

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### FIVE STANDARD QUESTIONS

1. Will you tell me about yourself?
2. Why would you leave your current position? Why did you leave your previous position?
3. What type of position are you looking for?
4. What are your strong/weak points?
5. Where do you see yourself in five years?

### BEHAVIORAL BASED QUESTION BANK

#### **Professionalism**

1. Tell me about a work situation that irritated you.
2. Which of your previous jobs was the most satisfying and why?
3. Which job was the most frustrating and why?
4. Tell me about the best boss you ever had. Now tell me about the worst boss. What made it tough to work for him or her?
5. When was the last time you were criticized? How did you deal with it?
6. If you had the opportunity to change anything in your career, what would it be? What would you have done differently?
7. How do you measure your own success?
8. When you have been made aware of, or have discovered for yourself, a problem in your work performance, what was your course of action? Can you give me an example?
9. Tell me about a time when your supervisor/co-workers gave you feedback about your work/actions. What did you learn about yourself?
10. What have you done to further your own professional development in the last five years?
11. Tell me about a job that you had which required you to learn new things.
12. Tell me about a recent job or experience that you would describe as a real learning experience. What did you learn from the job or the experience?
13. Tell me about a time when you were asked to complete a difficult assignment even though the odds were against you. What did you learn from that experience?
14. Discuss the highlights of your most recent educational experience. Did you accomplish any special achievements? What were your most difficult challenges?
15. I noticed on your resume that you attended \_\_\_\_\_ training program. Please describe the training program.
16. How have you applied what you learned to your current job?
17. What three specific things about your last job gave you the most satisfaction? Why?
18. What have you done in your last job that makes you feel proud?
19. Give me an example of something you've done in previous jobs that demonstrate your willingness to work hard.
20. What is the biggest error in judgment or failure you have made in a previous job? Why did you make it? How did you correct the problem?
21. Tell me about a time when you had to give feedback to an employee who displayed a lack of professionalism in their work relationships. What did you say? What standards did you set? What was the outcome?

22. What types of things in your work have upset you, and how did you react to those situations?
23. What are some of the things your last employer could have done to keep you?
24. If you could do anything in the world, what would you do?
25. What is the most interesting thing you have done in the past three years?
26. Why should we hire you?
27. What are your short-term or long-term career goals?
28. What responsibilities do you want, and what kinds of results do you expect to achieve in your next job?
29. How did the best manager you ever had motivate you to perform well? Why did that method work?
30. What is the best thing a previous employer did that you wish everyone did?
31. What are you most proud of?
32. What is important to you in a job?
33. What do you expect to find in our company that you don't have now?
34. What brings you joy?
35. If you took out a full-page ad in the New York Times and had to describe yourself in only three words, what would those words be?
36. How would you describe your personality?
37. What motivates you the most?
38. If I call your references, what will they say about you?

### **Quality**

1. When you had a particularly uninteresting job, how did you deal with it?
2. How do you organize your work to ensure that you are most effective and productive?
3. Tell me about a time when you reached out for additional responsibility.
4. Give me an example of a time when you went beyond your employer's normal job expectations in order to get a job done?
5. Tell me about a time when you had to work on a project that did not work out the way it should have. What did you do?
6. Tell me about a suggestion you made to improve the way job processes/operations worked. What was the result?
7. Tell me about one of your workplace improvements that another department now uses.
8. Give an example of when you initiated a change in process or operations.
9. Describe something you have implemented at work. What were the steps you used to implement this?
10. Tell me how you keep your job knowledge current with the ongoing changes in the industry.
11. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
12. Give me two examples of things you've done in previous jobs that demonstrate your willingness to work hard.
13. Describe a course, project, or work experience that was complex. What kind of follow-up did you undertake? How much time was spent on unexpected difficulties?
14. Give me an example of when you initiated a change in process or operations in response to customer feedback.
15. Tell me about a marketing promotion/initiative or information dissemination you developed. How did it meet the customer's need(s)?
16. In some aspects of work it is important to be free of error. Can you describe a situation where you have tried to prevent errors? What did you do? What was the outcome?

**Service**

1. Tell me about an objective in your last job that you failed to meet and why.
2. Describe what steps/methods you have used to define/identify a vision for your unit/position.
3. In your current or former position, what were your short and long-term goals? How long ago did you set them? Who else was involved in setting them? Which ones were achieved?
4. How do you see your job relating to the overall goals of your present/previous organization?
5. Tell me about a time when you anticipated the future and made changes to current responsibilities/operations to meet future needs.
6. Give me an example of an important goal that you had set in the past, and tell me about your success in reaching it.
7. What projects were accomplished during your previous job? How were these accomplished? What experiences did you have when meeting deadlines for project completion? Explain.
8. Name one of your best accomplishments, including where the assignment came from, your plans in carrying it out, how you eventually did carry it out, and any obstacles you overcame.
9. Of your current assignments, which do you consider to have required the greatest amount of effort with regard to planning/organization? How have you accomplished this assignment? Tell me how you handled it. How would you assess your effectiveness?
10. Describe how your position contributes to your organization's/unit's goals. What are the goal's/unit's mission?

**People**

1. Thinking of the most difficult person you have had to deal with, describe an interaction that illustrates that difficulty. Tell me about the last time you dealt with him/her? How did you handle the situation?
2. Think of a problem customer that you had to deal with on your last job. Tell me what happened and how you handled it.
3. Give me a specific example of a time when you had to address an angry customer. What was the problem and what was the outcome? How would you assess your role in defusing the situation?
4. Describe a time when you took personal accountability for a conflict and initiated contact with the individual(s) involved to explain your actions.
5. Tell me about a time when you had to resolve a difference of opinion with a co-worker/customer/supervisor. How do you feel you showed respect?
6. Tell me about a time when you needed to give feedback to an employee with emotional or sensitive problems. Was the outcome?
7. Describe the way you handled a specific problem involving others with differing values, ideas and beliefs in your current/previous job.
8. Describe a work situation that required you to really listen and display compassion to a co-worker/employee who was telling you about a personal/sensitive situation.
9. Describe the way you handled a specific problem involving people in your last job.
10. Tell me about a time when you were able to provide a co-worker with recognition for the work they performed. What did you do?
11. By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people.
12. What kinds of people bug you?
13. Tell me about a time when you needed to address an employee's attitude. What did you say to that person? What was the outcome?
14. Tell me about a recent success you had with an especially difficult employee/co-worker.

**Teamwork**

1. Describe a situation when you worked with a person whose personality was the opposite of yours. How did you deal with it?
2. What did you do in your last job to contribute toward a teamwork environment? Describe how you felt your contributions affected the team.
3. What kind of environment would you like to work in?
4. What kinds of people would you rather not work with?
5. Have you heard the expression “roll with the punches”? Describe a past situation in which you had to do that in working with a difficult person?
6. Have you ever had to resolve a conflict with a coworker or client? How did you resolve it?
7. How have you worked as a member of a team in the past?
8. Gaining the cooperation of others can be difficult. Give a specific example of when you had to do that, and what challenges you faced. What was the outcome? What was the long-term impact on your ability to work with this person?
9. Please give me your best example of working cooperatively as a team member to accomplish an important goal. What was the goal or objective? What was your role in achieving this objective? To what extent did you interact with others on this project?
10. Describe a project you were responsible for that required a lot of interaction with people over a long period of time.
11. How have you recognized and rewarded a team player in the past? What was the situation?
12. Tell me about a course, work experience, or extracurricular activity where you had to work closely with others. How did it go? How did you overcome any difficulties?
13. Describe a problem you had in your life when someone else’s help was very important to you.
14. Tell me about the most difficult challenge you faced in trying to work cooperatively with someone who did not share the same ideas. What was the difference in ideas? What was the outcome? What was the long-term impact on your ability to get things done working with this person?
15. Tell me about a time when you needed to have co-workers working on a project who normally have different work styles/ideas. How did you pull them together?

**Integrity**

1. Describe a situation in which you felt it might be justifiable to break company policy or alter a standard procedure. What did you do?
2. What have you learned from your mistakes?
3. Tell me about a situation in which you blew it. How did you resolve or correct the situation to save face?
4. When was the last time you “broke the rules” and how did you do it?
5. Discuss a time when your integrity was challenged. How did you handle it?
6. What would you do if someone asked you to do something unethical?
7. Have you ever experienced a loss for doing what is right?
8. Have you ever asked for forgiveness for doing something wrong?
9. In what business situations do you feel honesty would be inappropriate?
10. If you saw a coworker doing something dishonest, would you tell your boss? What would you do about it?
11. Tell me about a specific time when you had to handle a tough problem which challenged fairness or ethical issues.

12. Think of a situation where you distrusted a co-worker/supervisor, resulting in tension between you. What steps did you take to improve the relationship?
13. If you can, tell me about a time when your trustworthiness was challenged. How did you react/respond?
14. Give me examples of how you have acted with integrity (walked your talk) in your job/work relationship.
15. Trust requires personal accountability. Can you tell me about a time when you chose to trust someone? What was the outcome?
16. Tell me about a time when you had to give the "benefit of the doubt" to a co-worker/supervisor. What was the outcome?
17. Please think back to a time when setting a positive example had the most beneficial impact on people you worked with. How did you determine that a strong example was needed? What was the effect on the staff?
18. Tell me about a time when you took responsibility for an error and were held personally accountable.

### **Communication**

1. What experience have you had with miscommunication with a customer or fellow employee, and how did you solve the problem?
2. Describe a time when you realized you needed to make an improvement in your communication skills, and how you managed it.
3. Describe a time when you communicated some unpleasant feeling to your supervisor. What happened?
4. Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when you felt the individual did not value your perspective.
5. Tell me about a time when you and your previous supervisor disagreed but you still found a way to get your point across.
6. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to approach things your way. What level was the person you had to persuade?
7. Tell me about a project/suggestion that you initiated. Explain how you communicated the project/suggestion.
8. Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get an important point across.
9. Tell me about your efforts to "sell" a new idea to your supervisor.
10. What have you done to improve your verbal communication skills?
11. What have you done to improve your listening skills?
12. How have you assessed your behavioral messages and what have you learned about yourself as a result?
13. Keeping others informed of your progress/actions helps them feel comfortable. Tell me your methods for keeping your supervisor advised of the status on projects.
14. Give me an example of when you 'went to the source' to address a conflict. Do you feel trust levels were improved as a result?
15. Describe the most significant written document, report, or presentation you have had to complete. What was the response from the employer?

### **Commitment**

1. We invest time, money, and training in our employees and like to reap the benefits of developing and maintaining a long-term relationship. Have you been a long-term employee with other companies? If not, why not? Do you foresee any obstacles to having a long-term relationship here?
2. If hired right now, what goal would you have for your role within the company in one year? In three to five years? What title and pay?
3. Tell me about a time when you have felt like giving up on a certain job. What did you do?
4. We all face times when personal issues pull us away from work responsibilities. If possible, tell me about a time when your dependability or attendance was challenged. How did you handle it and/or remain accountable or involved in work? How long did the situation last?

### **Leadership/Supervisory**

1. What has been your experience in supervising a diverse group of employees with varied backgrounds and skills, and what did you do to ensure the best fit of employees for each job?
2. What has been your experience in dealing with poor performance of employees? Give me an example.
3. Tell me about a leadership role that you have filled in the past. Describe the key leadership skills you feel you have and how you demonstrated them.
4. Give me an example of a time when you came up with a clever way to motivate your employees.
5. Describe a circumstance in which you recommended the dismissal of a worker who had proven he/she could not handle the job. What procedure did you follow?
6. What are three effective leadership qualities you think are important. How have you demonstrated these qualities in your past/current position?
7. Describe a leadership situation that you would handle differently if you had it to do over again.
8. What one experience proved to you that you would be a capable manager?
9. Give me an example of a time when you helped a staff member accept change and make the necessary adjustments to move forward. What were the change/transition skills that you used?
10. Tell me about a specific time when you had to handle a tough morale problem.
11. Tell me about a time when you had to take disciplinary action with someone you supervised.
12. Tell me about a time when you had to tell a staff member that you were dissatisfied with his or her work.
13. Tell me about a time when you had to handle a highly emotional employee.
14. Discuss a work situation in which you felt you successfully directed the work of others.
15. Tell me about a time when your department was going through long-term changes or working on a long-term project. What did you do to keep your staff focused?
16. What have you done to develop the skills of your staff? How many of your employees have received training (any form) during the past year? What were the specific topic areas? Did they ask for the training or did you suggest it to them?
17. Tell me about a specific development plan that you created and carried out with one or more of your employees. What was the specific situation? What were the components of the development plan? How long was the time frame from start to finish? What was the outcome?

18. Please tell me about your most successful attempt to encourage others to take action and get the job done. What led you to take these actions? Exactly how did you encourage others to take action or responsibility? What was the result of your efforts? Did anyone comment on your actions? Who? What was said? How often have you taken this type of action in the past six months?
19. Tell me about a time when you were responsible for hiring and orientating a new employee. What did you do to help them adjust?
20. Tell me about a time when you needed to delegate parts of a large assignment. How did you decide whom to distribute them to? What problems occurred? What was the outcome?
21. What specific information do/did you share with your staff, how often do you share this information and why?
22. Give me a specific example of how you have empowered your staff to make independent decisions.
23. Tell me about the expectations you create for staff. What are they? What factors do you consider in setting/communicating expectations?
24. Tell me about the specific talents and contributions of your team/staff and how you have utilized these qualities to increase the effectiveness of the unit.
25. Setting high expectations implies you believe the employee can deliver. Give me an example of having done this.
26. Give me an example of how you and your staff have celebrated success in the past. What was the occasion?
27. What consistent methods do you use to ensure that staff feels valued for their contributions?
28. Tell me about a time when you felt your staff was under too much pressure. What did you do about it?
29. How do you make your feelings known when you disagree with the views of your staff?

### **Decision Making/Problem Solving**

1. Give me an example of when you were faced with a difficult decision affecting your job. How did you deal with it?
2. In your current or past positions, what types of decisions do/did you make without consulting your boss?
3. What were the major obstacles that you overcame in your last job? How did you deal with them?
4. Tell me about any experience you have had turning a problem into a success.
5. Give me an example of a problem you faced on any job you have had and how you went about solving it.
6. Give me an example of a situation in which you took a calculated risk in a recent position. What were your considerations?
7. What have you done that was innovative?
8. What was the wildest idea that you had in the past year?
9. What is the most difficult decision that you have had to make? How did you arrive at your decision?
10. When taking on a new task, do you like to have a great deal of feedback and responsibility at the outset, or do you like to try your own approach?
11. You are on the phone with another department resolving a problem. The intercom pages you to pick up a customer on hold. At the same time, your manager returns your monthly report with red pen markings and demands the corrections within the hour. What do you do?
12. What type of approach to solving work problems seems to work best for you?

13. Give me an example of when you solved a tough problem.
14. Describe the most significant or creative presentation/idea that you developed/implemented.
15. Describe a time when you came up with a creative solution/idea/project/report to a problem in your past work.
16. Tell me about a time when you created a new process or program that was considered risky. What was the situation and what did you do?
17. Can you think of a situation where innovation was required at work? What did you do in this situation?
18. Describe an instance when you had to think quickly to free yourself from a difficult situation.
19. Tell me about a politically complex work situation in which you worked.
20. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
21. Give me an example of a time when there was a decision to be made and procedures were not in place? What was the outcome?
22. How do you go about solving problems at work?
23. Tell me about a specific time when you eliminated or avoided a potential problem before it happened.
24. What types of problems do you most enjoy tackling? Give me some examples of such problems you faced. What did you enjoy about them?
25. What types of problems do you least enjoy tackling? Give me some examples of such problems you faced. What was it about the problems that you least enjoyed?
26. To whom did you turn for help the last time you had a major problem and why did you choose that person?
27. Tell me about a decision you made but wish you had done differently.
28. Tell me about an experience in which you had a limited amount of time to make a difficult decision. What was the decision and the outcome/result of your decision?
29. Tell me about a decision you made while under a lot of pressure.
30. Tell me about a time when you had to make an unpopular decision.
31. Discuss an important decision you have made regarding work. What factors influenced your decision?
32. In a current job task, what steps do you go through to ensure your decisions are correct/effective?
33. Tell me about a tough decision you made. What steps, thought processes, and considerations did you take to make an objective decision?
34. In your last job, what problems did you identify that had previously been overlooked? Were changes made? Who supported the changes as a result of your ideas?
35. Describe a time when you facilitated a creative solution to a problem between employees.
36. Describe a decision you made or a situation that you would have handle differently if you had to do it over again.

**Time Management**

1. Give me a specific example of a time when you did not meet a deadline. How did you handle it?
2. Are you better at working on many things at a time, or are you better at working on and getting results on a few specific things? Please give me two examples that illustrate this.
3. Think of a day when you had plenty of things to do. Describe how you scheduled your time.
4. Tell me about your work experience in managing multiple job priorities with varied deadlines. When and how do you determine priority and deadline changes?
5. When was the last time you felt pressure on a job? How did the situation come about? How did you react? What made you decide to handle it that way? What effect, if any, did this have on your other responsibilities?

**Flexibility**

1. By providing examples, demonstrate that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations and/or environments.
2. What do you do when priorities change quickly? Give me one example of when this happened.
3. Tell me about a specific time when you were given new information that affected a decision that you had already made.
4. Tell me about a time when an upper-level policy change or decision held up your work. How did you respond?
5. Describe a work situation in which a project you worked on and felt was very important to you was delayed or postponed. How did it interrupt your schedule and how did you respond to it?
6. What methods or processes have you used to ensure a positive outcome for you and the company when you were facing a change in your job responsibilities?

**Diversity**

1. Tell me about a time when you had to adapt to a wide variety of people by accepting/understanding their perspective.
2. What have you done to further your knowledge/understanding about diversity? How have you demonstrated your learning?
3. Can you recall a time when you gave feedback to a co-worker who was unaccepting of others?
4. Can you recall a time when a person's cultural background affected your approach to a work situation?
5. How have you handled situations in which you could not understand a customer's strong accent?
6. Tell me about a time that you successfully adapted to a culturally different environment.
7. Tell me about a situation in which you had to separate the person from the issue when working to resolve differences?
8. How have you taken responsibility/accountability for an action that may have been offensive to the recipient?
9. Tell me about a time that you had adapted your style in order to work effectively with those who were different from you.
10. How have you reacted to conversations between co-workers that were clearly offensive to non-participants?

11. Give examples of when your values and beliefs impacted your relationships with your co-workers.
12. Tell me about a time that you evaluated your own beliefs or opinions around issues of difference.
13. Tell me about a time when you avoided forming an opinion based upon a person's outward appearance.
14. How have you made your voice heard in a predominantly male or female-dominated environment?
15. What measures have you taken to make someone feel comfortable in an obviously uncomfortable environment?
16. Give me a specific example of how you have helped create an environment where differences are valued, encouraged and supported.
17. What have you done to support diversity in your unit?