

## **Interview Questions**

The following sections provide sample questions to be used in evaluating various performance factors. All questions in each section need not be asked. However, each candidate should be asked the same initial set of questions.

### ***Initiative***

Following is a list of sample questions designed to gather information about an individual's ability to identify tasks that need to be done without specifically being told to do them.

1. Have you found any ways to make your job easier or more rewarding?
2. Have you ever recognized a problem before your boss or others in the organization? How did you handle it?
3. We've all had occasions when we were working on something that just "slipped through the cracks." Can you give me some examples of when this happened to you? Cause? Result?
4. In your past experience, have you noticed any process or task that was being done unsafely (incorrectly)? How did you discover it or come to notice it?
5. Give me some examples of doing more than required in your job?
6. Can you think of some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts?
7. What new ideas or suggestions have you come up with at work?

### ***Stress Tolerance***

Following is a list of questions designed to provide information relating to an individual's stability of performance under pressure. These questions are not designed to rate a person's stress level. They are designed to give the interviewer an idea of how the applicant has reacted to past stressful situations.

1. What pressure do you feel in your job? How do you deal with them?
2. Describe the highest-pressure situations you have been under in your job recently. How did you cope with them?
3. Tell me how you maintain constant performance while under time and workload pressures.
4. Describe the last time a person at work (customer, coworker, boss) became irritated or lost his/her temper. What did they do? How did you respond? What was the outcome?
5. Tell me about some situations in which you became frustrated or impatient when dealing with (customers, coworkers, boss). What did you do?
6. Give me an example of when your ideas were strongly opposed by a coworker or supervisor. What was the situation? What was your reaction? What was the result?

### ***Planning and Organizing***

Following is a list of questions designed to gather information relating to an individual's ability to schedule work and handle multiple tasks.

1. How do you organize your work day?
2. How often is your time schedule upset by unforeseen circumstances?
3. Describe a typical day...a typical week. (Interviewer, listen for planning.)
4. How do you establish priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.
5. What is your procedure for keeping track of items requiring your attention?
6. We have all had times when we just could not get everything done on time. Tell me about a time that this happened to you. What did you do?
7. Tell me how you establish a course of action to accomplish specific long- and short-term goals.
8. Do you postpone things? What are good reasons to postpone things?
9. How do you catch up on an accumulated backlog of work after a vacation or conference?

### ***Technical and/or Position Specific***

Following is a list of questions designed to gather information relating to an individual's past work experience, duties, and working conditions which are similar to those of the position for which the individual is being considered.

1. What training have you received in \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Describe your experience with the following tools and equipment. (Interviewer, list job-related tool).
3. Walk me through the procedures you would follow to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What equipment have you been trained to operate? When/where did you receive that training?
5. What equipment did you operate in your job at \_\_\_\_\_?
6. Describe your experience performing the following tasks. (Interviewer, list job-related tasks.)
7. What job experiences have you had that would help you in this position?
8. How do you follow the prescribed standards of safety when performing (task)?
9. Being a \_\_\_\_\_ certainly requires a lot of technical knowledge. How did you go about getting it? How long did it take you?

### ***Work Standard***

Following is a list of questions designed to gather information relating to an individual's personal standard of performance.

1. What are your standards of success in your job? What have you done to meet these standards?
2. What do you consider the most important contribution your department has made to this organization? What was your role?

3. What factors, other than pay, do you consider most important in evaluating yourself or your success?
4. When judging the performance of others, what factors or characteristics are most important to you?
5. Describe the time you worked the hardest and felt the greatest sense of achievement.
6. Tell me about a time when you weren't pleased with your work performance. Why were you upset with your performance? What did you do to turn around your performance?

### ***Teamwork***

Following is a list of questions designed to gather information relating to a person's ability to work and get along with others.

1. We've all had to work with someone who is very difficult to get along with. Give me an example of when this happened to you. Why was that person difficult? How did you handle the person? What was the result?
2. When dealing with individuals or groups, how do you determine when you are pushing too hard? How do you determine when you should back off? Give an example.
3. How do you go about developing rapport (relationships) with individuals at work?
4. Give me some examples of when one of your ideas was opposed in a discussion. How did you react?
5. Tell me, specifically, what you have done to show you are a team player at \_\_\_\_\_.
6. We all have ways of showing consideration for others. What are some things you've done to show concern or consideration for a coworker?
7. How do you keep your employees informed as to what is going on in the organization?
8. What methods do you use to keep informed as to what is going on in your area?

### ***Communication Skills***

Following is a list of questions designed to gather information relating to an individual's communication skills. This section also includes observations to be made during the interview. These questions should be customized to fit your position. Normally, only two or three questions would be used.

1. We've all had occasions when we misinterpreted something that someone told us (like a due date, complicated instructions, etc.). Give me a specific example of when this happened to you. What was the situation? Why was there a misinterpretation? What was the outcome?
2. What kind of reports/proposals have you written? Can you give me some examples?
3. Give me an example of when you told someone to do something, and they did it wrong. What was the outcome?
4. What reports that you are currently preparing (or recently prepared) are the most challenging and why?
5. What kinds of presentations have you made? Can you give me some examples? How many presentations do you make a year?
6. Give me an example from your past work experience where you had to rely on information given to you verbally to get the job done.

7. What different approaches do you use in talking with different people? How do you know you are getting your point across?
8. What is the worst communication problem you have experienced? How did you handle it?
  - a. Interviewer's Observations
    - i. Consider if the applicant is able to express himself/herself effectively and in a well-organized manner.
    - ii. Observe the applicant's non-verbal communication.
    - iii. Consider whether the applicant's grammar, sentence structure, etc. are appropriate to the requirements of the position.

### ***Leadership***

Following is a list of questions designed to gather information relating to an individual's utilization of appropriate interpersonal styles and methods in guiding individuals or a group toward task accomplishment.

1. Tell me about a time you had a firm stand with a coworker. What was the situation? What was difficult about the coworker? What was the firm stand you had to take?
2. Describe how you instruct someone to do something new. What were you training them to do? Walk me through how you did it.
3. Tell me about a time you had to win approval from your coworkers for a new idea or plan of action.
4. Tell me about a new idea or way of doing something that you came up with which was agreed to by the boss. What did you do to get it to the right person? What did you do to get the boss to agree? Be specific.
5. Describe any supervisory or leadership training, schooling, or work experience you have had and its relevance to this position.
6. What leadership skills and experience do you have that would qualify you as an effective leader? Be specific.

### ***Job Motivation***

Following is a list of questions designed to help identify an applicant's motivation to do the type of work the position requires. The intent is not to see if they had good motivation/satisfaction in their previous jobs, but to see if the types of things they enjoy doing will be available in this position. For example, if a person said he enjoyed his last job because he like dot work outside and with people doing different things all of the time, a desk job in accounting would probably not provide high satisfaction.

1. What do you like best (least) about your job as a \_\_\_\_\_?
2. What were/are your reasons for leaving \_\_\_\_\_?
3. Give me some examples of experiences in your job at \_\_\_\_\_ that were satisfying? Dissatisfying? Why?
4. What gave you the greatest feeling of achievement in your job at \_\_\_\_\_? Why?
5. All jobs have their frustrations and problems. Describe specific job conditions, tasks, or assignments that have been dissatisfying to you. Why?
6. Give me some examples of past work experience that you have found personally satisfying.

7. What are some recent responsibilities you have taken on? Why did you assume these responsibilities?
8. Tell me about a time when the duties and responsibilities available in a specific position overlapped with duties and responsibilities that brought you personal satisfaction.
9. Why do you want to be a (title of position)?
10. Why did you choose this (career, type of work)?