Samples of Interview Questions

Introductory/Warm-Up/Rapport Building

- How did you find out about this job opening? What attracted you to this position?
- What do you know about our organization?
- Why are you considering making a job or career change at this time?
- What does this job offer you that your last job did not?
- What three things are the most important considerations to you in accepting a new job?
- In what kind of environment are you most comfortable? What do you need in a job to make you happy?
- Describe your “ideal job”, amount/style of supervision, contact/relationships with coworkers, job tasks, anything that is relevant.

Goals

- How do you set goals for yourself?
- What do you hope to be doing 5 years from now? How do you plan to get there?
- How will this position fit into your career plan?

Educational Background

- What schools did you attend?
- What were your accomplishments or achievements?
- What were your most/least enjoyable classes?

Workplace Policies/Relationship with Supervisors

- If I met your former supervisor and asked for one sentence about you, what would that sentence be?
- Tell me about a time when you and your previous supervisor disagreed but you still found a way to get your point across.
- What would you do if you knew you were right and your supervisor disagreed with you?
- How would you discuss your job dissatisfaction with your supervisor?
- Tell me about a time when a supervisor asked you to do a job that was not part of your job description.
- How did you respond?
Describe your ideal supervisor. What are the three most important characteristics of a good supervisor. Why?

How would you describe the working relationship with your last supervisor?

What will your previous employer(s) say about you? What will your references say about you?

What policies or procedures of your last company did you disagree with?

General Past Work History/Job Performance

What were your major responsibilities?

What were the three most important responsibilities in your last or present job or what responsibilities/tasks took most of your time?

Describe a typical day on your last or current job.

Of all the things you’ve done throughout your career, at what or when have you been the most successful?

Which of your ideas and actions helped you be successful in your present/prior organization?

What risks did you take in your last or present job? Tell me about it.

Tell me about a project that you initiated.

What did you do to make your last job more interesting?

What three things about your last job gave you the most satisfaction? Why?

Tell me about the process you used to “sell” a new idea to your supervisor.

Tell me about a suggestion you made on the job to improve the way things worked. What was the result?

Tell me about a time when you reached out for additional responsibility.

Related Technical Skills/Knowledge Base

*(In addition, develop behavioral/situational questions specific to the duties/tasks/responsibilities of the position)*

What makes you the best candidate for this position?

Describe how skills/knowledge used in your past jobs would apply to this position.

How have you gained the technical knowledge to do your job?

What is the most important development in your field today? What impact will it have? How do you stay informed regarding your field?

What job-related organizations do you belong and/or publications do you read?

How do you define a good job in your field?

If you were assigned *(describe a specific work assignment)*, how would you start, what would be the step-by-step and what information would you need?
What special knowledge, skills, abilities do you think a (position title) should have?

What do you know about or what is your experience in (specific technical operations, knowledge/problem-solving area)?

How would you handle (specific work situation that requires job specific knowledge and/or skills to solve)?

What information would you need if you were assigned __________________?

Specific Qualifications/Skills

**Interpersonal Communication:**

Define “good communication.”

What type of people do you enjoy working with the most? What type of individual do you find most difficult or frustrating to work with?

Tell me about a recent success you had with an especially difficult employee/coworker/customer.

What have you done to improve your verbal communication skills?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do you listen? On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do your co-workers say you listen?

How important is communication in your present job? Please explain.

Tell me about a time when you caused a breakdown in communication at work.

Describe a situation where you relied on ‘verbal’ information from someone else to accomplish a task.

When have you misunderstood someone’s instructions? Why did that happen?

**Oral Communication:**

Give me an example of a time you had to sell a proposal to a group of superiors or co-workers. How did you do? Why?

Describe your public speaking/presentation experiences. What steps did you use to develop it?

**Written Communication:**

What documents have you written? Describe about the most difficult proposal/writing assignment you’ve ever written.

Describe an important report you’ve prepared. How did you plan and organize it?
Attitude/Work Ethic:
The hours of this position are _______. Can you meet that work schedule?
What did you like most about your last or most recent job? What was the most disappointing aspect of your last job?
Give me two examples of things you’ve done in previous jobs that demonstrate your willingness to work hard.
What kind of career progress did you make in your last job?
How did you feel about your workload in your last job?
What did you do in your last job that made you more effective?
What suggestions did you make in your last job to increase profits, improve morale, cut costs, increase output?
What are your greatest strengths? What are your weaknesses?

Motivation:
What have you done in your last job that makes you feel proud? In your opinion, what does it take to be a "success"?
What motivates you to put forth your best effort? How does your supervisor get your best out of you?

Leadership:
Tell me about a time when you conformed to policy with which you disagreed.
Describe your leadership style. What makes you an effective leader? What could potentially interfere with your effectiveness as a leader?
What personal characteristics are necessary for success as a leader?
What single skill or ability is your greatest asset? How did you develop this expertise?
Gaining the cooperation of others can be difficult. Give a specific example when you had to do that.
What do you do to encourage others to do their best?
What is the most difficult work situation you have ever faced? How did you handle it?

Teamwork:
If I talked to your peers, what would they tell me about your ability to be a team player?
What have you done to contribute toward a team environment?
What kind of people do you like to work with?
Tell me about a time when you worked on a team in an effort that failed.

Learning Ability/Style:
Give me an example of the last time you had to learn something new (software application, procedure, directions to a new place). What was the situation and what steps did you take to learn that something new?
How were you trained in your last job?
What has been the most difficult thing you had to learn? What is your preferred learning style?
How long were you in your previous position before you felt at ease with the company’s products or services?

Self-Evaluation/Self Appraisal:
What specific tasks do you feel most competent and confident performing? Give examples.
Has your performance been evaluated accurately in the past? Why or why not?
If you were offered this position, what major contribution do you think you could make?

Organizational:
How do you track details?
Tell me the steps you took and the outcome of a big project you’ve completed.
Describe a situation where you were under time pressure to complete several tasks (multi-task). How did you handle it?

Problem Solving/Decision-Making/Judgment:
What steps do you take to solve a problem?
How do you enlist the help of others in solving a problem?
Tell me about a specific time when you eliminated or avoided a potential problem before it happened?
Tell me about several unconventional methods you have used to solve problems.
If a co-worker needed help in solving a problem, but you did not have the time to help, what would you suggest?
To whom did you turn for help the last time you had a major problem and why did you choose that person?
What criteria do you use to make decisions?
How long does it typically take you to make a decision?
What was the last major decision you made and how did you make it?
What kinds of decisions are the most difficult for you to make and why?
Give me two examples of decisions you had to make on your last job.
Tell me about an experience in which you had a limited amount of time to make a difficult decision.
Tell me about a time when you had to make an unpopular decision.
Tell me about a decision you made while under a lot of pressure.
Tell me about a decision you made but would have done differently now.
Planning:
How do you determine priorities for your time? What are the most critical considerations used? What do
you do if priorities are in conflict? Give me an example.
What do you do when priorities change quickly? Give me one example when this happened.
How do you develop short-range and/or long-range plans for your position/department/organization?
What methods do you use to ensure that your plan is ‘on target’?

Project Management:
Give me an example of communication methods you used to keep the group informed about project
goals, milestones and deadlines when you were managing a project with several people?
What project management tools have you used to keep the project on track both within timeline and
within budget?
When you are leading a project, how do you organize your workspace?

Analytical:
When have you recognized a problem or opportunity before anyone else? What happened?

Dealing with Change:
How has your present or last job changed while you’ve held it?
Give me an example of a time when you helped a staff member accept change.
How do you handle yourself under stress and pressure?

Office Politics & Cooperation:
How many levels of management did you interact with in your last job? What was that communication
regarding?
How do you get cooperation from someone in another department?
Describe a time when “office politics” impacted your job.
When is it OK to “go with the flow?”
How important is the “grapevine?”
Describe a project you were responsible for that required a lot of interaction with people over a long
period of time.
How important is a “chain of command?”
**Safety:**
What are the major safety requirements of your current job?
Do these requirements ever interfere with your performance? If so, what do you do then?
Have you recently seen someone doing a job in an unsafe manner? What did you do?

**Initiative:**
Give me an example of how you have been creative?/ What challenges you?
Describe two specific contributions you would expect to make during the first six months if you join our company?
How do you keep your supervisor advised of the status on projects?
What have you done about your own professional development in the last 5 years?
What have you done to make your job easier and/or more rewarding?
Tell me about a time when you surpassed all job expectations by going the “extra mile.”
What methods do you use to carry through assignments to assure their completion?

**Adaptability:**
Tell me about a time when your supervisor criticized your work.
Give me an example of how you handle interruptions or crisis situations.
You’ve worked diligently on a project and then are told the priorities have changed; how would you deal with that situation?
Describe a time you had to surmount an obstacle to reach a goal. What was the problem and what did you do?

**Supervisory/Management:**
What do you do when an employee comes to you with a personal problem?
How do you handle employees who gossip?
How would you recognize and reward a team player?
In what ways do you feel the people who report to you might find you difficult to work for?
Tell me about a specific time when you had to handle a tough morale problem.
How do you make your feelings known when you disagree with the views of your staff?
What employee behaviors do you find the most difficult to manage?
Tell me about a time when you had to take disciplinary action with someone you supervised.
What has been your experience with major expansions or reductions in work force?
What do you do to help your employees manage stress?
What would you do if you caught an employee stealing?
How would you build a team from scratch?
If you joined our company and inherited a staff, what would you do first?
How do you prepare for performance appraisals?
Under what circumstances do you feel a manager should discipline an employee? How do you handle it?
How would you determine that your staff was under too much pressure? What would you do about it?
How do you communicate priority projects to your staff without making them feel overwhelmed?
How do you and your staff celebrate success?
How would the people who work for you describe you?
What is it like to work for you?
Describe the relationship you feel should exist between the manager or supervisor and those reporting to him or her.
What aspects of your job do you consider most crucial?
How do you define “teamwork?”
How do you delegate work?
How do you monitor the performance of your staff?
As a supervisor, what is your greatest strength? Weakness?
What has your staff criticized you for?
Tell me about your best and worst hiring decisions.
How much turnover have you had in your last department, and what accounted for it?
What have you learned from your mistakes as a manager?
In a new position, how did you feel when you first met the people who would report to you?
Tell me about a time when you had to tell a staff member that you were dissatisfied with his or her work?
How do you handle employees with an attitude problem?
Tell me about a time when you had to handle a highly emotional employee.
How would you handle an employee who changed from a reliable, hard working employee to a problem employee?
If you discovered an employee was cheating on expense reports, what would you do?
Before you would fire someone, what factors would you take into consideration?
What would you say to an employee who is frequently late for work?