



Human Resources

Sample interview questions to find the qualities you desire in an applicant

Remember, as a rule of thumb, keep your questions job/work related. Questions become 'dangerous' when they become personal or not job specific.

Questions to reveal integrity, honesty or trustworthiness:

- Discuss a time when your integrity was challenged. How did you handle it?
- What would you do if someone asked you to do something unethical?
- Have you ever experienced a loss for doing what was right on the job?
- Have you ever asked for forgiveness at work for doing something wrong?
- In what business situations do you feel honesty would be inappropriate?
- If you saw a co-worker doing something dishonest, would you tell your boss?

Questions to reveal personality, temperament, ability to work with others:

- 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?
- How would you describe your personality?
- When I call your references, what will they say is your greatest strength and your greatest weakness?
- Do you consider yourself a risk taker? Describe a situation in which you had to take a risk.
- What kind of people would you rather *not* work with?
- What kinds of responsibilities would you like to avoid in your next job?
- What are two or three examples of tasks that you do not particularly enjoy doing? Indicate how you remain motivated to complete those tasks.
- Tell me about a work situation that irritated you.
- Tell me about a recent time when you resolved a conflict with a co-worker or client.
- Describe the appropriate relationship between a supervisor and subordinates.
- What sort of relationships do you have with your associates, both at the same level and above or below you?
- How have you worked as a member of teams in the past?
- What is your management style? How do you think your subordinates perceive you?
- As a manager, have you ever had to fire anyone? If so, what were the circumstances, and did you handle it?
- Have you ever been in a situation where a project was returned for errors? What effect did this have on you?
- What previous job was the most satisfying and why?
- What job was the most frustrating and why?
- Tell me about the best boss you ever had. Now tell me about the worst. What made it tough to work for him or her?
- What do you think you owe to your employer?
- What does your employer owe to you?

Questions to reveal creativity, creative thinking or problem solving:

- When was the last time you 'broke the rules' (thought 'outside the box') and how did you do it?
- Give a specific example of something you have done at work that you consider innovative.
- What was the wildest idea you have had in the past year? What did you do about it?
- Give me an example of when someone brought you a new idea, particularly one that odd or unusual. What did you do?
- If you could do anything in the world, what would you do?
- Describe a situation in which you had a difficult (management) problem. How did you solve it?
- What is the most difficult decision you've had to make? How did you arrive at you decision?
- Describe some situations in which you worked under pressure or met deadlines.
- Were you ever in a situation in which you had to meet two different deadlines given to you by two different people and you couldn't do both? What did you do?
- What type of approach to solving work problems seems to work best for you? Give me an example of when you solved a tough problem.
- 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?
- You're on the phone with another department resolving a problem. The intercom pages you for a customer on hold. Your manager returns your monthly report with red pen markings and demands corrections within the hour. What do you do?
- Describe a sales presentation when you had the right product/service, and the customer wanted it but wouldn't buy it. What did you do next?

Miscellaneous questions:

- How do you measure your own success?
- What is the most interesting thing you've done in the past three years?
- What are your short-term or long-term career goals?
- Why should we hire you?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
- What is the best thing a previous employer did that you wish everyone did?
- What are you most proud of?
- What do you expect to find in our company that you don't have right now?
- Is there anything you wanted me to know about you that we haven't discussed?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Kinds of questions to avoid:

- Where are you from originally?
- Are you married?
- Tell me about your family life.
- When do you and your husband plan to start a family?
- Do you have a disability?
- I think I saw you in church a few weeks ago, was that you?
- Are there special religious holidays that you're going to want off?
- When did you graduate from high school? From college?
- When do you plan to retire?
- How are you planning to get to and from work?
- Are you politically active?
- Tell me about your membership in civic groups or political organizations.