

Interview Questions

Invest more time on the front end to eliminate a lot of heartache in the middle and on the back end!

High-Level Questions For Phone Interviews

- 1 Walk me through your resume from the bottom to the top. For each position, tell me your key duties and accomplishments and also the circumstances surrounding your departure when you left each position. (You want to understand if the departure was voluntary or involuntary and what the reasons were in either case.)
- 2 Why are you considering leaving your current position? (If currently employed.)
- 3 Other than ongoing growth and challenge, what are you hoping to find in a new position?
- 4 What prompted you to apply for this opening?
- 5 What salary range are you expecting/needing for this position?

General

- 1 Why have you applied for this position?
- 2 What skills do you have that would make you the best candidate?
- 3 What kind of things do you feel most confident doing?
- 4 What are some of the strengths you utilize in your current work that can help you in this position?
- 5 What qualities do people admire in you?
- 6 Tell me about your last job. Why did you choose it? What three responsibilities did you enjoy the most in your last job? Why did you want to leave?
- 7 If you are the one we choose to fill this position, how would you expect to be different after a year in this position?
- 8 Why should we choose you?
- 9 Based on your current level of knowledge about this position, describe your level of interest. (The strength of their response to this is critical.)
- 10 What do you know about our company?
- 11 What questions would you like to ask me?

Organizational Success

Goals/Dreams

- 12 What are the things you like to do the most in your spare time?
- 13 What is the most interesting thing you have done in the past year?
- 14 Who are your heroes and why?
- 15 In what areas would you like to develop further? What are your plans to do that?
- 16 Review your accomplishments over the past five years. What do you think are the main qualities, characteristics, and strengths that enabled you to do well?
- 17 What personal and professional achievements are you most proud of and why?
- 18 What are your most important personal goals away from the office?
- 19 What are your most important professional goals?

Needs from Management

- 20 Describe the perfect supervisor. Describe the worst supervisor you ever worked for.
- 21 Describe your last/present supervisor. What did you like/dislike about him or her?
- 22 If I picked up the phone and called your last supervisor, what would he/she say about you?
- 23 When you take on a new project, do you like to have lots of guidance and feedback up front, or do you prefer to try your own approach?

Commitment to Continuous Quality/Process Improvement

- 24 Tell me about a suggestion you made to improve the way job processes/operations worked. What was the result?
- 25 What were your most significant accomplishments in your last/current position?
- 26 Tell me three things you think would delight our customers the most.
- 27 What's the coolest thing that happened to you as a customer?
- 28 Describe the nicest compliment you've received and why you received it.
- 29 What have you been criticized for?

Teamwork/Cooperation

- 30 Gaining the cooperation of others can be difficult. Give a specific example of when you had to do that, and what challenges you faced. What was the outcome? What was the long-term impact on your ability to work with this person?
- 31 What kinds of people do you not enjoy working with?
- 32 Tell me about a time when you were responsible for completing a team project. Explain how you determined who would be responsible for each task.

Creativity/Innovation

- 33 Describe a time when you came up with a creative solution to a problem.
- 34 Give me an example of a time when you had an unusual idea that worked well.
- 35 Describe the most creative work-related project you have completed.

Flexibility/Adaptability to Change

- 36 What do you do when priorities change quickly? Give me one example when this happened?
- 37 Tell me about a specific time when you were given new information that affected a decision you had already made?
- 38 Describe a significant change in your job responsibilities and the steps you took to manage the transition smoothly.
- 39 Tell me about a situation when you abruptly had to change what you were doing.
- 40 Tell me about a time when you worked on a project that did not turn out well. How did you handle that?

Continuous Learning/Development

- 41 Describe a decision you made or a situation you would have handled differently if you had to do it over again?
- 42 Tell me about a recent experience you would describe as a real learning experience. What did you learn?
- 43 What new skills have you learned in the past 12 months? What would you like to learn in the next year?
- 44 What have you accomplished that is unusual?
- 45 What are you willing to do to be successful in the future you haven't been willing to do in the past?
- 46 What personal development books have you read lately?

Displays Vision

- 47 Tell me about a time when you anticipated the future and made changes to current responsibilities/operations to meet future needs.

Leadership/Initiative

- 48 What are three effective leadership qualities you think are important. How have you demonstrated these qualities?
- 49 Describe a leadership situation you would handle differently if you had to do it over again.
- 50 Tell me about a project you initiated.
- 51 How have you handled a situation when you needed to "correct" your boss?
- 52 Describe a project or idea that initially met resistance, but you were able to "sell" to others and implement.

Making People Matter

Interpersonal Skills

- 53 Tell me about the most difficult challenge you faced in trying to work cooperatively with someone who did not share the same ideas. What was your role in achieving the work objective?
- 54 Tell me about a time you had adapted your style in order to work effectively with those who were different from you?
- 55 Tell me about a time when you disagreed with others in a group about something important, but were able to work with them to reach a consensus you felt was a good one.
- 56 Describe a time when you felt it necessary to modify or change your actions in order to respond to the needs of another person.
- 57 Tell me about the most difficult co-worker with whom you have ever had to work. What actions did you take that proved helpful? What did you find made things worse? What would you do differently if you were faced with a similar situation in the future?

Honesty/Fairness

- 58 Tell me about a tough decision you made. What steps, thought processes, and considerations did you take to make an objective decision?
- 59 Describe a sensitive situation in which you were able to guide your actions by your understanding of others' individual needs or values.
- 60 Have you ever experienced a personal loss from doing what is right?
- 61 In what business situations do you feel honesty would be inappropriate?
- 62 When was the last time you "broke" the rules and what did you do?

Recognizes Others' Achievements/Contributions

- 63 What consistent methods do you use to ensure staff feels valued for their contributions?

Positive Attitude

- 64 What three specific things about your last job gave you the most satisfaction? Why?
- 65 Give me an example of a time when you were told or you discovered for yourself you were having a problem doing a job. How did you correct the situation?
- 66 Tell me about a work situation that bugged you.
- 67 What things do you find the most frustrating and how do you handle them?

Job Effectiveness

Planning/Organization

- 68 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?
- 69 Describe how you handled a request to take on an exciting new project you really wanted to do at a time when you already had more to do than you could do well.

Problem Solving/Judgment

- 70 Tell me about a specific time when you eliminated or avoided a potential problem before it happened?
- 71 What types of problems do you most enjoy tackling? What did you enjoy about them?
- 72 What was the most difficult decision you made in the last six months and how did you go about making your decision?
- 73 Describe a problem you confronted without success. If you could go back in time, how would you handle it differently?
- 74 Give an example of the most significant problem you have faced and solved at work. Describe the process you used to find a solution.
- 75 Describe a situation when you were faced with making a decision that involved important conflicting needs between an individual and your employer and explain how you handled it.

Makes Effective Decisions

- 76 Tell me about an experience in which you had a limited amount of time to make a difficult decision. What was the decision and the outcome/result of your decision?
- 77 Describe a situation when you were asked to meet two different deadlines given to you by two different managers and you could not do both. How did you handle this?

Sales Skills

- 78 Let's say you're attending your spouse's company holiday party and you don't know a single person there. Do you spend most of the evening talking with your spouse or do you mingle with other people? If you mingle with other people, what do you say? How do you initiate a conversation?
- 79 If I asked you to walk up to someone who was standing on a street corner reading a newspaper and interview them about their views on retirement planning, how would you go about starting and completing that conversation?
- 80 Do you prefer selling in person or over the phone?
- 81 If you have a choice between communicating with a phone call or an email, both being acceptable during the circumstance, which would you prefer?

- 82 In the ideal sales situation, what percentage of the time do you spend listening and what percentage talking?
- 83 Is it more important to be respected or to be liked as a salesperson?
- 84 If you had a product or service that could benefit your family and friends, would you sell it to them?
- 85 Give me an example of a situation where a salesperson approached you about buying a product or service and you were very impressed with how he or she tried to sell you. Describe the sales approach and why you thought it was good.
- 86 How would you describe your selling style? Transaction oriented? Consultative? Relationship? Needs-based?
- 87 Give me an example of how you followed up on a sale that went above and beyond the call of duty.
- 88 Is there a certain amount of income you would like to make that would allow you to say, "If I could just make X then I'd be happy with my financial situation?"

CAUTION: DON'T ASK

The following topics are either illegal, unethical, or in poor taste. Stay far away from these topics.

- 1 Race, ethnicity, country of origin
- 2 Religion
- 3 Sex, gender identity or sexual orientation
- 4 Marital status
- 5 Number of children or pregnancy status
- 6 Age
- 7 Medical history or disability
- 8 Alcohol consumption
- 9 Dating status
- 10 Graduation dates
- 11 Political beliefs

Examples of troublesome questions that could either be illegal or lead you into a gray area include:

- 1 "Are you married?"
- 2 "Have you ever been divorced?"
- 3 "What church do you go to?"
- 4 "Do you have any children? What kind of child care arrangements have you made?"

- 5 “Will you be starting a family any time soon?”
- 6 “Your name is very different. Where are you originally from?”
- 7 “Did you take any sick days or medical leave last year?”
- 8 “What year did you graduate college?”
- 9 “Do you have any plans that might interfere with your ability to work full time over the next year?”
- 10 “I see you graduated from high school in (year) – do you plan on retiring soon?”
- 11 “Since you have kids, will travel be a problem?”
- 12 “How long do you plan to work until you retire?”
- 13 “If you’re a mother, will you have to leave every day to pick up kids from school?”

