term goals? How have you responded to unanticipated difficulties that arose in carrying out your plan?
3. Tell me about the period of time when work has been most hectic. What did you do to keep it under control? What led to your being pressed for time? Have you been able to take steps to avoid this situation in the future?
4. What systematic processes or tools have you used to plan, organize, and monitor/control a project? How effective have those tools/approaches been? Why or why not?

Interpersonal skills

1. Describe a time when you had to build a relationship with someone whom you really didn't like. How did you do this?
2. Describe the kind of network you have laterally within the organization. What kind of energy do you invest in this?
3. Describe a time when you observed that opposing views of a situation were causing problems. What did you do?
4. Give me an example of how you've been able to get different groups to talk to each other. What was gained?

Judgment/Decision Making

1. Give me two examples of good decisions you have made in the last 6 months. Why were they good decisions? What were the alternatives? Did anyone disagree with you? Why?
2. Describe a time when you involved subordinates in an important decision. To what extent did you involve them? What alternatives did you consider? What was the outcome?
3. What kind of decisions do you make rapidly, and on which ones do you take more time? Please give specific examples and describe the steps you followed in making decisions.

Drive for Results

1. What are the standards for success in your job? What have you done to meet these standards?
2. In which areas would you like to develop yourself further?
3. What was the most difficult task or project you have been assigned? What made it so difficult? How did you go about performing it and making adjustments to unforeseen problems? How long before or after your deadline did you get it done?
4. Describe your best achievement and how you accomplished it. Tell me about the obstacles you encountered, the effort you put in, and the end result.

Initiative

1. What have you done recently that was beyond the call of your normal duties? Please describe the assignment or project in detail. How did you contribute? How successful were you?
2. Tell me about a new policy or idea you recently implemented which was considerably different from standard procedure. Describe the approach you used to gain cooperation, the guidelines that got in the way, and the outcome.
3. Have you found any new ways to make your subordinates' jobs more rewarding? Please describe the methods you used, employees' reactions, and the outcomes.

Problem Solving/Analytical Skills

1. When was the last time you made a decision or solved a problem which required a lot of hard thinking and careful analysis on your part? What alternative solutions did you consider? Why? What additional information would you like to have had before deciding? Describe the outcome, including particular difficulties you had to overcome.
2. What problems are you currently working on that came as a surprise to you? How much advance notice did you have? Why? What steps did you take? What is the current status?
3. Describe the time you were most resourceful in solving some problem or in coming up with an improvement. Where did your ideas originate? How and with whom did you check your ideas as you proceeded? What was the result?

People Management

1. Tell me about some of the people who have become successful as a result of your management techniques. What was your role in their development?
2. Do subordinates participate in decisions you make? If yes, give specific examples of their input. Do you encourage participation? How? What role do you play in facilitating participation?
3. What methods do you use to monitor performance? How do you keep up-to-date on changes in your management skills?
4. Describe your style of supervision. Tell me about a time that you were disappointed in the results of your supervision.

Cooperation and Collaboration

1. Tell me about a time when you had a choice of whether to go through formal or through informal channels in order to get something done. Which way did you go, and why?
2. As a team leader, what can be done to bring out individuals who are reluctant to contribute? Give an example of this.
3. Describe a time when you were involved in re-structuring an organization to take advantage of workforce capabilities.
4. Give me an example of a time when you worked with other managers to achieve a larger organizational objective. What was most important in working together well?

Critical Thinking

1. Describe a time when you helped someone else tackle the analysis of a difficult problem. How did you go about this?
2. Describe a time when you were able to solve a short-term problem but not the long-term consequences. What were the issues?
3. Describe an opportunity you had to conduct an analysis involving complex and ambiguous information and then produce a report with recommendations.
4. Tell me about a difficult decision you had to make recently. Which way did you go, and why?

Leadership Potential

1. Tell me about a team you helped build. What was important to you in doing that?
2. Tell me about a time when you felt it was important to challenge or question an existing way of doing things. What was your approach in presenting your ideas; what did you actually say and do?
3. Tell me about your level and range of responsibility for overseeing one or more administrative functions within your department.
4. Describe how you see your role in terms of setting direction vs. getting involved in the day-to-day work. Then, give an example to show me how you do this.

Management Skills

1. Describe how you have set performance expectations for your staff. How have you made these clear and how have reinforced them during the year?
2. Tell me about a time when you switched someone's role around to better suite their strengths, or to better serve the unit.
3. Give me an example of how you have capitalized on the talent that exists within your team.
4. Tell me about a time when you got others involved with the decision-making process within your group.

Teamwork

1. Describe a time when you turned over the decision-making process to members of a team you were leading. How did they react, how good were their decisions?
2. Think of a time when it was essential to align the efforts of a variety of contributors. What objectives were sought?
3. How do you go about encouraging involvement from all members of the team when some members don't take ownership?
4. Tell me about a time when you revitalized a stagnant team.

Influencing Others

1. Tell me about a time when you helped someone on your staff develop their influencing skills through a key assignment. How did you provide this help?
2. Tell me about a change you introduced that was not immediately popular. What did you do to win acceptance of the change by others?
3. Tell me about an opportunity you took to bring people together to accomplish what you thought was an important goal.
4. Think of a situation in which you felt that the best way to gain support for your position was to take a logical approach. (follow-up question) Think of a time when the best way to gain support was.

ADMINISTRATIVE / SUPPORT STAFF

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

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Work Experience

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2. Tell me about your primary job challenges.
3. What was the most difficult aspect of your last job?
4. What would you like to do more of in your current (last) position? Less?
5. Tell me about your best (worst) boss.
6. Why are you seeking other employment?

Technical/Functional Skills

1. What experience, skills or education do you consider most helpful in contributing to your success on the job?
2. Describe the tasks you typically perform in your position. On which of these do you feel particularly competent? Why? Which is your weakest area? Why?
3. Describe the content of your last performance appraisal. What were you praised for? What was the developmental plan for your performance?

Education

1. Why did you choose the college/trade school you attended?
2. What determined your choice of major?
3. What were your best and worst subjects? Please describe them.
4. Do you have any skills or knowledge not evident from your school record? Please describe.
5. What accomplishments do you feel proudest of at school? Please describe them.
6. What were your long-term and short-term goals upon leaving school?
7. Describe any new ideas or suggestions you developed while at school.
8. Give me an example of when you did more than required in a course. What promoted you to put in extra effort?
9. What were your extracurricular activities? Why did you choose those activities?

Communication/Language Skills

1. Tell me about the most complicated message you have had to communicate to someone on the job. How was it complicated? What did you do to ensure that the message was understood? How successful were you in communicating what you intended?
2. What different approaches do you use in talking with different people? Please give some recent examples.
3. What kind of standard reporting do you perform in your current position? Who receives these reports? Describe the content, frequency and format of the reports. What is your role in preparing the reports?
4. What were some of your most difficult writing assignments? Please describe the assignments, the problems you encountered and the outcome.

Planning/Organizing

1. Describe your workload on a typical day. How do you decide which tasks to work on and when? How much of your day do you spend actually working on those tasks? How do you deal with competing demands?
2. Describe a recent assignment or project which required you to take care of the greatest number of details. What were the important details? What steps did you take to ensure attention to all details? How do you feel about detail-oriented work?
3. Tell me about a time when you were unexpectedly requested to provide important information to someone immediately. Were you able to provide the information; how often does this situation arise?
4. How do you determine your long-term and short-term goals? What unanticipated difficulties arose in carrying out your plan?
5. Tell me about the period of time when work has been the most hectic. What did you do to keep it under control? What led to your being pressed for time? What steps would you take to avoid this situation in the future?

Multi-Tasking:

1. Do you prefer to handle one task at a time or several?
2. Give me an example of a time when you had to juggle several things at once. How often did this type of thing happen? How did you handle the situation?
3. Tell me about a time when you were responsible for coordinating several tasks for several different managers?
4. In your current (last) position, how do you deal with changing priorities, delays, or crises? Are you able to work well in this environment? What have you done in the past?

Creativity/Innovativeness

1. Can you describe some innovative things you have done in your present position? What action did you take to implement these things? Did anyone encourage you? Who and how?
2. Describe a time when you had a good idea and had to persuade your supervisor to accept it. What was the idea? How did you present it to your supervisor? What did your supervisor find difficult to accept? What was the outcome?
3. Can you think of a situation you had to handle in which old solutions didn't work? What did you do to handle it? What role did you play? What was the end result?

Interpersonal Skills

1. Think of the most upset person you've had to deal with lately (a co-worker, client, other). Describe how the problem came to your attention, and how you handled it.
2. If I were to ask your co-workers or superior, what two positive things would they say about you? What complaint would they have?
3. On what projects was it important for you to coordinate with another functional unit or an outside organization? Please describe the project, the steps you took to facilitate cooperation and the outcome.

Thinking/Decision Making

1. Describe the decisions you make on your own. How long have you been making those decisions? Who has given you the authority to make those decisions?
2. Give me two examples of good decisions you have made in the last six months. Why were they good decisions? What were the alternatives? Did anyone disagree with you?
3. What kind of decisions do you make rapidly, and on which ones do you take more time? Please give specific examples and describe the steps you follow in making decisions.

Self-Management

1. What are the standards for success in your job? What have you done to meet these standards?
2. Give me an example of a time when your supervisor or others in your work group placed excessive demands on you. What did they want? What did you do?
3. What was the most difficult task or project you have been assigned? What made it so difficult? How did you go about performing it and making adjustments to unforeseen problems? How long before or after your deadline did you get it done?
4. Describe your best achievement and how you accomplished it. Tell me about the obstacles you encountered, the effort you put in, and the end result.

Initiative

1. What have you done recently beyond the call of your normal duties? Please describe the assignment or project in detail. In what ways did you contribute? How successful were you on it?
2. Describe a time when you implemented a procedure to help make your job run more smoothly. What was the procedure? How did you go about organizing it? What was the reaction of your boss?
3. Describe a time when you didn't adhere to the proper rules, regulations or policies. What led to the decision? What steps did you take in working through the situation? How often does this type of situation occur? What was the outcome?

Problem Solving/Analytical Skills

1. Describe a recent problem that you couldn't solve on your own. What did you do? Who did you consult with? What was the outcome?
2. What problems are you currently working on that came as a surprise to you? How much advance notice did you have of the problems? Why? What steps did you take after you identified problem? What was the outcome?
3. Describe the time you were most resourceful in solving some problem or in coming up with an improvement. Where did your ideas originate? How and with whom did you check your ideas as you proceeded? What was the result?

Team Work / Collaboration

1. If you were given a choice, would you prefer working alone, or on a team? Why?
2. Working on a team can be quite different than working independently. Give me an example from your experience to illustrate this.
3. Give me an example of a time when you had to work with a group of people you didn't know very well. How did it go?
4. Tell me about a time when you had to build a relationship with someone very different from yourself. What was easy, and what was hard?

Service Orientation

1. Tell me about a service request you received recently, and how you handled it.
2. Give an example of a time when you ask questions to find out more about what someone needed.
3. Tell me about a time when you went out of your way to make sure a customer's service inquiry was handled right.
4. Describe a time when a customer asked for something you couldn't help them with. What did you do?