



HubSpot

50 Common Interview Questions

Plus, 10 bonus questions to
ask the hiring manager!





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Introduction

Interviews can be intimidating, no matter if you're just starting your career or are a veteran job seeker. You're waiting in an office lobby or Zoom waiting room—nerves may have you on edge as you wait for the unknown of what this impending conversation will hold.

An interviewer can only ask so many questions within the time that you have together. Because of this, questions are often layered to give you the opportunity to address question subtext and leave a strong impression. Understanding why your interviewer may be asking some of these common questions can be very beneficial as you prepare for the conversation and form your answers.

Interviewing Tips

01

Keep it natural

Knowing what is expected of you and what questions will be asked of you will help you appear more natural. At the end of the day, a successful interview looks like an authentic conversation between you and the interviewer. Setting the right tone at the start of the interview goes a long way in fostering an impactful, informative discussion. Of course, you want to stay professional—but that doesn't mean you have to be stiff or rigid.

02

Stay positive

Whether you're being asked about an old job that made you miserable or a gap in your skillset, focusing on the good is always the best route to take. What can you highlight that shows your ability to make meaningful contributions?

03

Avoid gimmicks

You might also interpret this as “be honest.” Enthusiasm and confidence are obviously important things to bring to the table during your interview, but so are honesty and authenticity. Steer clear of cliches or cheesy pitches.

04 Focus on what is relevant

You know to study the job description—but while you're doing that, take note of what in your background would naturally transfer. When possible, give [STAR answers](#) (Situation, Task, Action, Result).

05 Don't be afraid to take a pause or ask clarifying questions

These two habits can show the interviewer that you want to give a thoughtful answer. If a brief pause would help you form a strong and relevant answer, just communicate that you would like to take a few seconds to think about the question. On the other hand, if you don't understand what the interviewer is asking, it's perfectly okay to ask that the question be explained or repeated.

06 Practice answers ahead of time

While you don't want to sound overly-rehearsed when you're answering questions, it can be helpful to prepare answers to ensure that you're giving the most relevant information possible. Think ahead on the scenario-based questions you might be asked (e.g., tell me about a time when you had to deal with conflict on the job.), and jot down a few talking points that you want to be sure and touch on.

07 Be confident

There's no room for imposter syndrome here. This is the time to be your own hype-person! Your resume was intriguing enough that the hiring manager wanted to book time with you—now it's time to lean into your skills and contributions.

08 Interviews go two ways

No matter how much you may want the job, you're interviewing them just as much as they're interviewing you. It's important to be authentic in your answers to help both you and the hiring manager determine whether the role is the right fit.

Common Interview Questions

Every interview experience is unique, but generally, there are a few key areas that the conversation will focus on:

01. Who you are and what skills you would bring to the role
02. How you respond to challenges and conflict
03. How you will fit in and/or add to company culture
04. Your professional goals and desired career trajectory

RESOURCE: Interview Prep Checklist

How you choose to prepare for an interview will determine the impression you leave on the hiring manager. Don't miss an important step with this 18-item pre-interview checklist.

[Check it out here.](#)

Getting to Know You

When an interviewer asks questions about you and your personality, they are trying to determine a few things. Will you be a good fit for the company? What would you add to company culture? Do you seem like a good match for the current team?

Tell me about yourself.

One of the most common ways interviewers kick off the conversation is with an open-ended prompt along the lines of "Tell me about yourself." It may be helpful to think about this prompt as a request to pitch yourself. This is your chance to frame your value proposition and really highlight what you're bringing to the table.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I've been working in digital marketing for three years. At my current role, I oversee campaign analysis for several clients and focus on ROAS optimization. Over the course of my career, I've had the opportunity to work on campaigns for clients in all kinds of industries, from cosmetics brands to software companies. I'm known by colleagues for being detail-oriented and a team player. I love using data to help inform creative strategy, which is why I was particularly interested in this digital marketing analyst role at your company."

How would you describe yourself?

When an interviewer asks you to describe yourself, they're seeking details about how your traits and skills match up with the competencies they think are necessary to succeed in the position. Though you have a variety of options when choosing how to respond to this question, the most important thing is to explain why your particular experiences and qualifications make you the ideal candidate for the position.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I'm definitely a people person. I love being able to meet new people and form positive relationships with those I work with. That is one of many reasons that I love working in client success. Forming and nurturing client relationships makes me excited, especially when I get to do that on behalf of a company like yours that is providing real solutions to real problems."

What motivates you?

The interviewer is interested in learning more about your motivation for achieving workplace objectives and working well. The hiring manager will also be looking to determine if the things that drive you are compatible with the objectives of the business and the position you would be filling.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I'm a results-driven person. Knowing that I'm working towards a specific goal, preferably one that is measurable, gives me a lot of confidence and direction in my day-to-day. In my last role as an inside sales representative, our team had some very aggressive goal Q4 goals. I worked with my manager to break that large goal down into smaller milestones which made reaching—and then surpassing—that goal feel less daunting."

What are your strengths?

Most often, interviewers use this question to see whether your skills align with the firm's needs and the job's responsibilities. The interviewer wants to know if you are a good fit for the job you are applying for. The interviewer's objective is to match your qualifications to the abilities required for the position.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "My greatest strengths are my time management and organizational skills. I'm good at being able to prioritize tasks in a way that allows me to work quickly without compromising quality. I am careful to keep an organized workload so that even when unexpected requests or roadblocks arise, it's easier to keep my head above water and stay on track."

What are your weaknesses?

Interviewers use your answer to evaluate your capacity to recognize your flaws and willingness to overcome them. Your answer should illustrate a time when you struggled with a particular aspect of your job and show how you were able to overcome it.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I love talking with my coworkers because it helps us form relationships, which is important for morale. However, I sometimes can let conversations run on for too long and allow it to be disruptive to the day. Over time, I've learned ways to manage this so that I can still socialize with my team and accomplish everything I need to in a day. One way I do that is by setting timers on my phone to hold myself accountable."

What should I know that's not on your resume?

A resume can only tell a company so much about you. One way for an interviewer to gain perspective on who their candidates are is to ask an open-ended question like this one. Your answer should be an authentic representation of who you are and what qualifies you for the job.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I got my certification to teach yoga last year and lead a class every Saturday. When I first moved to my city, I barely knew anyone else who lived here and I started taking classes to meet people. Since I started teaching last summer, I've been able to help the studio by helping them choose and set-up a CRM to keep communications and client information organized."

Do you consider yourself a big-picture person or a detail-oriented person?

It's likely that an interviewer will ask about your approach to work. Your response to this question can help the interviewer determine whether your working style and general approach to projects is compatible for the position at hand.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "If I had to choose, I would say that I lean more towards being big-picture oriented. I don't mind getting in the weeds on a project, but I'm always careful not to spend too much time there. I appreciate the small, day-to-day details but ultimately they are all meant to add together to form the big picture."



Who has impacted you most in your career and how?

A potential employer might be interested in where you draw inspiration, or what you aspire to be like. If you are prepared with a meaningful answer, you can easily show interviewers that you have goals and motivation—and that you seek advice from others to succeed.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "My first employer is, still to this day, one of the most influential mentors in my life. He was an amazing leader for his employees and clients and helped me gain confidence in leading meetings and pitching ideas. His influence really helped me establish what I want from my career."

What are you looking for in your next position?

Your answer gives the interviewer the chance to assess whether your professional interests and experiences are consistent with the responsibilities for the job at hand. Before answering this question, consider your goals as compared to the role and focus your answer on how you can bring value.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I'm looking for an opportunity to focus on ecommerce. My background in content and SEO lends itself well to ecommerce strategy and I am experienced in managing advertising budgets. As an ecommerce manager at your company, I would be eager to apply my skills to attract and retain customers and optimize the online experience for them."

Why are you looking for a new opportunity?

Depending on the answer you give, this question can provide eye-opening information to hiring managers to help determine if the company and role will be a good fit for your desired next steps. Strong answers focus on your ability to be a team player, add to company culture, and level of commitment.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I very much appreciate the opportunities I had at my last company, I am ready to move forward and take on a new challenge that will allow me to strengthen the breadth and depth of my skills as a customer experience manager. This position seems like an ideal match for my qualifications and professional goals."

About the Company

This is the time to show you've done your due diligence of researching the company ahead of time. Be clear about why this role or company caught your eye.

Why are you interested in working for this company?

The majority of the time, this question is actually intended to determine how much you know about the company more than eliciting genuine preferences for your next position. Instead of putting your demands front and center, concentrate on how the role and company have caught your interest and gained your respect.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I'm excited to contribute to forward-thinking sales and communications strategies. I find that my personal values are well-aligned with those of your company, particularly when it comes to this company's commitment to doing the right thing for the customer."

What is the name of our CEO?

Interviewers may ask questions to gauge how much an applicant has done to prepare for the interview. This helps determine how interested you are in the position. It's a good idea to show the extent you've gone to research the business by not only naming the CEO, but also sharing something else about the company that caught your eye.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "Her name is Yamini Rangan. I was reading about her and your company's story on your website. I was interested to learn that she was the company's first Chief Customer Officer before transitioning into her role as CEO."



What about your experience is relevant to this role?

This question is used to learn more about how your background and work experience relate to the position. Try citing specific examples of how your previous experiences have helped you prepare for this new role.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I noticed in the job description that this role demands strong attention to detail and collaborative skills. These are both skills that I have historically been complimented on in the workplace.

In my last role, I was part of an engineering team that built complex, scalable web applications. My core focus assisting in solving complex display issues, but I also took on the additional responsibility of participating in the company's internal development program where I was able to coach junior developers through different projects and learning experiences."

How did you hear about this position?

The information you provide can give helpful context to the employer in terms of how familiar you might be with their company or if you've been actively seeking them out. There really are no right or wrong answers, so just try and give an informative, concise, and honest answer.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I have been following your company on LinkedIn for a while now and was recommended the job listing in a notification shortly after it was published. I knew I wanted to submit my resume after reading about the contributions this role will be able to make towards customer retention and engagement."

Describe your ideal company culture.

Interviewers are curious to know how your priorities, working methods, and personality might fit in with or add to their company culture. Research the company's culture ahead of time and identify a few areas of overlap between what you enjoy in work culture and what the company seems to offer.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I thrive in a work environment that values career development. Working in marketing, it can sometimes feel like our whole discipline can change overnight. Working on a team that not only values, but also sets aside resources for education and learning is incredibly important to me. At my last role, each employee was given a certain amount of work hours every quarter that were to be used for continued learning. That time allowed me to earn a few of the certifications listed on my resume."

Your Career History

Interviewers frequently ask about your prior career history, including the lessons you took away from them, your abilities, the connections you made, and the reasons you chose to move on to a different opportunity.

Tell me about your work history.

To offer you the chance to go into further detail about your prior work experience, this question has been purposely left open-ended. This question gives you the opportunity to elaborate on your job history beyond what is listed on your resume. Try to be as detailed as possible when answering a question like this by using names, dates, and anecdotes that best describe your previous employment.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I started my marketing career right out of college when I started working as an account manager at a small agency. That job gave me the opportunity to start working in SEO and learning from the strategists I worked with. I left that agency after 2 years after being offered the opportunity to work as an SEO strategist for a national skincare company. After eight months there, I was promoted to manage the brand's blog and was eventually tasked with overseeing both our blog and affiliate marketing programs.

I feel that this experience specifically prepared me for the role you're looking to fill because it trained me to make strategically-sound decisions that balanced the priorities of multiple marketing programs."

What did you enjoy most/least about your last job?

Every applicant has a reason for seeking a new opportunity. Inquiring about what you liked and didn't like in previous roles helps interviewers gain a deeper understanding of your perspectives, goals, and experiences. It's best to steer clear of highlighting people in your answer—especially when you're addressing what you didn't like—and instead focus on tasks and situations. Form your answer with a careful balance of tact and honesty.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "My last role was as a sales manager at a SaaS startup. The company had an exciting product and hungry leadership team, which enabled us to frequently explore new strategies and pitch ideas. Things did feel a bit disorganized at times, but it was a great opportunity to improve my ability to work under pressure. I really appreciated the time I spent there and am confident that what I learned there was instrumental in preparing me for my next step."

What is a work accomplishment that you're most proud of?

Interviewers might use this question to further explore your accomplishments, values, and qualifications. You can talk about how your career and skillset is growing and evolving. This is a great opportunity to discuss credentials and experiences that are relevant to the specific role and company.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I was hired as a content manager at a national wellness company very early in my career. We had a very nimble marketing team, which afforded me the opportunity to manage many tasks beyond social media. I pitched an influencer program to leadership and was approved to build the program out. I had no budget but was still able to successfully start this grassroots program through product trades with micro influencers that shared our target audience. After the first three month trial, I took the data and my findings back to the leadership team and was able to secure budget and resources to continue building the program.

It was so rewarding to work on this project and truly see the fruits of my hard work come to life. I was able to test many different strategies for outreach and management, and the whole process honestly taught me a lot about my own grit and passions."

What was the last project you led and what was the outcome?

It should be no surprise that interviewers want to dive into the specifics of your work history. Asking about recent projects can help gauge your abilities to collaborate and take action. Be sure to highlight the most relevant aspects of the project and leave out any details that may be distracting from accomplishments at hand.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "Most recently, I led a team of three other sales development managers through creating an outreach strategy for a new product launch. We worked cross-functionally with our product marketing team to tailor messaging that would highlight how this new product would speak to unique pain points for our B2B clients and what the ultimate value-add would be for them. At the end of the quarter, we were able to attribute about a 12% increase in new business to this outreach strategy that I helped put in place."

Teamwork & Collaboration

Teamwork is a must for the majority of jobs. In order to determine whether you have the appropriate mindset, strategy, and abilities to perform well in a group context, companies ask you these questions.

Do you prefer working with a team or working independently?

There really is no right or wrong answer to this question—and it's crucial to be genuine about your preferred working style. Different jobs require independent work, frequent teamwork, or a blend of the two. Use this opportunity to highlight your strengths and provide examples of how you have been able to adapt your working style in the past.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I feel that both have their time and place in a productive work environment and I truly value each one. When it's time to brainstorm or strategize, I prefer working in a group, but feel that independent work suits me better when it comes to deep work. I tend to be a very adaptable person, which I attribute to the first company I worked at. It was a team of about a dozen people and we all worked together in a big room, sharing two tables. Working there taught me how to be able to pivot between independent and collaborative work on a dime."

Are you a team player?

This question is used for the interviewer to assess how you might work with others in the day-to-day of the prospective role. Regardless of position or level, almost everyone needs to have strong collaboration and communication skills to succeed. Your answer should focus on how you have historically contributed to your team.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I am absolutely a team player. My perspective has always been that if my team succeeds, I succeed, and if I succeed, my team succeeds. I think work is a lot more fun when you're sharing your time and energy with people who want to raise each other up."

Tell me about a time when you had to give someone difficult feedback.

Delivering effective feedback requires a balance of empathy and tact. Hiring managers want to understand your ability to navigate delicate situations, foster productive relationships, and deliver honest feedback even when it isn't always easy to do so. Form a specific and constructive answer by leaning into the steps you took to address the situation.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "One of my peers on the marketing team at my last company had been given the responsibility of publishing new blog content on our website. A few weeks after she took over that task, I noticed that new blog posts were being published with formatting errors. Because I worked asked her to jump on a quick call so I could share my screen and show her the errors I was seeing. She told me she had actually been aware of the issue, but wasn't sure how to correct it. It turned into a great learning experience for her and I was able to explain a simple HTML hack that would fix the existing mistakes and prevent them from happening in the future."

Tell me about a time when you had to deal with conflict on the job.

We're all going to encounter conflict at work whether with teammates, clients, or other stakeholders. Knowing how to answer this question in a way that highlights your interpersonal skills and willingness to compromise will go a long way.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I once worked somewhere that would do project reviews with the whole design team. We would do a round robin of sharing our screens and critiquing each other's work. Normally, these were fine and I did learn a lot from my team members. But there was a certain person on my team at the time who was very difficult to work with, especially during these reviews.

I found that her feedback would often be very harsh, not only to me but to other teammates as well. After a session where she had been particularly difficult to work with, I decided to speak with her privately afterwards. I explained that I valued her experience and perspective, but wanted to communicate how she was coming across. The conversation was really productive and I think we were able to understand each other better. In future reviews, I really noticed an effort from her to speak with more kindness towards our team."

Have you ever been on a team where someone was not pulling their own weight? How did you handle it?

Your interviewer isn't asking this to hear you rag on an old coworker, but rather to explore how you are able to respond to challenging interpersonal situations. Highlight how you were able to be empathetic, reasonable, and positive in your example.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I think anyone who has ever worked on a team has worked with an underperforming coworker—that's just par for the course. What I've learned is that empathy will take you a long way.

I had a coworker in my last role who routinely missed deadlines which would push the rest of our team behind. I decided to sit down with them and try to understand why they were unable to meet project timelines. I learned in that conversation that they hadn't been properly trained on our project management software and didn't have a good line of sight into due dates. I was able to help them access training resources and answer some of their questions."

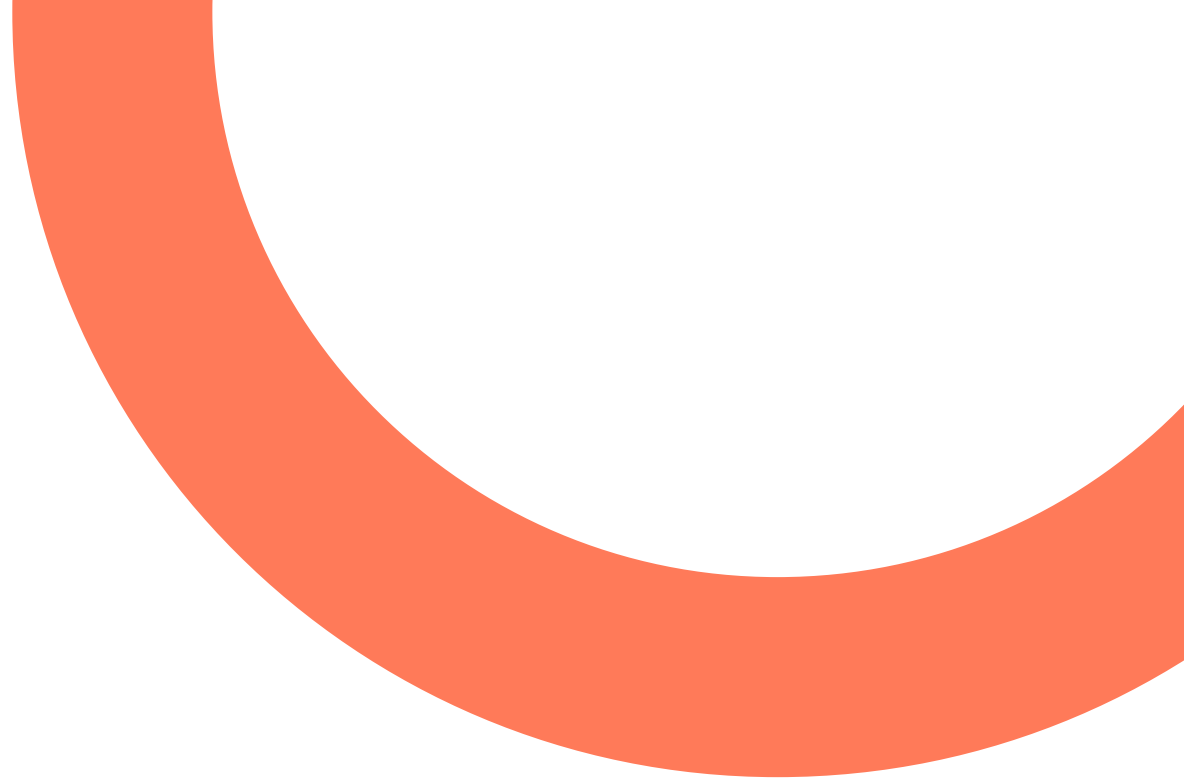
Problem Solving & Critical Thinking

Throughout the course of your job search, you will likely be asked to address questions designed to assess your personality, skills, and overall ability to problem solve in stressful situations.

How do you make decisions? Describe your approach to a recent decision you've made.

Employers want to be sure that you can handle pressure and respond skillfully to challenging circumstances. They are looking for indicators that you are able to act autonomously and make effective decisions.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I want to gather as much information as I can before making a decision, but I also take my time constraints into account, knowing that most work decisions need to be made quickly, even if not all information is available. I try to carefully review all options and explore what the outcomes of each choice might be. I use the information at hand to choose an outcome that is fair and reasonable for the situation."



Can you describe a time when you had to respond to a problem at work?

Employers are asking about this to try and determine the breadth of your observational and problem-solving skills. Your answer to this question should provide insight into your critical thinking, acumen, and ability to work within the unknown.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "When I'm faced with a challenge at work, I try to rely on data and logic when I'm coming up with my response. As an example, in my last role we saw a sudden decline in our social media engagement. I was tasked with assessing our strategy and identifying where we needed to shift.

I analyzed recent performance for our own pages and how our competitors were performing. By researching platform best practices and applying them in a way that was still consistent with our brand, we were able to turn performance around and end the quarter with strong engagement numbers. We learned a lot from that exercise and it confirmed for leadership that more regular analysis of our social media strategy was needed to keep performance strong on those channels."

Tell me about a time you made a mistake.

This inquiry is really an attempt to dig into how you respond to challenges. Provide a brief description of the mistake you made, but avoid self-deprecation or dwelling on the error. You'll want to frame your answer around the positive outcome and learning experience that came from the blunder and explain the steps you took to prevent it from happening again.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "In a previous role, I was responsible for deploying marketing emails using our ESP. I once had built and scheduled an email that was scheduled to send to about 100,000 users. About an hour after the email was sent, I realized I hadn't updated the subject line and it was just the campaign name and send date. I was so embarrassed! And email is such a tough channel to make a mistake on, because there really is no way to correct it. Fortunately, my manager was very understanding of the error and so was our audience. In response to my mistake, I created a more comprehensive review process that helped ensure we didn't miss things like that in the future."

Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision but you didn't have all the information to hand.

When a question like this is posed, you should respond with an illustration that shows how you react under pressure. Use an example that demonstrates how you analyze situations using the resources at your disposal in order to keep a project moving forward.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I was once responsible for determining a budget for an ecommerce project that had a lot of variables. It was a unique circumstance and would involve our team using this specific retail media network for the first time. We didn't have historical data to help us forecast expenses and, ultimately, there were just a lot of unknowns.

Because we couldn't start the project until a budget was determined, I used my best judgment to determine our spend allowance. Unfortunately, I underestimated and we did have to request a budget extension from management. Even though I didn't make the right choice, it was a great learning opportunity and helped improve my accuracy in budget estimation in the future."

Tell me about a time when you had to adapt to major change in the workplace. How did you cope?

This is another opportunity to demonstrate your adaptability and ability to work effectively under pressure. Explain the circumstances, outline your role, describe the action you did, and discuss the outcomes in your response.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I was about four months into my last role working as an affiliate program manager when my manager came to me and asked me to also take over our Amazon advertising campaigns. I had never worked with Amazon ads before and had limited experience in paid search. I had the time to take over this responsibility and am always eager to help my team, but this added responsibility did require a lot of self-educating.

The benchmark from my manager was to keep our ROAS between 4 and 5, which I was able to successfully accomplish. I had to ask a lot of questions and spend a good amount of time researching and self-teaching, but I'm thankful for the opportunity to have expanded my skills."

Career Development

Looking to the future, hiring managers may ask about your long-term ambitions and career goals to help determine if your desired plans are compatible with what the company can offer you.

Where would you like to be in your career five years from now?

This is a measure of your ambition and motivation. Interviewers are interested in understanding what you'll bring to the table and if the opportunity aligns with your career goals long-term. Additionally, your answer can give valuable insight into the compatibility between the prospective role and your personal motivations.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "In five years, I see myself having strong management skills that I'm putting to use in a director-level operations role. I have team management experience already and know I am just as excited about people management as I am about making high-level, strategic decisions."

What are you looking for in terms of career development?

When you are asked to reflect on your progress and goals, the interviewer wants to know where you are now, where you're going, and where you ultimately want to be. These questions are intended to determine how passionate you are about your profession and how committed you are to your professional development.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "In my next role, I am looking forward to sharpening my public speaking and presentation skills. As a finance manager, I'm competent in creating and interpreting reports, and sharing with my immediate team, but I would like to become more confident in presenting for larger audiences."

How do you keep up with latest trends and developments in your field of expertise?

The interviewer is looking for evidence that you are enthusiastic about what you do and that you are committed to staying abreast of trends and best practices. After all, a passionate employee is likely to be a hardworking employee.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I regularly read several newsletters that cover different marketing disciplines and industry trends. I recently read an article outlining the latest best practices for A/B Testing on Facebook and found it was really informative."

What skills or knowledge would make you better at your current role?

Employers want you to provide an unbiased, objective evaluation of yourself.. The hiring manager may get insight into your capacity for improvement and openness to learning if you use this opportunity to identify an area you'd like to strengthen and explain why. Your answer should harness a gentle balance of confidence and humility.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "As a marketing generalist, I feel like there are always opportunities to improve in existing skills or learn new things altogether. One area that I'm particularly interested in right now is learning basic HTML and CSS coding. I've been working more and more in blog management and SEO and both of those responsibilities have exposed me to times where having basic coding knowledge would be very beneficial."

How does this position fit your career goals?

Interviewers are interested in your professional objectives and future plans. This question is opening the door to discuss your drive and determination. A well-thought-out response might demonstrate to your interviewer that you've weighed the benefits and drawbacks of a certain position as well as how it can promote your professional objectives.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "My primary career goal is to eventually lead employee engagement efforts to help businesses foster employee-centric company cultures. Basically, I just want to help people love where they work. This role's specific focus on employee retention seems like a natural next step that would allow me to contribute meaningfully to the team while still being able to expand my experiences and skills."

What is one professional goal you'd like to accomplish this year?

The hiring manager is likely looking to see if you're excited about your career and motivated to pursue professional development on your own. Use this prompt as an opportunity to positively explore your ambitions and share a glimpse into your career objectives.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "By the end of this year, I plan to enroll in an online career-advancement program. I'm excited about learning new product development frameworks that I can take back to my job to help me and my team work more effectively."

Leadership

These questions focus on your experiences with teamwork, conflict resolution, interpersonal communication, and ability to motivate others. You might even hear questions like these if you're interviewing for a position that isn't going to require any direct leadership.

What is your leadership style?

You don't need to have previously managed or overseen employees to provide an impactful answer. You could even be asked this question for a job that doesn't immediately or explicitly require direct people management. Your response may help them understand long-term potential and compatibility between your goals and this role's trajectory.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I try to stick to a democratic leadership style because it actively involves the entirety of the team. I've always worked with intelligent, capable, creative people and even if I have a more senior role than someone else, it doesn't always mean I have better ideas. I try to show up as a leader by empowering my team to collaborate with each other to come up with the best ideas."

What would your direct reports say about you?

Interviewers are looking for a pulse check on your managerial and teambuilding skills. Along with showcasing your successes, you should also mention your areas of weakness and the actions you took to overcome them. Display a realistic, truthful, and comprehensive image of yourself.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "My direct reports would say that I am empathetic and organized. In addition to scheduling regularly one-on-ones with my team, I always held weekly office hours on Zoom for anyone on the team to pop in and ask questions. I follow-up every meeting with an email outlining action steps and timeline expectations so that our team is always on the same page and has the opportunity to ask questions or get clarification if something was miscommunicated."

How would you handle having to fire someone?

Here you have the chance to showcase your leadership style, capacity for empathy, and emotional intelligence. When forming your answer, first discuss the efforts you would take to avoid terminating someone before moving on to the logistics of how you would manage a termination.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I have fortunately never been in the position of having to end someone's employment, but if I were to ever be in that position I would try to handle every aspect with kindness. I hope that before reaching a point of having to let someone go, any other measures would have already been exhausted, such as offering additional training or implementing a performance improvement plan. Maintaining clear lines of communication surrounding performance and expectations is crucial, in addition to providing reasonable support as necessary."

What are the qualities of a good leader? A bad leader?

The interviewer might be asking this question to gauge your perspective on leadership and work culture. Mentioning real-life scenarios gives authenticity to your answer, weathering that means mentioning things you've learned from previous managers or attributes that you possess

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "To me, leadership is all about fostering collaboration and encouraging others to do their best work. I believe that good leaders go out of their way to include everyone on their team, value everyone's input equally, and maintain open lines of communication with their team members. In my experience, leaders fail when they try to make themselves the center of the team or project, instead of leading by example and amplifying their team members."

Can you describe a time when you led by example?

The interviewer wants to know how you approach example setting in the workplace. When it comes to leading by example at work, make sure to emphasize your sincere concern and awareness of your deeds, choices, and mannerisms.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I think that oftentimes, the best opportunities to lead by example are all in your attitude. A big pet peeve of mine is actually when people have a bad attitude about work—not that it's not okay to be frustrated or even to complain sometimes, but I always try to focus on being productive with those feelings. How can we turn this negative situation into a positive one? How can this thing you're frustrated with be changed into a good learning experience for you or someone else on the team?"

Time Management

There is more to time management than how you use your time and how quickly you finish activities, despite what you may believe employers care about. In practically each profession, in every industry, the ability to plan, organize, and prioritize your work is crucial.

How do you plan and manage your work when you have multiple conflicting priorities?

This question focuses on your ability to manage priorities and perform under time constraints. The capacity to confidently prioritize tasks is critical for employees across all levels and roles. When forming your answer, consider a moment when you needed to establish and approve the order in which competing tasks were to be completed.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I've frequently found myself in situations where I have had to juggle several competing tasks. One method that I've found to be helpful is using the Eisenhower Matrix to prioritize based on importance and urgency. I'm a visual person, so being able to physically divide my responsibilities into different quadrants helps me better understand the scope of work at hand and make decisions about how to best use my time."

Has a manager ever given you too much work? What did you do?

Employers are mostly interested in your problem-solving and stress management skills. Are you flexible? Could you set priorities? Although persistence is a valuable attribute, it is preferable to tackle issues deliberately and logically. Demonstrate your ability to reason critically and make strategically-sound decisions.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "Everyone will have moments in their career where their workload is heavier than normal. I've found that this can happen for a lot of reasons and being adaptable can go a long way. A few years ago, one of my colleagues ended up leaving our company for a different opportunity. Naturally, we all had to step up to take on some extra work while waiting on her backfill. I ended up being asked to take on a lot of her administrative work. There were a lot of small things that, especially when added to my existing workload, became too much for me to handle.

After giving it my all for a few weeks, I ended up scheduling time with my manager to discuss my bandwidth. We worked together to prioritize my tasks based on our team's goals and he helped me delegate."

Have you ever been overwhelmed with work? How did you handle that situation?

This question likely comes from a desire to understand how you handle stress and time management. Strong answers will include a description of what caused you to feel overwhelmed, how you addressed it, and what the results were.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I have experienced being overwhelmed with work. Earlier in my career, I had a really hard time with setting boundaries in terms of communicating my capacity to take on more work and would frequently find myself with more to do than I could handle. This inevitably led to burn out and I had to reassess my approach to work. Not only did I learn how to better prioritize my tasks, but I also gained important communication skills that help me work with my team and manager to balance new work with existing projects."

What techniques and tools do you use to keep yourself organized?

It's not surprising that hiring managers, recruiters, and other interviewers ask applicants about their organizational abilities, methods, and techniques in order to prevent the mayhem of disorganized staff. Use this question as an opportunity to highlight examples of how you've adopted new techniques and processes that have resulted in a more effective workflow.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I am naturally a very organized person which has been helpful throughout my career. I prefer using a task management software to take notes, track progress, and keep deadlines organized. I also use my calendar as an organization tool by practicing time blocking. I'll mark out chunks of time during the week to focus on specific projects or tasks, that way I know I have some dedicated time to give to important tasks without having to worry about being interrupted."

How do you maintain work-life balance?

Interviewers are looking for indicators that you have a good attitude toward work, as well as an awareness of the importance of taking care of yourself personally. Consider referencing a time when you faced challenges in maintaining balance.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "My time management skills are a life-saver when it comes to my ability to maintain work-life balance. Because I am able to use my time effectively during the workday, I find that I am able to enjoy my personal time without having to think too much about work, and vice versa. It's also a blessing that I work in a field that I love, because I get to wake up each day and look forward to going to work."

Wrapping Up/Next Steps

Congratulations! You've made it to the final few questions of your interview. Typically, the end of your conversation will focus on highlighting next steps in the process or making sure they've collected other relevant details from you that will aid them as they make their decision.

What are your salary expectations?

Employers need to determine if your desired pay range is in line with what they have budgeted for the role. They could ask you this question in order to gauge how you value yourself and your contributions. Do some research ahead of time by looking into average salaries for the role you're applying for based on years of experience, location, and company size.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "Based on my experience, knowledge of the industry, and average compensation for similar roles, I am looking for a salary in the range of \$X to \$Y. However, I would be interested to learn what you have budgeted for this position and what benefits may be offered outside of salary."

Are you interviewing with other companies? Where are you in those processes?

Interviewers may ask you where you are in other processes to try and gauge how competitive of a candidate you are. As always, it's best to answer honestly. If you are interviewing with other companies, let them know what stage you are in with them. Whether you are or aren't interviewing with other businesses, this is a good opportunity to mention why this position has piqued your interest.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I have two interviews scheduled this week with other companies in the industry. However, your company remains my first choice because of how closely my values and goals align with your brand's mission. Your reputation for customer and employee satisfaction speaks for itself and I am very interested in being part of your team."

What can you do for us that other candidates can't?

This question may be used to assess your ability to express your strengths and self-confidence, without being arrogant or putting others down. When developing your answer, focus on identifying relevant skills and experiences that qualify you for the role.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "I think that my experience working at a startup lends a unique set of skills that set me apart as a brand marketer. Because I have spent the last few years on a scrappy team, I have a holistic approach to marketing and am able to think about campaigns from perspectives outside of my core area of focus."

When are you available to start?

There's probably no hidden agenda here—and it's a good sign if an interviewer is inquiring about your availability! Answer with a high-level idea of how much time you would need to transition to a new role. Be honest with yourself (and the interviewer) about your current circumstances, whether that means you are available right away, you need to give notice to a current employer, or you're looking to take a break between roles.

EXAMPLE ANSWER: "After learning more about the role, I am excited about the opportunity to join your team. If I were to receive an offer, I would need between two and three weeks to give notice to my current employer and wrap up the projects I am currently working on."

Do you have any questions for me?

Interviewers will typically wrap up the conversation with the opportunity for you to ask questions about the company, the role, and expectations. As you're doing research to prepare for the interview, try jotting down a handful of questions about the company or job description so you can be prepared with meaningful inquiries for the interviewer. [Check out the next page](#) for 10 questions you may want to ask.



BONUS:

10 Questions for The Hiring Manager

01. What opportunities will I have to learn and grow in my career?
02. What is the typical career path for someone hired into this role?
03. Do you have any concerns about my skills or work history that I could have the opportunity to address?
04. What would you want to see me accomplish in the first 90 days?
05. What do you enjoy most about working here?
06. What are the most important skills that you are looking for in a candidate?
07. What tools or programs would I be using regularly in this role?
08. How would you describe this company's culture?
09. What are the immediate and long-term priorities for this role?
10. What are the next steps in the hiring process?

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