

30 Good Interview Questions and A Few Other Tips to Help Managers Make “Rightful Hires”

Interviewing is frequently viewed as a “necessary evil.” Most managers don’t like the process or the time and energy it takes. It’s a difficult undertaking that most of us freely admit we’re not very skilled at.

Asking good questions takes some thoughtful planning. “Shooting from the hip” is unlikely to lead to good hiring decisions. A few keys to good questioning include: Keeping control of the interview, allowing the candidate to do 75% or more of the talking, not providing too much information or clues about what you’re looking for as you ask your questions, chronologically examining the candidate’s work history, and asking a variety of types of questions.

Providing managers with lists of possible interview questions not only makes their jobs easier but makes the interview process much more effective. A few good questions are provided on the next pages. You’ll likely want to customize them to meet the needs of your particular organization.

30 Good Interview Questions

1. Tell me what you’re looking for in a new position. How would you like to be spending your days?
2. What functions/duties did you most enjoy at your past jobs? Which were your least favorite?
3. Why did you leave your last positions?
4. What type of boss do you enjoy working with?
5. What challenged you in your past jobs? What was the most difficult task?
6. What was your greatest accomplishment at work?
7. Describe yourself in 3 words.
8. What 3 words would your past bosses (or coworkers) use to describe you?
9. Tell me about a time when you failed on the job.
10. Tell me about some problems you had on your past jobs.
11. What were the critical elements of your past position(s)?
12. Describe how you would deal with a problem employee. Give me a past example.
13. What qualities in coworkers bother you the most? In a boss?
14. Tell me about a time of crisis at work. What was your role in fixing it?

15. What stresses you out at work?
16. What frustrates you? What makes you angry at work?
17. How does what you did in your past jobs prepare you for this one?
18. What should a company expect from its employees? What should an employee expect from the company?
19. What elements of this job excite you?
20. Describe a time when you had a conflict with a coworker and how you handled it?
21. Please tell me about an instance when you had to deal with an irate customer. What did you do?
22. Describe your career goals. Where do you see yourself in 1 year? 5 years?
23. Describe your greatest strengths (i.e., regarding skills or personal characteristics). What about your weaknesses?
24. What types of responsibilities do you like? What kind do you like to avoid?
25. What if a serious problem arose over which you had no authority and there was no manager available? How would you handle it?
26. In what work situations is it appropriate to lie?
27. Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with your boss.
28. Tell me about the types of people you like to manage. Have you fired anyone? (Tell me about that.) How do you motivate employees?
29. Is there anything we should know about you that would help us make this decision?
30. Why should we hire you?