

# Interview Questions

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## Behavioral - Personal

1. Walk me through your background/tell me about yourself.
2. If I asked others to describe you to me, what words would they use?
3. What is your biggest accomplishment and why do you view it as such?
4. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
5. Describe your most significant success & failure in the last two years.
6. What value do you bring to the company?
7. How do you determine or evaluate success?
8. What are your long-range/short-term career objectives?
9. What is the most unusual or creative idea you have come up with? How do you foster creativity in others?
10. What have you done in the past year to develop your skills and abilities, beyond getting your
11. MBA?
12. What is your personal mission statement?
13. Describe your decision-making process around the issue of getting your MBA.
14. When you go to the Internet, what sites do you look at?
15. The last time you did not know what decision to make, what did you do?
16. Tell me about the toughest decision you've made in the past 6 months. What did you consider when making the decision?
17. How would you describe your basic leadership style?
18. Why do you want to work at \_\_\_\_\_?

## Behavioral - General

1. Tell me about a time when you saw an opportunity that required immediate action or the opportunity would be lost. What did you do? *(Read: Are you action oriented?)*
2. Tell me about a time when you had a serious disagreement with a co-worker/supervisor. How did you handle it? *(Are you composed under pressure?)*
3. Tell me about the most adverse situation you've had at work. What was the situation? How did you handle it? *(Do you have conviction/courage?)*
4. Tell me about a time when you were assigned a project you had to complete very quickly, but didn't have all the information you needed. What did you do? *(How do you deal with ambiguity?)*
5. Tell me about your most intellectually challenging or difficult problem. Why was it difficult? How did you work through it? > Intellect/Problem Solving
6. Tell me about a time when you took on a significant risk. How did you determine it was worth taking the risk? *(Are you self-confident?)*
7. Tell me about a recent project you managed and the systems and processes you put into place to ensure success.
8. Tell me about a project you owned that crossed group or division boundaries. How did you keep your important parties informed? What problems did you encounter and how did you solve them?

9. Tell me about the last time you had an unhappy customer. How did you handle it?
10. Tell me about the best/worst team you've worked on. What was your contribution/how did you turn the situation around? (*Are you a team player?*)

### Communication

1. Success on the job, in part, depends on having good work relationships. Tell me of a time that you were able to get the job done because you had such a relationship with another person.
2. Describe a situation in which your success depended upon communicating with people from different backgrounds and levels.
3. Tell me about a time on the job when you had to handle a sensitive situation.
4. Describe for me a situation when you were a relative newcomer and saw people doing things in a way you considered ineffective or inefficient. Talk to me about how you handled that situation.
5. Talk to me about how you dealt with a person who was inflexible. Give me specific tactics you employed.
6. Describe a situation in which you had to decide the best way to summarize, organize, and present complex information.
7. When working with people, we often find that one style doesn't always work for every person – we have to be flexible in our style of relating to others. Can you tell me of a time when you had to vary your style with a particular individual?
8. Standing up for your point of view may not always be a popular position to take. Tell me about a time when you had to do that.
9. Has there been a time when you thought that you had a better idea than that of one of your supervisors? How did you handle the situation?
10. You've heard of the expression, "being able to roll with the punches." Tell me of a time when you had to do that when dealing with a difficult person.
11. Tell me of a time when you had a miscommunication with a client or fellow employee and how you resolved it.
12. Describe a time when you had to communicate something unpleasant to a supervisor.
13. At one time or another, we all have had problems getting our point across. Give me an example of when this happened to you.
14. Tell me of a time when you didn't communicate something unpleasant, but should have. What were the consequences?
15. Gaining the cooperation of others can be difficult. Give a specific example of when you had to do that.

### Leadership

1. Give me a specific example of when you had to motivate a group of people to get an important job done.
2. Tell me about a time when you had to rally the troops to complete a difficult assignment. What did you do and what were the results?
3. How do you balance the need to supervise without "doing the work yourself" for your team?
4. Give me an example of how you've motivated others.
5. Describe a situation when you had to mobilize others to take action on a specific goal.
6. If you had to describe your leadership style, what would it be? (Follow-up) Talk to me about how you've implemented (or would implement) that style on the job.
7. Give me an example when you simply had to use your authority to get something accomplished. (Follow-up) What were the consequences?
8. Assume that you are managing a project and as the leader, you are expected to give feedback to team members. Describe how you would give feedback to someone who is not contributing quality work.
9. Describe a situation in which you were responsible for a project and at least one of your team members had more experience or expertise than you did in one area.
10. Understanding how other people think is often a part of being a leader on a project. Describe an incident that you've experienced in which that understanding was key in the project's success.
11. Give me an example of a time when you've been instrumental in empowering a person or a group to accomplish something.

12. At times, a situation arises when we can really “make our mark” on the business we’re working on. Tell me about a time when you were involved in that kind of situation and how you took advantage of it.
13. How frequently do you meet with your immediate subordinates as a group? What do you do in preparation? At the meeting? After the meeting?
14. What recent problem have you had in which you included your subordinates in arriving at a solution? What approach did you take to get them to accomplish the task?
15. Tell me about a specific time when you had to handle a tough morale problem.
16. Tell me about a time when you had to tell a staff member that you were dissatisfied with his or her work.
17. Describe a time when you came up with a creative solution to a problem between two employees.
18. Describe how you communicate priority projects to your staff without making them feel overwhelmed.

### **Decision Making/Risk Taking**

1. The last time you did not know what decision to make, what did you do?
2. Tell me about the toughest decision you’ve made in the past 6 months. What did you consider when making the decision?
3. Sometimes you have to make a decision even when others believe that it may be premature. Can you tell me about a time when you made a decision even when others were not ready to do so?
4. While planning is usually important, there are times when being spontaneous can lead to success. Tell me about a time on the job when you were able to be spontaneous with good results.
5. Describe an important decision you made that affected the course of a project or an activity.
6. Tell me about a time when you made a decision that at the time was risky.
7. Describe a situation in which you had to defend your actions or recommendations because they were challenged by others.
8. Please describe an experience that demonstrates your ability to evaluate a situation on the spot.
9. What was the most difficult decision you have made in the last six months? What made it so difficult?
10. What was the biggest obstacle you had to overcome in order to incorporate a new idea or process? Why was it an obstacle? How did you overcome it?
11. Give me an example of a time when you had to analyze another person or a situation carefully in order to be effective in guiding your action or decision.
12. Tell me of a time when you were told by two different people how to handle a project two different ways. What did you do and how did you arrive at that decision?
13. Give me an example of when you’ve demonstrated the ability to make quick and accurate job-related decisions.
14. Tell me about a time when an upper-level decision or policy change held up your work.
15. Give me an example of a time when you stuck to procedure when it may have been easier to go around policy.
16. Give me an example of when you weren’t successful in dealing with a tough decision you had to make.
17. Tell me about an experience when you had a limited amount of time to make a difficult decision.
18. Tell me about a decision that you made while under a lot of pressure.
19. Describe a situation where you heard of some new technology and implemented it.
20. Describe a situation where you were not supported in a task and how you dealt with it.
21. Do you think of yourself as an internal entrepreneur and why?
22. How do you determine if a plan is worth the risk of rocking the boat?
23. If it were apparent that there was little support for something you felt strongly about, would you try it anyway? Why?
24. What do you think of the phrase, “no risk, no reward?”
25. Describe a time when you weighed the pros and cons of a risk and why you decided to take it?
26. Describe a time when you were criticized for taking a risk. What was your reaction to the criticism?
27. Do you believe in the concept of calculated risk and what does it mean to you?
28. Describe a time when you seemed to be on the wrong side of an issue and what you did or did not do.

## Managing Change

1. Tell me the part you played in implementing a new system and/or technology in your organization.
2. Tell me how you dealt with those who expressed the sentiment of, "Why change when we have always done it this way?"
3. What new technologies are out there that you would like to implement? Why?
4. How do you win people over to the adoption of new techniques or technologies?
5. How do you instill ownership in people when new ways of doing things are introduced?
6. How do you change the culture of a business? Department? Function?

## General Management

1. Tell me about your knowledge of other functions not related to your own. Describe in detail.
2. Do you have expertise in any other functions or disciplines? If so, describe.
3. How has your chief competition hurt your business?
4. If you could adopt something or some concept you know your chief competition has, what would that be?
5. Describe how functions within your business support each other to deliver what the customer wants.
6. Describe how international competition is impacting your business.
7. Describe how domestic competition is impacting your business.
8. What is the next big technological advance in your industry and how are you preparing for it?
9. Define the term "business partnering" for me.

## Marketing

1. Why Marketing?
2. How would you brand yourself?
3. Tell me about a product you think is well marketed. Why is it? If you were a competitor, how would you market in response?
4. List 3 products at different stages in their lifecycles. What is next for them?
5. Choose a product and illustrate the function of the 4Ps in the marketing process.
6. You are a product manager of X, what would you do in your first 30 days?
7. You work in marketing for Contadina. The company is evaluating the development and introduction of a branded fresh tomato. What things would you consider?
8. Consider yourself as the product and I am your target market. Put together an advertising campaign.

## Finance

1. Why Finance?
2. What's a P/E and how do you use it? What if 2 companies have the same value of P/E ratios – which company do you think is better?
3. What is cash flow? How can you utilize the cash flow to evaluate a company?
4. How would you value a stock you are considering buying?
5. Describe the finance functions within a company and where you see yourself fitting.
6. What elements do you consider when doing a valuation?
7. Explain net present value to a non-finance major.
8. What is our company's stock price? How would you forecast the future stock price for next year?
9. You are with Intel finance and you are asked to check out a supplier to see if the company would be a good supplier. What would you look at to make this decision?

## Case Questions

1. You've inherited a small manufacturing company and need to decide to sell it or stay in business. What do you do?
2. You are consulting for a major distillery in Canada. They mainly produce a mid-priced vodka product and 2 different brands of mid-priced gin. Every year, their profits are shrinking. What could be causing this?
3. You are consulting for a small manufacturer of motorcycles. They hand craft their motorcycles and are well reputed for having some of the best quality on the market. A large multi-national competitor

has announced that it will begin selling high-end motorcycles incorporating the newest engine technology. What should your client do?

4. You are consulting for one of the largest supermarket chains in the country. This chain is considering opening its own bank branches in its supermarket locations. What is your advice?
5. Your client is a small regional bank in the U.S. They are considering closing more and more of their branch locations, and diverting their resources to telephone and internet banking facilities.
6. Should they implement this strategy?
7. You are consulting for a major Canadian airline. Every year, they make more sales and every year, they lose more money. What could be causing this?
8. (The interviewer puts a product on the table between you.) "Market this product to me".
9. A German luxury car manufacturer is interested in entering the sport-utility vehicle market (for example, Jeep Cherokee) after noticing that the market has grown dramatically worldwide in the past two years. How would you advise the manufacturer? What does it need to know before making an entry decision? If it chooses to enter, what might a viable strategy be?
10. A North American manufacturer/retailer of high-end glassware experienced a dramatic decline in same-store sales at its retail outlets last year. How would you begin to assess the reasons for the decline? Using your analysis as a basis, what strategy would you recommend for the manufacturer?
11. A U.S.-based pharmaceutical company that focuses on discovering, developing, and selling drugs for the treatment of cancer has been experiencing flat growth and is interested in expanding into new businesses. In view of the growth and profitability of stand-alone cancer treatment centers in the U.S., the company is considering establishing and operating similar centers in China. This would be the company's first foray into the cancer treatment center business. How would you evaluate the attractiveness of the opportunity?
12. The Swiss Ski Association has been petitioned by an international snowboarding club to permit snowboarding on the ski slopes within its jurisdiction. (Assume that the association currently forbids snowboarding on all Swiss ski slopes.) If the association is interested in maximizing profits, how should it respond to the petition? What factors would the answer depend upon?

### Asking the Interviewer

1. How would you characterize the culture of the company? Management philosophy? Core strengths?
2. What are the traits of a successful (fill in job description here)?
3. How are the company's values reflected in everyday activities?
4. Describe your experience here (best to be asked of hiring managers, not HR folks).
5. Describe a typical day for (fill in job description here).
6. Describe a potential career path within the company.