

## **Behavioral Interview Questions**

The questions below were selected to uncover personal and cultural aspects of your job candidate. You possess the technical expertise to write questions that uncover the candidate's technical experience that relates to your selection criteria.

### **Accountable**

- Describe a situation when your work did not meet your coworker or supervisor's expectations. What happened? What action did you take?
- Tell me about a time when you had to deliver on a commitment that was difficult for you. What did you do to motivate yourself?
- Have you ever been in a situation where your role or responsibilities haven't been clearly defined? What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you had to conform to a policy or procedure you did not agree with.
- Tell me of a time when you disagreed with a customer, supervisor, or coworker. What did you do to resolve the conflict? What was the outcome?

### **Assertive or Self Confident**

- Tell me about a situation when you had to speak up (be assertive) in order to get a point across that was important to you or crucial to your customer.
- We all find ourselves in stressful situations at work when keeping a positive attitude is most useful. Tell me about such a time and how did it turn out?
- Tell me about a time when you felt compelled to immediately address a difficult situation with your boss or supervisor when others wouldn't. (You had to do the right thing). What happened? What was the outcome?

### **Calm**

- Tell me about a time when you were under extreme pressure and remained calm and focused at work.
- Tell me about a time when events collided or you were expected to accomplish much in a short time, but you were able to keep your composure. What was the situation and result?
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a split second decision. What skill did you use to keep your composure? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an uncomfortable situation at work. How did you manage it?
- Describe a time when you were proud of your ability to withhold your comments until you had all the facts. What was the result?
- Tell me about a time when you had to let go of your need to control a situation. What was the issue? Why was it necessary for you to let go?

### **Communication**

- Tell of a time when your active listening skills really paid off. Perhaps a situation when others missed a key idea or issue.
- Describe your most successful experience in delivering a presentation or giving a speech. When did this happen?
- Describe a complex writing assignment (longer than 10 pages) you had to complete. Tell me how you organized the document and what help you had (if applicable) finishing it.
- Some situations require us to express ideas or opinions in a very tactful and careful way. Tell me about a time when you were successful with this particular skill.

## **Customer Focused**

- Tell me about a time when your success depended on your prior working relationship with a customer. Describe the situation and the outcome.
- Tell me about a time when you went the extra mile to meet the needs of a customer.
- Tell me about a time in your previous job when you accommodated the client or customer even though it was more work for you or went against your instincts. What was the result?
- Tell me about a situation where you had to remain quiet when dealing with a hostile customer. How did you handle the situation?

## **Detail Oriented**

- Describe a situation when you coordinated several events or people at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
- Tell me about a recent job situation that required great precision to complete a task. How did you handle the situation?
- Tell me about a task that was tedious or boring to you—but had to be done. How did you approach and tackle the task?
- Tell me how you manage your daily work schedule.
- When have you found it valuable to use a detailed checklist or procedure list to reduce potential errors on the job? What was the outcome? What would you do differently today?
- Give me an example of a situation where you needed to pay attention to small but important details? When was this? How did it turn out?
- Tell me about a time when you had to manage large amounts of paperwork. How did you keep things organized to maintain order and accuracy?

## **Empathetic/Optimistic**

- Tell me about a time when you were sensitive to how another reacted in an emotional or tense situation. What did you do? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you volunteered your help to someone in need. How did they react? How did it turn out?
- Give me an example of a time when your positive attitude caused others to be motivated or energized. What was the situation? What was the result?

## **Flexible**

- Tell of a situation where you had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you?
- Tell me about a time when you had to change your point of view or your plans to take into account new information or changing priorities.
- Describe an example of a time when you had to approach people (with different perspectives) for support or cooperation. How did you appeal to each person? What was the result?
- Describe a situation in which your first attempt to sell an idea failed. How did you react to this? What other approaches did you try?
- Tell me about a time when your work effort didn't go as planned (blocked by obstacles). How did you resolve this issue? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you had to accommodate unplanned activities or demands?
- Tell me about a time when you had to adapt quickly to changing conditions to accurately complete your job. What were the circumstances?
- Tell me about a time when you had to work in a chaotic or noisy environment. How did you deal with this situation? How did you ensure your productivity and accuracy in this environment?

## **Mentor**

- In a supervisory or group leader role, tell me about a time when you had to discipline or counsel an employee or group member? What was the nature of the discipline? What steps did you take?
- Tell me about a time when you coached a coworker to help them improve their skills or job performance, what did you do?
- Describe a situation where you helped motivate someone to improve his or her performance, what was the outcome?

## **Proactive**

- We can sometimes recognize a small problem and fix it before it becomes a major problem. Give an example of how you acted to prevent a larger problem from occurring.
- Tell me about a time when you thought through the consequences of a specific action in planning a project. What obstacles or barriers did you discover?
- Describe a situation in which you forecasted a problem and prepared a strategy for handling it. How did it turn out?

## **Problem Solving**

- What was the most difficult work problem you ever faced? How did you address the problem? What were the results?
- Tell me about a time when you used fact-finding skills to solve a problem. What was the situation? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you had to step away from traditional methods to solve a difficult or complex problem. Can you describe your approach? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you had to respond quickly to a crisis situation. What were the circumstances? What was the final outcome?
- Give me an example of a project you personally planned, implemented, measured, and evaluated. What problems did you solve along the way?
- Give me an example of how you solved a problem in a unique way within the past 18 months.

## **Quality**

- Tell me about a project that you were completely responsible for completing. How did you stay on task to complete it even though no one was checking your progress?
- Tell me about a time when you felt it would benefit the situation to disregard structure or formal processes to achieve a better outcome. What were the circumstances? How did it turn out?
- Give me an example of a time when you recognized an opportunity for process improvement in your department or group. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem? What was the outcome?

## **Risk Taking**

- We all learn through our mistakes. Tell me about a time when you confronted a coworker or supervisor because you knew they were making a mistake. What was the issue and how did it turn out?
- Tell me about a time when you had to collaborate with another to resolve a conflict that initially felt uncomfortable, but actually turned out better than you anticipated.
- Tell me about a time when you perceived friction or resistance from a coworker, supervisor, or customer and you immediately addressed this issue to enhance your working relationship. What happened? How is your relationship today?
- Tell me about a time when you felt compelled to express an unpopular viewpoint to maintain your integrity. What did you say and how did you say it?

## **Teamwork**

- Tell me about a time when someone else neglected or failed to deliver on their work commitments—and it had a negative impact on your productivity. How did you react? What was the outcome?
- Collaborative work relationships often ease tension and facilitate productive relationships. Can you give me a recent example where you intentionally enhanced a relationship to get a job done?
- Tell me about a time when you needed additional information from other people or references to make an informed decision. What did you do? How did your extra-credit research impact the outcome?
- Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker understand a task. How did you assist them? What was the result?
- Tell me about a time when you improved a process by creating a cross-functional team. What was the issue and how did it turn out?
- Can you give me a recent example of how you displayed loyalty or commitment to your current work group? Why was this act important to you? What was at stake?
- When were you part of a great team? What were the circumstances? How did you contribute?
- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your team's agreed course of action. What did you do?

## **Well Adjusted**

- Describe a situation where you had to deal with someone who didn't like you (or you didn't like). How did you handle it?
- Tell us about a time when you had to use coping strategies when dealing with a high-pressure situation?
- Tell me about a time when you found yourself on unfamiliar territory: a new situation. How did you adapt to this situation? What was the eventual outcome?
- Occasionally our work is judged or criticized unfairly or our intent is misunderstood. Can you tell me about a recent situation that fits this description? How did you react?
- Tell me about a recent threatening or difficult work situation. How did you approach this situation? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time in the past year when your patience was tested with coworkers, customers, or supervisors. How did you handle the situation? What was the result?
- We all get angry or frustrated from time to time. Give me an example of how you reacted in a recent situation.