

Sample Interview Questions



We are often asked what are the best interview questions to ask, or what interview questions can I ask.

Statistics show that depending on where you are in Canada, and depending on the position you are looking to fill, it can take anywhere from 30-250 days to fill a position with a candidate. Obviously, making sure you are hiring the right person is very important, and background checks, good job descriptions, strong onboarding procedures and much more can and will impact whether or not you hire the right person.

However, asking the right interview questions is probably the most important way to get a good indicator of whether or not a prospect is the right fit.

The following questions are taken from the HRS of Brigham Young University.

Hiring the best candidate for a position is a big responsibility for hiring managers and interviewing is an important part of this process. Interviews should be used along with reference checks to identify qualified applicants. Below are different categories of sample interview questions. This list of sample interview questions is not comprehensive; use it to design appropriate questions that relate to your position.

VALUES DRIVEN SELECTION QUESTIONS

Competency

- What do you do on an ongoing basis to keep your professional skills up to date?
- Indicate some of the significant development efforts you have undergone in the last few years.
- What do you see as the key competencies needed in your current assignment and how have you gone about developing these?

Respect For Sacred Resources

- What type of budgetary responsibility do you carry in your current assignment? How well have you kept within that budget?
- Have you had significant experience with cost reduction efforts? Tell us about an experience.
- Can you share an experience of how you have maximized the benefit produced from

limited resources you were given to work with?

Integrity

- Tell us what you do to ensure that you meet the work commitments you make to others?
- Tell us about an experience where you had to confront someone or give candid feedback?
- How did you do it? What did you say?

Teamwork

- What are some of the things you are doing to ensure the effectiveness of the team you are leading?
- Have you been on a dysfunctional team? What did you do as a team member or team leader to address the problems?
- Tell us about a time where you disagreed with the objectives or direction of a team you were on. How did you handle this?

Exceeding Customer Expectations

- What types of efforts are you making to serve your customers and to exceed customer expectations?
- How are you gathering feedback from your customers and how do you use this feedback?
- Tell us about a time where you wowed a customer.

Respect For Others

- How do you currently encourage people on your team to express their ideas and opinions? Can you give an example?
- How do you handle disagreement? Give us an example.
- Tell us your experience in working with others of diverse background from yours. How you handle differences that come from different backgrounds?

Innovation

- Tell us about an innovation that you've introduced in your work area.
- What have you done to introduce change or redefine the way work gets done in your area?
- What continuous improvement methodologies are you familiar with? Tell us about your experience.

Accountability

- What kind of system or method are you currently using for reporting progress on your work?
- What kind of metrics or measure do you currently use to measure the work in your area?
- How do you follow through on projects that you delegate to others? Can you give an example?

GENERAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Customer Service

- Give me an example of the type of work experience you have had on a day-to-day basis with the public.

- What has been your most rewarding experience dealing with the public/customers?
- What “new way of doing things” did you introduce in your last job in dealing with the public?
- What typical kinds of customer dissatisfaction were inherent in your last job? How did you deal with this?
- What types of things were you able to do to help in alleviating this customer dissatisfaction?
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to help an angry customer with a problem.
- How do you define great customer service?
- What would others say about how you handle customers? Would they want you to wait on them? Did anyone ever ask for you?
- What kind of recommendation would your previous supervisor give you regarding your customer relations skills?
- Do you like working with the general public? Would you prefer to work alone?
- Give me an example when you were praised for your people skills in a past job.
- You have an angry customer that comes up to you. His/her past dealing with the department has been negative. This time he/she is going to get it done right. He/she demands you put him/her on top priority basis. Your department is now running a major project for your supervisor and can't accommodate this customer. How would you handle the customer?

Able to Handle Pressure

- Describe a situation where you were under a great deal of pressure. How did you handle it?
- We have a real pressure-cooker position here. (Explain why) Have you had a position that relates to this situation? How did you handle the pressure?
- Constant pressure gets to all of us after a long period of time. Describe an incident where you did not handle pressure well.
- Did your position have cyclical periods when you were extremely busy and then dead periods? How long did they last? What was it like during both periods of time?
- What flusters you when a deadline is near?
- If I called your supervisor, what would he/she say about your ability to handle pressure? What would he/she say you needed to improve on?

Able to Supervise Employees

- How many people have you supervised at one time? How many were Part-time? Full-time? How long were you their supervisor?
- Did you have the sole responsibility of hiring/firing these people? Did your supervisor have any say in who was hired/fired?
- Give me an example of a time when you handled an employee grievance that resulted in better working relationships.
- Give me an example of a time when you handled a grievance that did not result in better working relationships. What would you have done differently?
- What have you done to motivate your employees? Were they motivated? Give me a time when they were or were not.
- What kind of management style do you take with your employees? How do you treat your employees? How do you resolve discipline problems?
- What would your employees say about you as a manager? Were you an example of what you expected from others?
- How did you elicit cooperation from your employees? Give me an example of a time when an employee would not do what was asked. How did you handle this?

- What is required of a good leader? Which of these skills are you better at? What skills would your supervisor say that you would need to improve upon to be a better leader/supervisor?

Accurate

- Have you ever worked for a supervisor that demanded accuracy of you? What activities required accuracy?
- Suppose we called your supervisor and asked “Is (name) accurate in what he/she does?” What would your supervisor say?
- When it comes to accuracy, what do you need to improve on?
- Could you give me an example of the type of work you did on a day-to-day basis that required accuracy?
- Are you strongest in the areas of accuracy or speed? Why? Working on what?
- Did the pressure of your past job lend itself to a mistake environment?
- In some positions it is very easy to make errors. What do you do to control errors?

Dependable

- When we call your supervisor, what will he/she tell us about your ability to be dependable?
- When the workday starts are you the first one there?
- How would you define a dependable employee? Are you known as a dependable individual? Why?
- Describe how you have organized yourself in your present job so that you could create a dependable atmosphere with your clients/customers.
- When we check for references what will your supervisor tell us about the number of days you were absent last year?
- During a typical month, how many days are you be late to work?

Detail Oriented

- Give me an example of the deadlines that needed to be met in your last job. How did you make sure things got done?
- Give me an example of a time when you thought you had “it all nailed down” but a detail you missed fell through the cracks. What happened?
- Give an example of the most detail-oriented positions you have had.
- Describe a situation where you had to multi task. How did you handle it?
- How do you keep track of duties that must get done concurrently?



Handle Complex Problems

- Give me an example of the last major project you worked on. What was your role? Did you work as a team? What were the issues involved?
- Do you have any statistical background, either in school or on the job?
- Could you describe a decision you recently made that was initially unpopular with your supervisors or staff? How did you handle it?
- Describe how you think through a difficult problem.
- Have you ever had to “sell” top management on a decision you made? Please describe the situation.
- Describe a project you recently worked on that got “bogged down” for some reason and what you did to put it back on line.

- What types of problems do you solve on a day-to-day basis?
- Did you make any changes in the firm you felt particularly proud of?
- Give me an example of a very complex problem or issue you have faced. How did you solve the problem?

Power Questions

- In the next 2 minutes, tell me about your professional experience/history.
- What kind of professional development and training would make you a more effective employee?
- What aspects of your previous position did you find professionally challenging?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What particular skills or experiences make you the best match for this position?
- Did you get along well with the people on your last job? Explain.
- What types of people seem to “rub you in the wrong way?”
- Expand on those aspects of your schooling (or job) that you found to be most satisfying?
- What experience do you have with (equipment, procedures, tasks, etc.)?
- Why do you think this company should hire you?
- What do you expect from the company that hires you?
- In what ways could you contribute to this job?
- How long do you think it would take you before you could contribute to this job?
- What do you consider to be the ideal reporting relationship?
- How do you feel an employee should be approached regarding his/her job performance?
- Where does this position fall along your career path?
- Do you consider yourself a self-starter? Why?

Office Skills

- Do you feel the results of the Office Skills Test are representative of your skills?
- What kind of training, schooling, or experience do you have regarding office skills and abilities?
- How would you rate your Microsoft Word skills? Why did you rate yourself that way? How long have you used it on the job? Have you had formal training or did you learn on the job?
- Give me an example of the types of things you would use MS Word for. What functions are you familiar with and use daily? Which functions do you use occasionally?
- Are you as familiar with Quattro Pro/Excel as you are with WordPerfect/MS Word? Have you created spreadsheets and macros with Quattro Pro/Excel?
- Which of your former jobs required the use of your office skills to their optimum? Describe.
- Which firm utilized your telephone skills? What type of clientele did you work with?
- Which office do you feel exhibited the most professional atmosphere? Was the dress standards – written or unwritten? What do you feel creates a professional atmosphere? How did you contribute to the overall professionalism of the office?
- Which of your personality traits do you feel will be most effectively utilized in this position?
- How did you learn to put your job tasks in order? How do you plan and organize to save time?
- What kinds of things did you refer to your supervisor? What kinds of things did your supervisor refer to you?

- Depict a situation where you had to give repetitive information, or answer similar questions. How did you make the situation tolerable?
- Are there any skills or experiences etc. that we have not discussed that you feel would be relevant to this position?

Current/Last Job

- Tell me about your current/last job:
- To whom do you report?
- What aspects of your previous position did you find professionally challenging?
- What were your two most important achievements in your current job?
- How do you think your subordinates would describe you as a manager and supervisor?
- What attributes do you believe an effective manager should possess?
- What plans do you have for self-development in the next 12 months?
- What types of criticisms are leveled at you most often?
- Many of us improve our personal interaction with others as we mature. Looking back over the past two years, in what way have you improved?
- What steps do you generally follow in making a decision?
- Tell me what your supervisor would say about your secretarial skills and abilities. What particular things would he/she tell me are your strong points clerically? What would he/she tell me that you would need to improve upon?

Work with Little Supervision

- Give me an example of a time when you were able to complete a project without immediate supervision. Was this normal? Did your supervisor often give you tasks to do which did not require direct supervision?
- Give me an example of the kind of tasks or projects your supervisor would closely supervise.
- Did your job require direct supervision? Or were you able to complete most things on your own?
- What would your supervisor say about your abilities to complete tasks as assigned? What kind of a recommendation would this supervisor give me?
- Do you prefer working alone, or with others?
- In this regard, what job has given you the most job satisfaction in relationships with other employees? With customers? With your supervisor?
- Would you rather be closely supervised and given good direction, or work out the solutions for yourself?