

Sample Behavior-Based Questions

The goal of an interview is to determine three things about the candidate:

1. Can the candidate do the job?

Does the candidate have required skills, knowledge, education and experience for this position? Has he or she been able to articulate real experience-based scenarios to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and other requirements for the job?

The following are examples of questions that can be used to determine if the candidate can do the job:

- a) "Describe the most important skills that have led to your success in the position for which you are applying. Recount how you have used those skills during your career. What has been their impact on your career?"
- b) "Tell me about a time when a supervisor gave you feedback concerning a skills weakness. What actions did you take and what was the outcome?"
- c) "Explain how you could leverage your knowledge, skills, and experience to improve performance in the position for which you are applying. How would you implement your plan of action? What do you think will be the result the first year?"
- d) "Tell me about a time when you did not have the resources you needed to perform the job successfully. What resources were you lacking? What actions did you take to solve the resource problem? What were the results?"
- e) "Describe the knowledge and skills that team members would need to possess to be successful. What have you done to ensure that your team members possess the necessary skills to be successful? What was the result?"
- f) "Tell me about a time when you did not have the knowledge and skills to excel in the job. What did you do? What was the result?"
- g) "Describe your experience performing xyz task? What approach would you take to perform the critical tasks for the position you are applying? What result would you expect initially and over time?"
- h) "Tell me about a time when there was a need to improve the way a certain aspect of your job was performed. What was that aspect of your job that required improvement? What did you do and what was the result?"

- i) “Tell me about a time when you had to help your team members accomplish a task. What was the task? What was your contribution? How did it turn out?”
- j) “How do the knowledge, skills and experience that you will bring to the job contribute to the overall success of the organization?”

2. Will the candidate do the job?

Is the candidate motivated? Are job requirements consistent with what the candidate enjoys doing? Do the person’s career objectives align with the duties of the job, or are there advancement opportunities? Does the candidate job history evidence the type of upward advancement you would expect for someone holding his or her current position or the position for which the candidate is seeking?

The following are examples of questions that can be used to determine if the candidate will do the job:

- a) “What are your career goals? What are you doing to achieve them? In what way will this job contribute to achieving them?”
- b) “Give me an example of a situation that required you to do more than what was required of you on the job. What actions did you take? What difference did your actions make?”
- c) “There are times when we work without close supervision or support to get the job done. Tell me about a time when you found yourself in such a situation. How did things turn out?”
- d) “Which aspects of the job we are discussing energize you? On the flip side, tell me which part would not be your favorite.”
- e) “From your experience, what do you expect will be the greatest challenge you will face that will impact your success in this position? What will you do to overcome these challenges? How do you think the strategies will turn out?”
- f) “Tell me about a time when you had to motivate team members to accomplish a task. How did you motivate them? How did you feel about motivating your team members?”
- g) “Explain what you have done in the past to hone your skills in the position for which you are applying. How have those actions benefitted you?”
- h) “Describe the importance of this job to the success of the organization.”

- i) “Explain your plans to continually improve in this position? How will you implement your plans? What do you think will be the result?”
- j) “If you were not working in this field, what else would you be doing? Explain why?”
- k) “If offered this position, what changes would you like to make, if any? How do you see those changes impacting the job five years from now?”

3. Is the candidate a Fit for the culture?

Is the candidate a good fit for the job as well as the culture within the organization? Specifically, does his or her work behavior, style, and personality mesh with the job and the culture?

The following are examples of questions that can be used to determine if the candidate is a good fit for the job and culture:

- a) “Describe an important project you worked on with team members who had different work styles from you. How did you overcome the differences and what was the outcome?”
- b) “Recall for me a work situation in which you felt that your values might be compromised. How did you work through the situation and what was the outcome?”
- c) “Tell me about a time when you were under stress on the job. How did you work through it and what resulted from your actions?”
- d) “Describe the ideal work environment. How have you adapted in the past to a less than ideal work environment?”
- e) “Do you prefer to work on a team or as an individual contributor? Tell me about a time when you had to function in a less preferred role. What was the situation? How did it turn out?”
- f) “Describe the ideal supervisor that you have worked for in the past. What made that supervisor ideal? How did you relate to that supervisor?”
- g) “Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision without having all the information that was required. What was the situation? What was the impact of that decision?”

Sample Behavior-Based Questions, Continued

- h) “Tell me about a time when you had competing priorities. How did you handle the priorities? What was the result?”
- i) “Tell me about a time when team members were in conflict about how to accomplish a task. What actions did you take as a member of the team? How did the task get accomplished?”
- j) “Tell me about a time when your team did not successfully accomplish a given task. What was your role on the team? What were the results?”