

## 200+ sample behavioral interview questions

Questions organized by the following 32 competencies:

1. Adaptability/Flexibility
2. Ambition
3. Building Relationships
4. Caution
5. Communication
6. Conflict Management
7. Creativity/Innovation
8. Customer Orientation
9. Decision Making
10. Delegation
11. Detail Orientation
12. Employee Development
13. Initiative
14. Integrity
15. Judgment
16. Leadership
17. Leading Change
18. Listening
19. Motivating Others
20. Negotiating
21. Performance Management
22. Persuasion
23. Presentations
24. Prioritization/Project Management
25. Problem Solving
26. Sales
27. Self-improvement
28. Setting Goals
29. Strategic Thinking
30. Stress Management
31. Teamwork
32. Values Diversity

### 1. Adaptability/Flexibility

- Tell me about a time when things changed radically for you at work. How did you navigate that change?
- Describe a time when changes have been implemented at work without your input or control. How did you manage it?
- When a challenging situation arises at work, what steps do you take to work through it?
- Tell me about a time when priorities shifted without warning for you at work. How did you respond?
- Describe a time when you were handed one assignment, but ended up completing something different. What happened?
- Tell me about a time when you had to shift your style when it wasn't having the impact you intended.
- Describe a project you led or assignment you had where an obstacle got in the way of successful completion. What was the obstacle and how did you address it?
- How well are you able to maintain your composure in stressful circumstances? Please give an example.
- When you've had personal challenges come up in the past, how do you keep them from interfering with your ability to concentrate at work?
- What was your most recent professional learning experience? Please be specific.

- Describe a time when you took personal responsibility for a mistake. What was the mistake and how did you respond to fix it?
- When you've gotten constructive feedback on your work in the past, how did you react? Tell us about a specific instance.
- Describe the most stressful, high-pressure situation you've been in at work. How did you navigate it?
- In the last year, how have you become better at your job?
- In the past, when you've realized you've made a mistake, what steps have you taken to correct it? Please give an example.
- When you have multiple assignments or projects going at once, how do you keep track of them?
- Describe a work crisis that you helped manage through.
- How have you reacted to consistent change in past work experiences? What do you like about change and what can be challenging for you?
- When you've encountered obstacles in your career, how have you dealt with them?
- Tell me about a big disappointment that happened in the course of your career. Please be specific.
- When you've been in competitive situations in the past at work, how have you dealt with it?

## **2. Ambition**

- Describe a challenging project you've taken on that pushed you to not only work hard, but come up with new and different solutions.
- Describe a project you worked on that necessitated both initiative and advocacy for your process or ideas.
- How do you keep yourself up to date on changes in this industry? How do you integrate those new changes into your work as they arise?
- The ability to work independently is an important component of this role. Describe a time when you relied on your own expertise and abilities, asking for help as needed, to effectively complete a project.
- How does competition influence your work? Describe a time when competition played a role in your work life and how you responded to it.
- Describe a risky decision you made at work. Why was it risky and what was the ultimate outcome of that decision?
- Tell me about a unique situation that pushed you to work both harder and differently than you had before in order to achieve success.
- Tell me about the hardest parts of your last role. How did you navigate them to find success?
- Describe a project you decided to start on your own. What factors led you to begin it?
- Describe steps you've taken to make yourself more effective in your field.

## **3. Building Relationships**

- When you think about building long-lasting business relationships, what do you think are the critical components of that process? What is a specific example of a relationship you've cultivated over time?
- Tell me about the most challenging relationship you've had at work. What made it hard? How did you work to make things better? What was the ultimate result?
- Sometimes, not everyone on a team can work effectively together. Tell me about a time when you struggled to build a relationship with someone on your team and how you navigated that situation.
- Describe a challenging situation that demanded you build rapport with someone quickly.

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- Sometimes in this role you'll encounter dissatisfied or even angry customers. Tell me about a time when this happened to you in a previous role. How did you handle it? Who else, if anyone, did you involve in resolving the situation? What was the ultimate resolution?
- What do you think are the 3 to 5 most important steps to establishing a relationship and building credibility with a new team or team member?

## 4. Caution

- If guidelines, expectations, or rules aren't clear, how do you react? Tell me about a situation where this came up and how you navigated it.
- Have you ever had an experience in your career where you initiated something too quickly, without proper checks and balances? If so, please describe the situation and how you handled it.

## 5. Communication

### Communication effectiveness:

- Tell me about a time when you read between the lines and were able to shift your behavior based on what the other person needed from you or the situation.
- Strong relationships depend on strong communication. Tell me about a time when you were able to communicate effectively and it consequently made a work relationship stronger. How did the way you communicate play a role in strengthening the relationship?
- If a bit of information will directly impact your team's day-to-day lives, what method do you use to keep them informed?
- How informed does your current (or most recent) manager want to be about what your team is working on? How do you make sure that information is communicated effectively?
- Give an example of a time when your ability to communicate effectively helped you get an important point both made and understood.
- Describe a time when you had to communicate a strongly felt belief or opinion to your team.
- Describe a time when you were the only person with a particular opinion and had to advocate for it within your team or with your manager.

### Verbal communication:

- Tell me about a time when you pitched an idea to your colleagues or manager. What was the idea? How did your pitch turn out? Why did it turn out that way?
- When presenting complex information to someone or a group of people, how do you confirm understanding?
- How would you rate your verbal communication skills on a scale of 1 to 5? What have you done to improve them, and what else do you think could still be helpful?
- When preparing for a presentation, what steps do you take? Give an example, illustrating things that helped you prepare and obstacles you encountered plus how you addressed them.
- Tell us about an important or high-stakes meeting you facilitated, presentation you gave, or report you presented.

### Written communication:

- How have you used written communication to persuade others?
- Describe the type of written communication you most often use (email, presentations, etc.). Which type is most challenging? Why?
- When you have a communication to write, how do you prepare for it?
- Tell me about a time when you used written communication to convey an important message.

## Difficult communication:

- When you haven't communicated well in the past, how did you work to make the situation better? Please describe a specific scenario.
- When you have a challenging idea or bit of feedback to share with someone in a leadership position, how do you do it? Please describe a specific scenario.
- Describe a time when you communicated effectively at work with someone who you didn't like or who didn't like you.
- When you've encountered communication challenges with other teams at your company, why have they come up?
- When do you find communication most challenging at work? Give an example of what you've done in the past to address this.
- If an intricate technology problem comes up and you have to explain it to someone who isn't versed in technical language, what do you do?
- Describe a situation where you and your manager didn't see eye to eye on an issue, but you still managed to help him or her see your point of view.

## **6. Conflict Management**

- Tell me about a circumstance when conflict happened and you took both initiative and responsibility, reaching out to the other party to repair the relationship.
- Give an example of a time when you disagreed with your direct supervisor and what you did to resolve the disagreement.
- Tell me about when you last had to leverage your conflict management skills.
- Tell me about when you last had to enter into conflict with someone. Please be specific.
- Have you ever worked at a company where a decision made at the top negatively impacted employees' lives? How did you help your team navigate this situation?
- Describe your comfort with conflict. When you need to enter into necessary conflict, how do you do it?
- In your role, or a role you've held in the past, have you been forced to make a decision that was unpopular with the rest of your team? If so, please describe the circumstances and ultimate outcome.
- Describe your biggest communication shortcoming. How has it played out in the past with your team, colleagues, or manager and what have you done to try to improve it?
- If you find yourself in conflict with a colleague, how do you handle it? Please give an example.
- When your coping skills are tested, what do you do?
- When you've had to help two employees navigate a conflict, how did you do it? What solution did you come up with? Please be specific.
- Describe a time when you directly confronted the source of a conflict. How was trust between the two of you impacted?
- Tell me about a time when you encountered a particularly challenging relationship with a colleague or employee. How did you navigate the situation?
- Describe a time when finding common ground with someone led to the diffusion of conflict.
- Describe a time when you had to remain calm on the outside in order to effectively address a situation when, on the inside, you were highly emotional.
- Describe a time when you successfully worked beside a challenging colleague or team member.
- When working to resolve challenges with someone, talk about how you're able to separate the person from the challenge. If you struggle with this, how have you worked to get better?
- In collaborative projects you've worked on, tell me about a time when communication was especially muddy or collaboration was weak. What role did you play in getting things back on track? Please be specific.

- When an employee brings a challenge he or she is having to you, how do you respond?
- How have you recognized that problems existed, either between departments, teammates, or peers? How did you handle them once you realized they were there?
- If something comes up during a meeting you're leading that throws you off course, how do you handle it?

## 7. Creativity/Innovation

- When innovation has been needed on a project, how do you go about making sure it happens?
- Tell me about the most creative solution you've come up with to address a roadblock or team/client challenge.
- What is the biggest risk you've taken at work? Why did you take it? How did it turn out?
- What new approaches to old ways of doing things have you developed during your career? How did they go over? Give one example.
- Tell me about a time when you solved a problem by using an unconventional method. What was the problem and how did you solve it?
- Tell me about a time when you proposed a solution that you believed would improve a specific operation or process at work. Was your idea implemented? If so, what impact did it have? If not, why wasn't it implemented?
- Tell me about a job you had that required consistent creative thinking.
- What creative ideas have you had, whether or not they were implemented?
- When you've developed new and creative procedures in the past, describe your process for getting them both generated and off the ground. Please give a specific example.

## 8. Customer Orientation

- When you encounter an angry or dissatisfied customer, what steps do you take to find resolution?
- In your experience, what are the most successful ways to build long-lasting and trusting relationships with customers? Please give an example.
- Describe two concrete things you've done to enhance your relationships with customers.

## 9. Decision Making

### Quick/critical decision making:

- Tell me about a critical decision you've made at work in the last year. What was the decision and what factors came into play while making it?
- Describe a time when you had to make a rapid decision. What was the decision? How did you ensure that it was made quickly?
- When you don't have enough information but are asked to make a quick decision, how do you proceed?
- If policies and procedures were not in place to help you make a critical decision, how would you proceed? Please give an example (if you have one) of when this has happened in the past.
- When working with a challenging customer, how do you decide what approach to take?
- When crucial decisions need to be made, please describe the process you go through when making them.
- In the last 12 months, what was the most challenging professional decision you made? What made it challenging?

### Evaluating alternatives

- When you're faced with several paths of action, how do you choose which path to go down? What factors weigh most on your decision and which weigh least?

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- What are the three most significant decisions you've made in the course of your career? What made them significant?
- When you think about decisions you have trouble making, what commonalities do you see among them? Why are they difficult for you?

## General decision making:

- When you've made decisions in the past, when do you know it's time to involve other people in the process? Please give an example.
- Describe a time when you made a bad decision at work. What decision did you make? How did it impact the team/client? What did you do to rectify the situation?
- If a decision needs to be made but isn't time sensitive, how long does it usually take you to arrive at that decision? Please give an example of a decision you made relatively quickly versus one that took you longer.
- How can you tell if a decision you made was effective?
- Describe a decision you made that others were opposed to, but you believed was the right way to proceed.
- Describe your comfort level leading technical projects. If you enter unfamiliar territory, how do you ensure that you make effective decisions?

## **10. Delegation**

- When you need to delegate work, how do you decide what work can be delegated and what work cannot?
- When you decide to delegate work, what's your process to determine who will receive what work?
- Tell me about a time when delegating work enhanced the project outcome and about another time when it backfired.

## **11. Detail Orientation**

- Would you describe yourself as a details person or a big-picture person? Describe a situation that best demonstrates your style.
- Describe the level of attention to detail required by your previous jobs. Please give an example.
- Please describe two situations: one where attention to detail wasn't important in completing a project successfully and one where attention to detail was critical to success.

## **12. Employee Development**

- Please tell me about your experience developing employee or peer training programs.
- What experience do you have coaching team members to learn new skills? Please describe your approach to coaching/teaching.
- How do you set expectations when giving an employee a new assignment?
- Describe how you've worked with your team to ensure that they're developing professionally. Please be specific.
- Tell me about a time when you made a hiring mistake. When did you realize you'd made the mistake? What action did you take to try to make the situation better? What was the ultimate resolution?
- Describe the best hire you ever made. Please be specific.

## **13. Initiative**

- Describe when you had to take more initiative than usual, and even go outside the expectations of your role, to deliver outstanding results to a client.
- When have you had to take action without a directive from your manager? Please describe both the situation and the ultimate resolution.

- Describe a good idea you had that you were able to turn into a project for your team/company.
- Describe a time when you were able to see a potential roadblock with a project and led the team toward a different outcome.
- Tell me about the workflow in your current, or previous, role. How do/did you know what to work on each day?
- How were you able to impact change in your most recent role?
- About what are you most passionate?
- Describe when you had to take more initiative than usual, and even go outside the expectations of your role, to complete a project you initiated.

## 14. Integrity

- When you've been asked to keep information confidential in the past, how do you ensure that the information stays private, even though it may impact close colleagues or team members?
- How has integrity played a role in your work life? Please give a specific example.
- If your trustworthiness has been questioned in the past, please describe the situation and what you did to address it.
- If you find out about someone behaving dishonestly on your team, how would you/have you handled it?
- Describe a time when you had to directly confront someone who was acting unethically. How did you prepare for the conversation? How did the conversation go? What was the outcome of the situation?
- Describe a time when you made the conscious choice to trust someone on your team or at your company. About what did you choose to trust them? How did trusting them effect the situation?

## 15. Judgment

- When you've had to rely on your self-control at work, what happened? How did you handle it?
- Describe a time when you had to come to a decision quickly.
- For the position you're interviewing for, what do you think are the most important qualities and qualifications in someone we hire?
- Describe a time when you've been privy to highly sensitive information. How did you ensure that you kept it confidential? If you were encouraged by others to share the information, how did you respond?
- Describe a situation where workplace politics came into play. How did you navigate it to maximize the result for your client or team?

## 16. Leadership

- Describe your management style. Please give an example that illustrates it best.
- What tactics have you used to build motivation within your team? Give an example.
- If you're working on a team with other people whose work styles are markedly different from yours and each others, how would you navigate it? If you have a real-world example to share, please do.
- Describe a time when you had to get buy-in on an idea from a challenging group. How did you navigate the situation? What ultimately happened to your idea?
- How does your everyday work tie into the overall mission of your organization? How do you get your team to see that connection?
- Tell me about the influence you had on both clients and team in your previous role.
- What was the most challenging decision you've had to make as a leader?

## 17. Leading Change

- When introducing a policy or procedure shift to your team, how do you prepare? How do you conduct the meeting?
- When you've encountered resistance to change within your team, how have you handled it?
- Please describe a time when you helped one of your employees accept change and move on to find success. What process did you follow and how did it turn out?
- When implementing a new procedure at work, how do you ensure both compliance and understanding? Walk me through your process and a relevant example.

## 18. Listening

- When you're actively listening to someone, how do you demonstrate it to them?
- Describe a time when not listening well got you into a tough spot.
- How much of your success in your role depends on your ability to gather and act on information collected from other people? When has this proved difficult for you in the past?
- In what situations is listening especially important in your role? Give an example.

## 19. Motivating Others

- When a team member's work is exceptional, how do you recognize him or her?
- What is your strategy for getting a high standard of work from your team?
- If you've had the chance to manage cross-functional teams, what has been your strategy to ensure successful outcomes?
- What tactics have you used to build motivation within your team? Give an example.

## 20. Negotiating

- Tell me about a situation you found yourself in at work where you had to negotiate. How did you prepare for the negotiation? What were the results for everyone involved? Why do you think things turned out that way?
- What is the most challenging part of negotiation for you?
- What is the most exciting/easiest part of negotiation for you?

## 21. Performance Management

### Skill development:

- When you've supported someone's success at work, how have you done it? Please give a specific example.
- When one of your team members is struggling and not submitting his or her best work, how do you handle it?
- How do you develop new skills within your team?
- Describe a time when you were able to support a colleague in improving his or her work.
- Tell me about how you've approached staff development on your team.

### Performance evaluations & development plans:

- Talk me through your process in filling out and delivering performance evaluations.
- Please describe a difficult evaluation you delivered and also one for an employee who was doing exceptionally well.
- When writing performance reviews, from where do you pull your data and notes on employee progress?
- Describe a development plan you worked on with a team member. Please outline the reason for the plan, your approach to working on it, and what the resolution turned out to be.
- Describe a specific time when you had to document and address employee behavior.



## Feedback:

- With what frequency do you discuss an employee's performance? Why does that schedule work best for your team?
- Describe a specific time when you gave a team member challenging feedback about his or her performance.
- What is your approach to positive feedback? Tell me about how you ensure that your team members know what they're doing right and how to repeat it. Please give an example.

## Goal setting, tracking & expectations:

- When tracking your team's status on a project, how do you gauge their progress?
- Give an example of the expectations you set with your team re: keeping you in the loop on their responsibilities, projects, etc. Also, how do you keep track on your end?
- Describe your most recent goal-setting process. How involved do you invite your team members to be?
- When setting expectations with your team, what process do you follow?
- When you have noticed that one of your team members has consistently struggled to meet goals, what have you done to change the situation?

## **22. Persuasion**

- Tell me a story of when you persuaded someone effectively.
- Tell me about a time when your ability to persuade ended in a successful sale.
- What have you found to be the best tactics when persuading a group of people to accept an idea or new way of doing things?
- When you're working to persuade someone and encounter resistance, how do you go about overcoming it? Please give an example of when you were able to do this effectively.
- How have you used the power of story to persuade someone? Please be specific.
- How have you used data and facts to persuade someone?
- When you've had to use your authority to influence a situation, how did it turn out? Please be specific.

## **23. Presentations**

- When presenting to a group of subject-matter experts, how do you prepare?
- Tell me about a recent presentation you gave. What kind of interaction do you typically have with the audience? What kind of medium do you use (PowerPoint, etc.)?
- Think about a presentation about which you are particularly proud. Talk me through how you prepared for it, any roadblocks that came up, the response from your audience, and any follow-up you did.

## **24. Prioritization/Project Management**

- Tell me about how you prioritize your time so that you're able to effectively complete competing priorities.
- Would you describe yourself as someone who focuses more on the details of a project or the big picture? Describe a situation that illustrates this.
- Describe a situation where getting small details right played a critical role in the success of the overall project.
- If an obstacle comes up that gets in the way of your timeline on a project, how do you respond? Please be specific.
- Describe a successful event that you planned. What was the event and how did you ensure that it came off as expected?
- With what method or tool do you best keep track of time?
- What approach do you take to both planning and executing projects?

- Talk about a time when you had to spend time intentionally planning and organizing yourself before beginning a project. Why does this particular project stand out?
- How do you keep your supervisor updated on the status of your projects so he or she feels confident about your progress?
- In situations where you've stepped up to take on a leadership role, how have you been able to influence the ultimate outcome of a project? Please give an example.
- When you're responsible for developing goals for your team, how do you go about doing so?

## 25. Problem Solving

- When unforeseen obstacles to a project pop up, how do you handle them? Please give an example that illustrates this.
- When working to solve a complex problem, give an example of when good judgment came into play.
- Describe how you solved a significant problem that came up at any stage of your career.
- Talk about a time when you used a unique approach to solve a problem.
- Describe a situation where a problem had the potential to derail a project, but you were able to catch it and mitigate it before it became an issue.
- Describe a time when you were able to come up with several possible solutions to a problem. How did you choose which one to pursue?
- How do you support your team's productivity?
- Tell me about a situation at work where your critical thinking and analytical abilities came into play.
- Describe a project on which you needed to both create and follow a detailed procedure to find success. On what procedure did you settle and how did it ultimately impact the project?
- Both logic and sound judgment are key in problem solving. Tell me about a time when you used both to overcome an obstacle at work.
- Tell me about a time when risk-taking was a necessary part of goal achievement. What risk did you take? How did you decide that the risk was worth it? How did things turn out?
- Detail orientation is a critical part of this role. Please describe a time when precision and close attention to detail played a role in your success with a project.
- This role requires comfort with analyzing data/information and making clear recommendations. Describe, in detail, a time when you did this successfully, including your process and why you came to the conclusions you did.

## 26. Sales

- When you have a new client, what type of preparation do you do to ensure that the first call is successful?
- When you make cold calls to prospective clients, how do you make sure that you're targeting the right audience and are totally prepared? Talk me through your process.
- How have your sales skills developed in the last year?
- Describe the most challenging sales experience you've had. Please be specific and discuss both challenges and what you did to overcome them.
- What have you done to maximize sales in the last year?

## 27. Self-improvement

- Describe the best and most helpful piece of constructive feedback you've received in your career.
- Please list what you consider to be your top three strengths. If I came in to observe you in action at work, how would I see them in play?
- Describe a challenging goal you set over the course of your career. Have you completed it? If not, what progress have you made toward it? Why did you choose the goal in the first place?

- Share with us a time when you didn't measure up to your own standard of performance. What happened and how did you address it?
- Tell me about a time when you decided (or were made) to go along with a decision you felt was not the right one.
- Tell me about a time when you knocked a goal out of the park.
- How do you ensure that you're getting enough constructive feedback to improve your performance?
- If you could improve upon anything professionally, what would it be?

## 28. Setting Goals

- Walk me through a critical goal you set in the past and your process for ultimately meeting or exceeding it.
- When communicating goals to individual team members, what method do you use?
- When you develop goals for your team, who is involved in the process? If others are involved, what roles do they play and why?
- In the past, when you or your team missed hitting a goal, what got in your way?
- What goal are you most proud of meeting or exceeding? How were you able to meet or exceed it?
- Tell me about your most recent quarterly or annual goals. How were your goals tied to the overall success of the company?
- Tell me about your experience both building and executing strategic plans. How did you get your staff on board?

## 29. Strategic Thinking

- When establishing a vision for/with your team, how do you go about it?
- Tell me about the connection between the goals of your current company and the tasks of your everyday job.
- Describe both a long- and short-term goal you had in your most recent position.
- Describe a situation in which you were able to make operational changes in the moment because you identified a future need.
- What experience do you have with making schedules for your employees? What factors do you take into account when making them and how do you plan for the most effective customer experience?

## 30. Stress Management

- If you've worked in a role where tight turnaround times were the norm, how did you handle the constant pressure? Please describe a specific situation.
- How have you reacted in the past when job expectations shifted constantly?
- When you find yourself stressed out at work, what's most likely happening?
- How did you react to the most stressful situation you've found yourself in at work? Please be specific.
- If everyone on your team is overwhelmed, how do you support them to make sure that everything still gets done on time?
- Describe a time when you felt a good balance between work and life. Why did you feel that way? What habits have you been able to form to keep yourself as balanced as possible?

## 31. Teamwork

- What's been your most rewarding team experience? Please be specific.
- Tell me about the best example of effective teamwork in which you've participated.
- Would you call yourself a person who prefers to work as part of a team or do you prefer to work on your own?
- When on a team, what role do you typically play?

- When you need to work closely with someone who frustrates you on a personal or professional level, how do you navigate that situation? Please give an example.
- Tell me about how you personally contribute to fostering a healthy team culture.
- Talk about a time when you worked to resolve conflict with a peer. How did you approach the situation and how did it turn out?
- Describe a situation in which you worked with a dysfunctional team. What led to the dysfunction and how were you able to figure out how to get the project completed successfully?
- Describe a time in a work partnership/collaborative situation when you encountered someone who didn't share your ideas about next steps. How did you find common ground in order to complete the project?
- What contribution to a team project are you most proud of?
- Describe the most challenging situation you've faced while leading a team. What made it challenging? Whom did you involve in remedying it? What approach did you decide on and why? What was the ultimate result?
- What could you have done to be a more effective leader in the past? Please be specific.
- If you've ever gone from being a team leader to a team member, what was the most challenging part of that shift for you?
- Tell me about a time when you compromised or led a team to compromise. Please be specific.
- When leading a group, what process do you go through to earn their trust and get them to follow you?
- Describe a time when you worked closely with a group of people to help them complete a project. Please describe the project, how you supported the group, and what the ultimate outcome of the project was.
- As the leader of a project, what are some of the obstacles you've experienced when working to meet a deadline? What did you do to work around them?
- What kind of experience do you have leading groups of your peers? What parts are you best at? At which parts do you struggle?

## 32. Values Diversity

- On teams you've led in the past, how have you made sure that employees felt free to express a diverse range of opinions?
- Describe your experience adapting to an environment different from your own.
- Describe a circumstance where you were the minority in a group and needed to adapt in order to collaborate.
- Describe a time when you worked collaboratively with someone from another background.
- How would you describe your understanding of the impact diversity (or lack thereof) has on teams and workplace cultures? How have you seen this play out on your team/in your company?
- Describe a time when you helped a new team member or peer feel welcome in a difficult environment.