



Interview Questions

- For training on competency-based interviewing, visit www.mindtools.com/rs/HiringPeople.

Get-To-Know-You Questions

- What have you accomplished in the past that makes you particularly qualified for this position?
- What motivated you to be interested in this position?
- How would your last supervisor describe you?
- What aspects of your last job did you really like?
- What are some job responsibilities you do not like?
- How do you know when you have done a good job?
- What is your overall philosophy when managing or supervising others?
- How would you describe your basic leadership style?
- What is your long-term career objective?
- What areas do you need to further develop in order to meet your career goals?

Competency Questions

General

- What do you find difficult in your current job?
- What tasks or activities do you find interesting?
- What do you spend most of your time doing?
- What excites you about this new role?
- What worries you about it?

Communication

- Discuss a time when you had to assert yourself or speak up in order to get a point across that was important to you.
- Have you had to “sell” an idea to your co-workers, classmates or group? How did you do it? Did they “buy” it?
- How do you ensure that someone understands what you are saying? Tell me about a time when you had to use these skills in the workplace.
- Describe a situation where you missed important details that were communicated to you. What was the outcome? How did you resolve the situation?
- Describe an example of when you jumped into a task or project before you fully understood the entire concept.
- Give me an example of a time when you were unclear about the directions given to you for a work assignment. What did you do to clarify the directions? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a presentation to a large group.
- Tell me about a time when you were required to give a presentation and it did not go as planned. What happened? What contributed to the problem? What would you do differently?



- Describe the last written communication you had with your boss.
- Tell me about a time in which you chose to write your message versus talking to the person directly and that decision turned out to be a mistake. How did you know it was a mistake? What did you do to resolve the situation? What did you learn as a result?

Interpersonal Skills

- Tell me about your relationship with a co-worker with whom you work well.
- Describe the most difficult working relationship you've had with an individual. What specific actions did you take to improve the relationship? What was the outcome?
- Think about a difficult boss, professor or other person. What made him or her difficult? How did you successfully interact with this person?
- Tell me about a time when you were able to establish rapport with a "difficult" person. How did you go about it? What were the results?
- Describe a situation in which you developed an effective win/win relationship with a stakeholder or client. How did you go about building the relationship?
- Describe a time that politics at work affected your job. How did you handle it?

Motivation

- Give me an example of a significant professional goal you met. How did you achieve it? What were the obstacles? How did you overcome them?
- Tell me about a performance standard that you have set for yourself. How are you working towards meeting that standard?
- Describe a situation in which you persevered with an idea or a plan even when others disagreed with you.
- All jobs have their frustrations and problems. Describe examples of specific job conditions, tasks or assignments that have been dissatisfying to you.
- How have you motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you did not want to do?

Initiative

- Give me an example of when you were given a project and did more than was required in order to exceed someone's expectation.
- Tell me about a project you initiated. What did you do? Why? What was the outcome? Were you happy with the result?
- Describe for me two improvements you have made in your job in the past six months.
- Tell me about a suggestion you made to improve the way job processes/operations worked. What was the result?
- Tell me about a situation where you attempted to improve something and you were met with resistance. How did you handle the situation?
- Describe a situation in which you recognized a potential problem as an opportunity. What did you do? What was the result? What do you wish you had done differently?



Stress Management

- Describe a time when you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
- Describe a project or goal that caused you frustration.
- Describe a situation in which you were under pressure and you feel you handled it well.
- How do you know when you are under stress?
Whom do you go to for support when you are stressed or under pressure at work? Why and how is this person instrumental in alleviating your stress?
- Describe a situation in which you had to exercise a significant amount of self-control.
- Describe a time when stress from your personal life threatened to interfere with your work. What did you do?

Problem Solving/Analytical Skills

- Describe a difficult problem that you tried to solve. How did you identify the problem? How did you go about trying to solve it?
- Describe a major project that you worked on where things did not go exactly as planned.
- Tell me about a time when you had to identify the underlying causes of a problem.
Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.
- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.
- Tell me about a time when your manager was unavailable and you had to solve an immediate problem. What did you do and what was the outcome?
- Give me an example in which you failed to come up with a solution to a problem. What caused the failure?
What would you do differently next time?
- Tell me about a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- What steps do you follow to study a problem in order to fully understand the situation?

Decision Making

- Tell me about a difficult decision you had to make. What information led you to make the decision that you made? What other possible solutions were there? What was the final outcome?
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic to make a decision.
- Recall for me a time when you had to choose between several alternatives. How did you evaluate each alternative?
- Tell me about a time when you made a decision and then felt you had to defend your decision to co-workers or staff.
- Describe a situation in which a prompt and accurate decision on your part was critical. What did you consider in reaching your decision?
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you needed. How did you handle it? Why? Were you happy with the outcome?
- Tell me about a situation where you made a poor decision and had to live with the consequences.
- Tell me about a decision you made in the past that later proved to be wrong. Why was it wrong? What would you do differently now, if anything, in making that decision?



Teamwork

- Tell me about a time when you had to rely on a team to get things done.
- Think of a time when you worked effectively in a team situation. Describe how you felt about the contributions of the others on the team.
- Give me an example of one of the most significant contributions you made as a member of a high performing team. What, in your opinion, made it a high performing team?
- Tell me about one of the toughest teams/groups you've had to work with. What made it difficult? What did you do?
- Describe a team experience you found disappointing. What should you have done to improve the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you were on a team, and one of the members wasn't carrying his or her weight. What did you do to try to prevent this?
- 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?
- Tell me about a team for which you were the leader. How did you promote the effectiveness of your team? What were the results?

Time Management/Organization

- Walk me through last week. Tell me how you planned the week's activities and how the schedule worked out?
- Tell me about a project that you planned. How did you organize and schedule the tasks? How did you develop your action plan?
- We often have multiple tasks to accomplish in a day. Tell me about a time when you had to handle many competing priorities. How did you plan your time? What were the results?
- We all have had times when we just couldn't get everything done on time. Tell me about a time when this happened to you.
- Tell me about a time when you were given a deadline by someone of higher authority that could not possibly be met. How did you handle it?
- Describe a time when you missed a deadline. What was the result and what did you learn from the experience?
- Tell me about a time when you rushed to complete a project and sacrificed quality for efficiency.
- Describe a time when you had to make a difficult choice between your personal and professional life.

Impact:

- What would you expect to achieve in the first three months in the role?