



TPD Tips

Interview Guidebook





Introduction:

More effective interviews. More cohesive teams.

The interviewing phase can provide major insight into a candidate's fit with company culture. In this phase, the goal is to get a better understanding of what will motivate and engage the employee to ensure his or her success and longevity with your organization. If conducted effectively, a successful interview will help to minimize employee turnover in the future.

Spending time to better prepare for and structure the interview process can be extremely valuable and ensure you are getting the best insights into the candidate's character, potential, strengths and limitations.



To prepare you to conduct successful interviews, examples of interview questions are provided herein. While numerous questions are listed, only those that are most relevant should be asked. As the typical interview takes between 30 minutes and two hours to conduct, we suggest choosing a wide range of questions to ask during the course of the interview.



- 6 Quick Tips for Interviewing Success
- Basic Interview Questions
- Behavioral Interview Questions
- Situational Interview Questions
- Brainteaser Interview Questions
- Questions Not to Ask



Part 1:

6 Quick Tips for Interviewing Success

Make the candidate feel comfortable

- Allow time for general conversation that helps you and the candidate get to know one another beyond structured interview questions.

Use a range of interview questions and techniques

- Basic, behavioral, and situational questions should be utilized to gain a comprehensive understanding of the candidate's experience and fit for the position.

Keep the questions asked consistent

- Ask all candidates the same questions to ensure fairness. Take notes during conversation, and benchmark all candidate responses when evaluating.

Interview all candidates within a short time period

- It's recommended that all interviews take place within 2-3 days to ensure you have a basis for direct comparison. This way your evaluation will not be bias as a result of any primary or recency effect.

Listen and watch carefully

- 80% of communication is nonverbal! Stay present during the interview to pick up on body language and overall personality. Keep in mind that skills can be taught while attitude or willingness cannot.

Consider the candidate's interviewing experience

- If a candidate has only had two jobs in the last 12 years, chances are they may not be the best interviewee. However, considering loyalty alone, they may well be a great employee.



Part 2: Interview

Context:

Basic interview questions are straightforward questions that require defined, concise responses by the candidate. These basic interview questions are ideal to use in first round interviews as another method of screening for skills, applicable experience and culture fit.

A) The Very Basics

Insight: Understand the candidate's overall perception of himself/herself; start assessing for fit.

- Tell me about yourself
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What are your top three motivators?
- What de-motivates you?
- Why do you think you are a good fit for this job?

TPD Tip

While there is no way to directly compare candidate responses to this question, you can still assess answers based on how relevant, professional, and interesting they are. Do they ramble on and on? Do they mostly speak about work history? Do they talk about valuable life experience? Do they display well rounded characteristics?

B) Interest in Company and Industry

Insight: Understand the candidate's interest in and knowledge of the industry, the company, and the role. Gauge their enthusiasm.

- What do you know about our company?
- What do you know about this industry?
- What trends do you think affect our business?
- What attracted you to this company?
- Why do you want this job?

C) Previous Experience

Insight: **Understand successes and identify limitations in past work experiences.**

- When were you most satisfied with your job?
- What were the responsibilities of your last position?
- What did you like least about your last job?
- Why are you leaving your present job?

D) Future Goals and Aspirations

Insight: **Understand the candidate's future aspirations, desired working environment, and motivation to achieve his/her goals. Gauge his/her alignment with the goals of your organization.**

- What's your ideal company/job?
- Where would you like to be in your career five years from now?
- Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
- If you were to start your own business in the future, what would it be?

E) Confidence Testers

Insight: **Test the candidate's self-confidence and ability to pitch himself/herself against competition.**

- Why should we hire you?
- What can you do for us that other candidates can't?
- What makes you unique?



F) Compensation

Insight: **The candidate's salary expectations and evaluate his/her future earning potential.**

- What salary are you seeking?
- What is your salary history?
- If I were to give you this salary you requested but let you write your job description for the next year, what would it say?

G) The Final Question

After asking the interview questions you have prepared, be sure to always take a moment to ask what questions the candidate has for *you*.

Insight: **The candidate's prior research, hesitation, and topics of importance/value.**

- What questions do you have for me?

TPD Tip

Make sure that you ask this question as an open-ended question rather than a closed-ended question. Using open-ended questions such as 'What questions do you have for me?' rather than 'Do you have any questions for me?' is extremely helpful in encouraging the candidate to proactively ask away rather than give yes/no answers.

Questions YOU Can Expect to be Asked

- What do you enjoy most about working here?
- What don't you like about working here, what would you change?
- Why is this position open?
- Why should I choose to work here over other opportunities?
- How would I be supervised and evaluated to ensure my success in this role?
- Skills and experience aside, what qualities would make a candidate successful in this role?
- Are there any factors that you think would limit my capability in this role that I can improve on?
- What are the next steps in the interview process?



Part 3:

The Behavioral Interview

Assessing Past Experiences

Context:

Asking behavioral interview questions is the strongest screening technique employers can use to assess a candidate's suitability for a particular role. The idea here is that past behavior and performance is the best predictor of future performance in the candidate's new role. By asking behavioral interview questions, you can probe for deeper responses, learn about why the candidate has been successful in the past, understand what they are capable of doing in the future, and how to set them up for success at your organization.

A) Outcomes - Success and Failure

Insight: The candidate's perceptions and attributions of success and failure and the candidate's ability to learn from both positive and negative experiences.

- What was the last project you led, and what was the outcome?
- What is your greatest failure, and what did you learn from it?
- Give me an example of a time you did something wrong. How did you handle it?
- What assignment was too difficult for you, and how did you resolve the issue?
- Tell me about a work idea you suggested. Describe the situation and outcome.
- Tell me about a good decision you made recently at work.
- Tell me about a recent problem you faced at work and how you found the best solution.
- Tell me about a time when you had to convince someone to take an action they originally opposed.
- Describe the most significant written document or presentation that you had to complete. How did you accomplish it? What were the results?

B) Willingness, Initiative, and Prioritization

Insight: The candidate's willingness to take initiative and step outside of his/her job responsibilities, and his/her ability to thrive under pressure while remaining focused on priorities.

- Give me an example of a time that you felt you went above and beyond the call of duty at work?
- Tell me about a task that required you to be a self-starter. What did you do when there were no immediate directions? What was the result?
- Tell me about your most recent hectic day at work? How did you keep under control? How did you ensure that your priorities were addressed?
- What examples can you give that demonstrate your ability to meet deadlines and react to priorities? How are you able to decide?
- What types of decisions can you make without consulting your manager? Give me an example of one, and the steps you took to make the decision.

C) Ethics and Compliance

Insight: **The candidate's sense of right and wrong, ability to stand up for what he/she believes in, and decision making processes in difficult situations.**

- Give me an example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree. What did you do and why? What was the outcome?
- Describe an instance when you decided not to follow a standard policy or procedure. What did you do and why? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you faced an ethical dilemma; how did you handle it?

D) Management and Conflict Resolution

Insight: **The candidate's leadership and management style, ability to resolve problems and work with multiple personalities in a team.**

- Have you ever been on a team where someone was not pulling their own weight? How did you handle it?
- We have all had to work with someone who is difficult to get along with. Give us an example of when this happened to you and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to give someone difficult feedback. How did you handle it?
- If I were your supervisor and asked you to do something that you disagreed with, what would you do?
- What irritates you about other people, and how do you deal with it?
- Tell me about a time where you had to deal with conflict on the job.
- Can you describe a time when your work was criticized?
- Describe a time when a colleague didn't agree with the approach you wanted to take. What was the end result?
- Describe a situation in which you and a co-worker/client were in conflict with each other. What did you do to resolve the conflict? What was the outcome?

E) Life Experience

Insight: **The candidate's ability to overcome challenges and the major factors that influence the candidate's decision making in tough situations.**

- What was the most difficult period in your life, and how did you deal with it?
- What's the most difficult decision you've made in the last two years and how did you come to that decision?



Part 4:

The Situational Interview

'What If' Scenarios

Context:

Situational interview questions ask candidates what they would do in specific situations that relate to important aspects of the job they're applying for.

These interview questions are useful in assessing:

A candidate's immediate problem-solving abilities.

A candidate's train of thought in problem solving.

A candidate's ability to weigh out his/her options to come to the best decision.

A) Prioritization and Problem Solving

Insight: The candidate's pattern of thinking in prioritizing multiple projects of high importance, his/her ability to differentiate between what's urgent and what's important, and his/her ability to stay on top of major projects.

- Describe how you would handle a situation if you were required to finish multiple tasks by the end of the day, and there was no conceivable way that you could finish them?
- What would you do if you realized at deadline time that a report you wrote for your boss or professor was not up to par?
- You don't have the information you need to prioritize your projects. Your co-workers and supervisor are unavailable for you to ask for assistance. How do you handle the situation?



B) Management and Conflict Resolution

Insight: **The candidate's leadership and management style, ability to resolve problems and handle multiple personalities in a team.**

- What would you do if the work of a subordinate or team member was not up to expectations?
- Describe how you would handle the situation if you met resistance when introducing a new idea or policy to a team or work group.
- How would you handle it if you believed strongly in a recommendation you made in a meeting, but most of your co-workers shot it down?
- How would you deal with a colleague at work with whom you seem to be unable to build a successful working relationship?
- You disagree with the way your supervisor says to handle a problem. What do you do?
- As a supervisor, you've made an unpopular decision. What action would you take so that morale in the department is not negatively affected.
- In a team-leadership role, you discover that a team member has gone 'over your head' to propose an idea or complain about an issue without talking to you first. How do you handle the situation?
- You have been placed in charge of a project team for a new project. What are your first steps to get the team going and complete the project.

C) Ethics and Compliance

Insight: **The candidate's sense of right and wrong, his/her ability to stand up for what he/she believes in, and his/her decision-making processes in difficult situations.**

- If you found out your company was doing something fraudulent or against the law, what would you do?
- If you saw a co-worker doing something dishonest, what would you do?
- What would you do if someone in management asked you to do something unethical?



Part 5: The Brainteaser Interview

Problem Solving Under Pressure

Context:

While not always necessary to use, the brainteaser interview is a fun and insightful type of interview to conduct. Brainteaser interview questions are questions that are completely unrelated to the job at hand. These questions are useful in assessing:

The candidate's ability to cope under pressure.

The candidate's critical thinking skills.

The candidate's ability to draw on other areas of knowledge to solve problems.

The candidate's ability to thrive in difficult situations.

- How many times do a clock's hands overlap in a day?
- How many times heavier than a mouse is an elephant?
- How would you weigh a plane without scales?
- Tell me 10 ways to use a pencil other than writing?
- Sell me this pencil.
- If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?
- If you could choose one superhero power, what would it be and why?
- With your eyes closed, tell me step-by-step how to tie my shoes.





Part 6: Questions NOT to ask

When conducting interviews, it is imperative that the questions asked comply with human rights regulations and local labor laws. Each province, territory and/or state, as well as the federal government, has established a human rights act or code that prohibits discrimination in employment. Failure to avoid discriminatory questions can make your organization vulnerable to lawsuits and a tarnished reputation.

To avoid liability, here are some of the topics you should not ask questions relating to:

- Race
- Religion
- Nationality
- Birthplace
- Age
- Mental or Physical Disability
- Previous or present drug use or alcohol dependence
- Marital/Family Status
- Pregnancy
- Sexual Orientation
- Pardoned Conviction

Examples of Interview Questions You Should Not Ask

- Are you married?
- What religious holidays do you observe?
- Do you have children?
- How old are you?
- What country are you from?
- Is English your first language?

Note:

The list provided above is simply a guideline and should not be utilized exclusively to draw conclusions about question appropriateness. Consult a legal professional for clarification.

Conclusion

The interviewing phase is one of the most crucial phases of the hiring process. Proper preparation and structure can make a major difference in getting the right people on board and ensuring that they are here to stay. Remembering tips for interview success and using a range of interview techniques will put you on the right path to building successful teams.



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