



INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE



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These questions can be used to inquire into a candidate's past experience in order to verify their personal style. You do not need to ask all the questions. Instead pick questions for those traits that are most important for successful job performance and will work best in your environment.

In order to choose the appropriate questions, it is important to have a clear picture of what personality traits a person needs in order to be successful on the job. You can then select which questions will identify the candidates who are best suited to the position.

The questions are grouped by personality trait, and some traits include subsections of questions based on the type of person you are looking for. For example, you will find a selection of questions that can help identify someone with a high level of teamwork grouped together. Following these questions, you will find a second group of questions that can help identify someone with a low level of teamwork; the type of person who works well independently. If the job requires a mix of teamwork and independent tasks you can choose some questions from each section.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

Teamwork

If the job involves a lot of teamwork and you need someone who works well in groups, consider some of the following questions:

- Give me an example of when you had to work closely with others. What was your role? What aspects of teamwork do you enjoy/dislike? Name a problem you had with a team member and discuss how you worked to resolve it.
- Describe a situation where you needed to encourage people to work together.
- How do you do your best work; with others or on your own? Why?
- To what extent have you worked closely with groups of people in the past?

If the job involves a lot of independent work, and you need someone who can work well on their own, consider some of the following questions:

- Tell me about a time when you had to work independently. What aspects of the experience were successful? What did you enjoy/dislike about working on your own?
- To what extent have you worked independently before?
- How do you do your best work; with others or on your own? Why?

Concern for Others

If you need someone who can support and help others, and/or gauge the personal thoughts and feelings of others, consider some of the following questions:

- Describe a situation where you had to be sympathetic.
- To what extent do you believe you should involve yourself in other people's problems?
- Name a time when your sensitivity to someone's feelings gave you an advantage?
- To what extent should an employer get involved in employee's personal problems?
- How do you show concern/sympathy?
- Describe a time when you failed to pick up on someone's feelings.
- Tell me about a time when you picked up on a person's feelings/reactions that others had missed.

If you need someone who can be tough-minded and comfortable making difficult decisions that negatively impact people, consider some of the following questions:

- Tell me about a decision you made that had a negative impact on people. How did you do it?
- Have you experienced a situation where paying too much attention to people's feelings was problematic? What was it?
- To what extent do you believe you should involve yourself in other peoples' problems?

Outgoing

If you need someone who is comfortable with frequent personal interaction and meeting with a lot of people, consider some of the following questions:

- What skills are important for meeting new people? What skills do you have and utilize when meeting new people?
- Tell me of a time when you had to meet a lot of new people. What was that time like for you? What was enjoyable? What was challenging/difficult?
- Tell me about your past experiences with making business acquaintances, meeting people, developing business relationships.

If the job has little personal interaction and does not require meeting with a lot of people, consider some of the following questions:

- How do you deal with work that involves little interaction with others? Give me an example of work you completed that involved little to no interaction with people.
- Would you describe yourself as outgoing or reserved?
- Tell me about your past experiences with making business acquaintances, meeting people, developing business relationships.

Democratic

If you are looking for someone who is comfortable making important decisions on their own, and works effectively with little to no supervision, consider some of the following questions:

- Describe a time when you had to make a difficult decision on your own.
- Have you ever sacrificed your own ideas to follow someone else's? What was that like for you?
- Do you believe that decisions should be made through consultation? How much consultation?
- Would you prefer to have close supervision of your work, or no supervision at all?
- How often do you consult with others when making decisions?

If you are looking for someone who makes decisions through consultation and is comfortable with supervision, consider some of the following questions:

- Give me an example of a time when you had to work under close supervision. What was that experience like for you?
- Tell me of a place where you worked where most decisions were made through consultation. What was that experience like for you? What were the positives and negatives of that approach?
- Give me an example of when you followed someone else's ideas at the expense of your own.
- Tell me about a decision you made by consulting with others extensively.
- Have you experienced a time when you had to sacrifice your own ideas to follow someone else's? What was that like for you?

DYNAMISM

Ambition

If you are looking for someone who is driven and goal oriented consider some of the following questions:

- Tell me some career goals you have set for yourself.
- Would you describe yourself as easy-going or competitive? Why? How competitive are you? How does that show itself in your work?
- Tell me of a time when you needed to compete hard to win.
- What do you think are the key skills for success?
- Tell me about some difficult goals you set for yourself, and how you reached them.

If you are looking for someone to fill a job that has little room for advancement, consider some of the following questions:

- Describe a situation in which you adopted a noncompetitive attitude in order to be successful.

- Have you ever had a job with little room for advancement? What was that like for you?
- Would you describe yourself as easy-going or competitive? Why? How competitive are you? How does that show itself in your work?

Energy

If you are looking for someone with a high level of energy who does not tire easily, consider some of the following questions:

- What kinds of activities drain your energy?
- Describe a project you worked on that required a lot of energy. What was that experience like? What did you do to keep your energy level up? What would you do differently?
- Name a time when you ran out of energy working on a project.
- How do you deal with easy tasks? Do you get bored? How do you deal with demanding tasks?
- Name some of the most demanding things you have done.

If you are looking for someone who prefers steady work with little demands, consider some of the following questions:

- What wears you down? What do you do to get your energy back?
- What kinds of activities drain your energy?
- How do you deal with easy tasks? Do you get bored? How do you deal with demanding tasks?

Persistence

If the job requires someone with a high level of persistence, consider some of the following questions:

- Tell me about a difficult task that you recently completed. What made it difficult? How did you manage to work through the difficulties/obstacles?
- Describe a time when you had a large amount of boring/dull/uninteresting work to complete. How did you motivate yourself?
- Give me an example of a project that you gave up on because it was no longer worth the resources to complete.
- Tell me about a time when you showed a high level of persistence.
- Tell me about some obstacles you have overcome that took a lot of persistence.
- Give me an example of something you gave up on because you did not think it worth the effort.

If the job mostly involves tasks that can be completed quickly and has few obstacles to overcome, consider some of the following questions:

- Give me an example of a project that you gave up on because it was no longer worth the resources to complete.
- Describe a time when you had a lot of boring work to complete. How did you motivate yourself?
- Have you ever had a job that only required you to do easy work that had no challenges? What was that like for you? Was it pleasant or unpleasant?

Leadership

If you need someone willing to take a directive leadership role, consider some of the following questions:

- How do you lead others? How do you convince people to follow you?
- What experience have you had with telling people what to do? What was that like for you? What was positive about the experience? What would you do differently? How could you have been a more effective leader?
- What leadership experience do you have?
- What are your leadership skills? What makes you a good leader?
- Tell me about an occasion when you encountered difficulties with subordinates. What were the difficulties and how did you overcome them?
- Name a time when you took on a leadership role without being asked.
- What are the characteristics of a good/bad leader?
- Would you describe your leadership style as directive or consultative? Why?
- Give me an example of a difficult leadership role you took on.

If you need someone comfortable following the lead of others, or who prefers to lead by example, consider some of the following questions:

- Tell me about a time when you had to follow someone else's lead.
- What are the characteristics of a good/bad leader?
- Would you describe your leadership style as directive or consultative? Why?

TASK ORIENTATION

Attention to Detail

If the job involves working with a lot of detailed information, consider some of the following questions:

- Describe a project you worked on that involved a lot of detailed work.
- What is the most detailed work you have had to complete?
- What is worse for you, submitting a project late, or submitting it on time with imperfections?
- What kind of work have you had to do in the past that required you to pay close attention to details?

If the job does not involve examining a lot of detailed work, but requires someone who focuses on global issues, consider some of the following questions:

- Tell me about a time when you ignored the details and focused on the big picture.
- Tell me about a time when people you were working with focused too much on details and missed the big picture. What did you do to help them broaden their focus? Is there such a thing as spending too much time looking at the minor details?
- What experience do you have with determining corporate strategy/looking at the big picture/setting large goals and priorities?

Rule-Following

If the job has a lot of work procedures and rules that need to be strictly followed, consider some of the following questions:

- Describe your past experiences of working in a very structured, rule bound workplace.
- Describe your experiences of working in an environment with no structures or rules on how to work.
- Can you tell me about an occasion where you needed to ignore rules or work procedures to get your work done successfully?
- How do you determine when work procedures/rules can be ignored? Are there situations where you believe they should be followed all the time? How do you determine when that is?

If the job has few to no work procedures and rules, and requires the individual to determine the best way to complete their work, consider some of the following questions:

- Tell me about some ineffective rules that were still followed in your previous places of work.
- Can you tell me about an occasion where you needed to ignore rules or work procedures to get your work done successfully?
- How do you determine when work procedures/rules can be ignored? Are there situations where you believe they should be followed all the time? How do you determine when that is?
- How often do you encounter work rules/procedures that you think should no longer be in effect?

- How comfortable are you working on tasks when you have not been given any direction/instruction? Do you enjoy the freedom? Do you wish you could get feedback to ensure you are doing your work correctly?

Dependability

If you are looking for someone with a high level of dependability, consider some of the following questions:

- Tell me about a project you couldn't finish on time. What happened? What would you do differently?
- Are you comfortable leaving a job unfinished if something else comes up?
- Give me an example of a task that you needed to work beyond your normal hours to complete. What was that experience like?
- Can you describe a time when you had to shift priorities and leave a task you were working on unfinished? What happened? How did you complete the first task?
- Name a time where it was difficult for you to complete your work. What happened, and how did you resolve the difficulties?
- Describe a time when you needed to work extra hard to get your tasks done on schedule.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Innovation

If the job requires someone who is creative and innovative, consider some of the following questions:

- Tell me about a problem you solved in an innovative way.
- Name an original/creative/new solution you came up with to solve a problem.
- When addressing a problem do you first look at what has worked in the past, or do you come up with an entirely new solution?
- What are the benefits/disadvantages of using past solutions?
- What have been some of your most creative ideas at work?

If the job does not require much problem solving, or the problems addressed only require incremental changes or practical solutions, consider some of the following questions:

- When addressing a problem do you first look at what has worked in the past, or do you come up with an entirely new solution?
- What value do you see in sticking with the established ways of doing a job?
- What are the benefits/disadvantages of using past solutions?
- What have been some of your most practical solutions to work problems?
- Would you describe yourself as innovative or practical?

Analytical Thinking

If the job requires analyzing a large amount of information and a decision making approach that is logical, cautious, and deliberate, consider some of the following questions:

- How much information do you need to feel comfortable making a decision? How do you get that information?
- Tell me about a decision you have made through extensive information gathering and discussion with others. How did it work out? Did you need to be as cautious as you were, or could you have made the decision more quickly?
- Would your friends describe you as analytical and calculating or intuitive and spontaneous? Why?
- What process do you go through before you make a decision?
- Tell me about an important decision you needed to make quickly.

If the job requires quick decision making that does not allow for the extensive gathering of information, consider some of the following questions:

- How much information do you need to feel comfortable making a decision? How do you get that information?
- Tell me about a decision you have made based on your gut feelings. How did it work out? How comfortable are you making decisions that way?
- Would your friends describe you as analytical and calculating or intuitive and spontaneous? Why?
- When have you had to rely upon your intuition to make a decision?

IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING CHANGE

Initiative

If the job requires someone with a high level of initiative to identify new opportunities and take on challenges, consider some of the following questions:

- Give me an example of a time when you completed a project without any support from others. What was the outcome?
- Tell me about an opportunity you identified that others missed.
- Describe some new challenges that you took on without encouragement from others.
- Name some new responsibilities you took on voluntarily.
- When you identify a potential opportunity what do you need before you will begin working towards it?
- What do you prefer, stable job responsibilities or frequently changing responsibilities, and why?

- Tell me about some occasions where you have shown initiative.
- Give me some examples of when you have shown initiative.

If the job consists of stable responsibilities and the individuals' responsibilities will rarely change, consider some of the following questions:

- What do you prefer, stable job responsibilities or frequently changing responsibilities, and why?
- Have you ever had a job where you identified changes that would make the work better, but you were not given the freedom to pursue your ideas? What was that like for you?
- Have you ever had a job where your responsibilities changed too often? What was that like for you?

Flexibility

If the job involves frequent change and you need someone who is flexible and able to adapt to changing circumstances, consider some of the following questions:

- Tell me about a significant change that occurred in your previous work and how you managed to cope.
- Would you prefer structure and routine in your job or flexibility and variety? Why?
- How do you adjust to changes in your work?
- How do you cope with change?
- What kinds of changes have you had to adjust to in the past?
- Have you ever been in a situation where things were changing too much? Describe it for me.
- Have you worked in a place that changed a lot? What was that like for you?
- Give me some examples of how you had to be flexible at work.

If the job involves little to no change and you need someone who is comfortable working in a stable environment, consider some of the following questions:

- Give me an example of a time when you thought an organization you worked for would have been better off sticking with their old ways of doing things.
- Have you ever worked in a place where you had to do the same tasks every day? What was that like for you?
- Have you ever been in a situation where things were changing too much? Describe it for me.
- Tell me about your experience working in environments with little change. Did you enjoy it or feel restricted?
- Have you ever changed things at work solely for the variety the change would bring?

DEALING WITH PRESSURE AND STRESS

Self-Control

If the job requires the individual to have a high level of self-control, consider some of the following questions:

- What do you do when you get frustrated with others? Tell me about a time when you were frustrated with a coworker.
- Give me an example of when you maintained your composure in a difficult situation.
- Give me an example of a time when you were angry with someone at work. What did you do?
- Describe a previous work experience that had you frequently dealing with upset people.
- What experience have you had dealing with irate customers?
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an upset customer. What did you do? What were the results? How did you feel afterwards?

Stress Tolerance

If the job requires frequently results in a high level of stress, consider some of the following questions:

- What do you do to alleviate stress?
- How do you tolerate stress?
- Name a time when you had to work under extreme stress.
- What types of activities do you find stressful?
- Name a time when you had difficulty coping with stressful tasks. What did you do to get yourself through that time?
- What type of stress do you find very hard to deal with?
- Are there stressful activities that you can not cope with? What are they?
- What do you find to be the most stressful?
- What kinds of extreme stress have you had to work under?
- What have been some of the most stressful things you have been involved in?