

# Sample Interview Questions

## SKILL FOCUS: General Questions

- Walk me through your resume and tell me how you decided on each position you've had; what criteria did you use to determine if it was a good fit for you?
- How does your experience relate to the job you're interviewing for?
- What are your strengths?
- How do you like to add value to a team and to an organization?
- How do you learn? What is a skill you learned recently? How did you acquire the new skill?
- What would you consider the most significant accomplishment in your career?
- Tell me about your role and the team involved; why were you chosen?
- What were the actual results achieved?
- When did the project take place and how long did it take?
- What were the 3-4 biggest challenges you faced and how did you deal with them?
- When did you go the extra mile or take initiative?
- Explain your manager's style and whether you liked it.
- What were some of the biggest mistakes you made?
- What aspects of the project did you truly enjoy?
- What aspects did you not especially care about and how did you handle them?
- Why are you open to creating a change now?
- Tell me about a time when you demonstrated dedication to your employer; what did you do?
- What does it mean to be hard working? Give me an example of a time when you were working hard.
- Tell me about an employee who did not meet the job expectations and how you handled it.

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- What do you imagine about the normal workday of this role? What would you most enjoy about that? What would you like least about that?
- Tell me about your normal day. What time do you start work and stop working? What do you do if you have finished your job?
- What do you do to keep your energy level high all day – if you are working 9-12 hours each day?
- What are the ways you keep yourself focused and motivated?
- How do you work with peers in solving problems and holding them accountable? Give me examples.
- Tell me about a time when you had to drop everything to handle an urgent issue.
- Tell me about a time when you had too much work to do in the time available. What did you do?
- Give me an example of a time you and your team accomplished something significant; how did others in the organization recognize the team's contributions? (*Listen for whether the leader promotes their team first or does the leader take all the recognition.*)
- Give me an example of a time you and your team failed to accomplish a goal; what happened? Who fell flat? (*Listen for whether the leader took personal accountability for the failure or put the blame on others.*)
- What does diversity on a team mean to you?
- How often do you currently travel? How often would you like to travel?
- Please explain any gaps on your resume.
- In order to proceed to the next round of interviews, we will be conducting criminal background and credit checks. Is there anything you would like to tell me in advance?
- What software do you have knowledge and proficiency with?
- Using the MS Office suite of software (PowerPoint, Excel, Word), what is your proficiency level in each and examples of how you've used them recently?
- What is your current educational background? High school? AA or undergrad? Graduate degree? Other?
- What is your current total annual compensation? We will be asking for a copy of your 1099 and/or W2 at the next round of interviews, if you proceed. How much was the base salary and how much was the commission? (*Note: There are some states where you are no longer allowed to ask this question; check this for your own state.*)

- Tell me who you talk to when you encounter a problem at work.
- What questions do you have for me?
- What concerns you most when you consider this new role?
- Tell me about a time when you needed to create detailed and clear financial forecasts and reports for the management team.
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to maintain confidentiality and privacy of company and client information.
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to work in a disciplined and organized way to complete tasks and other activities in a timely manner.
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to exhibit maturity and self-control, even in situations involving conflict or stress.
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to treat other people, including those of different backgrounds, beliefs, and gender, with fairness and respect.
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to demonstrate trustworthiness, honesty, and high personal standards in dealings with others.
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to build strong, positive working relationships with manager, peers, and clients and maintain them over time
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to possess a strong attention to detail and deliver high quality work.
- Give me an example of when you approached work activities with a confidence and a positive attitude (e.g. respond to requests in a helpful and constructive manner)?
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to listen carefully to others.
- If I asked your boss for an example of how you listen carefully to others -- take the time to understand and ask questions without interrupting -- what example would your boss give me?
- How do you clearly explain concepts and information so that all can understand regardless of their background in this area?
- Tell me about a presentation you've delivered to a management team where you were clear and organized.

## **SKILL FOCUS: Organization**

- How do you manage your time?
- What systems do you use for making sure you complete important tasks?
- To what extent do you rely on others to keep you organized?
- Tell me about a time when you experienced chaos and dug yourself out.
- How do you organize your paperwork and space?

## **SKILL FOCUS: Professionalism**

- Tell me about a time when you were particularly stressed. How did you cope with it? How did you affect the people around you?
- How do you handle conflict with a colleague? Give me an example.
- What does it look like when you “lose it” at work?
- Tell me about a time when someone made a mistake that had an impact on the team. How did you respond? What do you do if you’re the one who made the mistake?

## **SKILL FOCUS: Customer Service**

- We all have customers – internal and external customers. Give me examples of both that you’ve worked with in past roles.
- Describe a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty to serve a customer.
- How do you handle a person who’s being difficult?
- How do you handle unhappy customers? Give me examples.
- What would the people who report to you say is your worst attribute?

## **SKILL FOCUS: Decision Making**

- Under ideal circumstances, how do you prefer to make decisions? Do you want the bottom line so you can make decisions quickly or do you prefer to analyze your options before deciding?

- What are examples of important decisions you have had to make in your current role?
- Describe your decision-making process. Do you make decisions unilaterally or seek consensus?
- How do you decide what to do, when, and what's a priority?
- When have you made a high-quality decision based on facts and business priorities?

## **SKILL FOCUS: Sales**

- What are your best or most successful techniques for selling?
- What aspects of selling do you enjoy? What do you dislike?
- Tell me how you approached your most recent sale from beginning to end.
- Have you grown a sales organization? If so, how did you do it, what were your results, what metrics did you establish?
- What is your experience of hiring salespeople, motivating and managing them? How many people were on your sales team? What was the turnover?
- Have you built a sales team? Tell me about it. Pros and cons. Lessons learned.
- Talk to me about your experience with sales training. Solutions (relational) versus informational selling.
- Tell me about how you conduct sales team meetings? For example, what is a typical agenda, what topics are covered?
- What is your experience selling to customers internationally?

## **SKILL FOCUS: Professional Development**

- Describe a personal goal you wanted to achieve and the steps you took to achieve it.
- Give me an example of how you have consistently met or exceeded your goals? What time management system do you use for complex goals?
- What's your ideal work environment? How do you create that for yourself?
- What do you do to develop others who work for you?
- Discuss a time when you faced a significant problem at work. How did you solve it?

- Describe a time when you received criticism about your work performance. How did you respond?
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to accept feedback without becoming angry or defensive and use the feedback to strengthen your future performance.
- What are you proudest of?

## SKILL FOCUS: Leadership

- Describe a boss who brought out the best in you. What did he or she do?
- If you were going to tell your boss the best way to manage you, what would you say? What works and what doesn't?
- What's the worst thing a previous supervisor has said about you.

## SKILL FOCUS: Writing

- Describe the types of writing you've done in the past.
- What writing is required in your current position?

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**NEXT ACTION:** *Decide which questions will be asked in the phone screen as “price of admission” for an interview – then which questions will be asked and by whom in each of the next interviews. I suggest for most professional positions you will want a phone screen and two in-person interviews. Include the hiring manager and the team or stakeholders the new hire will be working with most in the interview process.*

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