

## Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

**Instructions for Hiring Managers:**

Given limited interview time, you must determine whether the candidate has the necessary skills for the role and ensure the candidate has sufficient information to determine whether the opportunity is a fit for them. Use this interview guide before and during your interview to ensure that you gather and share the most accurate, complete information as possible with the candidate. Complete the fields in yellow prior to the interview, and complete the fields in white during or after the interview.

| Contextual Information |  |                 |  |                 |  |
|------------------------|--|-----------------|--|-----------------|--|
| Hiring Manager Name:   |  | Candidate Name: |  | Recruiter Name: |  |
| Interview Date:        |  | Position Title: |  | Position Code:  |  |

| Information Regarding the Opportunity  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Take time during the interview to fully describe the position and the organization, allowing the candidate to ask questions as needed.   |                             |
| Information to Provide Candidate   | Notes on Candidate Response |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizational culture</li> <li>Day-to-day experiences of the job</li> <li>Rewards of the job</li> <li>Development and future career opportunities</li> <li>Roles the position will interact with</li> <li>Other information</li> </ul> |                             |

**Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers**

| Resume Review   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Prior to the interview, review the candidate’s resume and document questions regarding the candidate’s experience and skills that you would like to clarify or discuss (e.g., reasons for leaving past jobs, gaps in employment experience, technical skills, promotions earned, leadership opportunities). |                             |
| Question  | Notes on Candidate Response |
|   |                             |
|   |                             |
|   |                             |

**Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers**

| Technical Competencies  |                    |                                |                             |              |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Probe the candidate on the technical skills, using the resources at the end of this document as a reference. Before the interview, fill in the technical competencies and related weights that you identified in job scoping and identify an interview question or activity that adequately probes the candidate on each competency. During or after the interview, take notes on the candidate’s performance against each question or activity and score the candidate response to each. |                    |                                |                             |              |
| Technical Competency  | Competency Weight* | Interview Question/ Activity** | Notes on Candidate Response | Raw Score*** |
|   |                    |                                |                             |              |
|   |                    |                                |                             |              |
|   |                    |                                |                             |              |
|   |                    |                                |                             |              |
|   |                    |                                |                             |              |

\* Competency Weight is on a 1-3 scale, with 1=Nice to Have, 2=Somewhat Important, 3=Very Important

\*\* Refer to the end of this guide for sample interview questions for common competencies.

\*\*\* Raw Score is on a 1-5 scale, with 1=Unskilled, 3=Skilled, and 5=Very Skilled

**Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers**

| Behavioral Competencies   |                    |                                |                             |              |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Probe the candidate on the behavioral skills, using the resources at the end of this document as a reference. Before the interview, fill in the behavioral competencies and related weights that you identified in job scoping and identify an interview question or activity that adequately probes the candidate on each competency. During or after the interview, take notes on the candidate’s performance against each question or activity and score the candidate response to each. |                    |                                |                             |              |
| Behavioral Competency   | Competency Weight* | Interview Question/ Activity** | Notes on Candidate Response | Raw Score*** |
|   |                    |                                |                             |              |
|   |                    |                                |                             |              |
|   |                    |                                |                             |              |
|   |                    |                                |                             |              |
|   |                    |                                |                             |              |

\*Competency Weight is on a 1-3 scale, with 1=Nice to Have, 2=Somewhat Important, 3=Very Important

\*\* Refer to the end of this guide for sample interview questions for common competencies.

\*\*\* Raw Score is on a 1-5 scale, with 1=Unskilled, 3=Skilled, and 5=Very Skilled

### Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

---

| Summary   |
|---|
| Summarize thoughts on the interview and the candidate. Consider listing the candidate's 1-2 biggest strengths and 1-2 biggest drawbacks, as they pertain to the role in question. |
|   |

## Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

### For Your Reference: Sample Descriptive and Demonstrative Interview Activities

#### Sample Descriptive Interview Activities

*Ask the candidate to describe...*

- ...how he/she responded to particular situations in the past
- ...the skills he/she has
- ...potential weaknesses, skill gaps, or areas for improvement
- ...his/her career plans beyond the current job
- ...how he/she would respond to a particular situation in the future
- ...what he/she likes to do
- ...the type of person he/she is

#### Sample Demonstrative Interview Activities

*Ask the candidate to...*

- ...demonstrate how he/she would solve particular problems faced on the job
- ...demonstrate his/her people skills
- ...work through an example problem, case, or question
- ...act out or play a particular role
- ...provide a writing sample
- ...participate in a job sampling

## Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

### For Your Reference: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

#### Ability to Learn

*Definition:*

Assimilates and applies new job-related information for all sources promptly and effectively; shows desire to broaden knowledge and perspective; learns from both successes and failures.

*Questions:*

1. Describe a situation where you had to request help or assistance on a project or assignment. How did you apply what you learned to similar projects after that time?
2. Describe a time that you volunteered to expand your knowledge at work, as opposed to being directed to do so? What compelled you to seek out the opportunity?
3. What was the last seminar you attended? How did you apply this new-found knowledge towards your work?
4. When was the last occasion you asked for direct feedback from a superior or a customer? How did you then use this knowledge to improve your personal performance?

*Response:*

Candidate should describe a situation where they were able to apply learning in a resourceful and innovative manner. Candidate should be able to able to acquire knowledge from errors as well as triumphs.

#### Adaptability

*Definition:*

Overcomes resistance to change; maintains effectiveness despite changing tasks, responsibilities, coworkers, and environments; incorporates changes in priorities and team composition into work processes.

*Questions:*

1. Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation. How did those involved react?
2. Give an example of a time your team or organization shifted their goals or resources. What affect did it have on your work? How did you respond?
3. Give me an example of difficulties you faced during a transitional period (from college to the professional world, or from one job to another) and how you overcame them. How did the experience affect your coping skills?
4. Recall a time from your work experience when your manager or supervisor was unavailable when a problem arose. What was the nature of the problem? How did you handle that situation? How did that make you feel?

*Response:*

Candidate's examples should show they are able to absorb new information and situations quickly and with ease. Situations that indicate difficulty in adapting should be accompanied by the specific steps used to overcome them.

## Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

### For Your Reference: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

#### Analysis & Problem Solving

*Definition:*

Applies a systematic approach to problem solving; relates and compares data from different sources, identifies issues, secures relevant information, and spots connections in the data before developing strategic plans for solving problems.

*Questions:*

1. Give an example of a time you identified a small problem and took action to fix it before it became a major problem. What were the potential pitfalls you were trying to avoid?
2. Give an example of how you applied knowledge from a previous project (or class in the case of a recent graduate) to a subsequent, perhaps more complex project. Did you recognize you were doing so at the time?
3. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem. What steps did you take?
4. Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to locate data from different sources to solve a problem. How did you filter the data after it was collected?

*Response:*

Candidate should describe times where they had to use reason and logic to resolve a problem. They should show they analyzed all the relevant information and created an effective solution. Candidate should demonstrate they have a balanced thinking process and are not hasty in making decisions.

#### Attention to Detail

*Definition:*

Accomplishes tasks thoroughly with concern for all areas involved, no matter how small; verifies the accuracy of information before moving forward on a project or task.

*Questions:*

1. Describe a situation where you had the option to leave the details of a team project to others or take care of them yourself. Why did you not trust other team members to handle them?
2. Tell me about a project where details were overlooked and which ended up negatively affecting or delaying the project's successful completion. Did the experience change your work process?
3. Tell me about a situation where attention to detail was important in accomplishing an assigned task. What about the nature of the task made the details so important?

*Response:*

Candidate's answer should show they are quality-conscious and understand the importance of time management techniques. Candidate should understand the criticality of deadlines and show that they have overcome obstacles to meet deadlines.



## Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

### For Your Reference: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

#### Communication

*Definition:*

Articulates ideas and instructions both written and orally; initiates communication in difficult situations or with unreceptive individuals and groups; helps to create and facilitate open communication in a team environment.

*Questions:*

1. Describe a situation in which you had to collect information from several people. How did you organize and filter the information you collected?
2. Give an example of a time when you were working on a project and had difficulty getting cooperation from a group outside of your team that was vital to the completion of the project. How did you go about requesting the assistance?
3. Tell me about a time when you gave a presentation where it was important to influence someone's opinion. What was the outcome?
4. Tell me about a time when your active listening skills really paid off for you, maybe a time when other people missed the key idea being expressed. Were you able to communicate these details to those who may have missed them?

*Response:*

Candidate should provide examples that display an ability to both receive and relay information effectively. Candidate should have confidence in their oral and written communication skills indicated by the ability to effectively describe aspects of a project or process.

#### Creativity & Innovation

*Definition:*

Seeks innovative and new ways to deal with challenges; introduces creative methods to improve group performance; builds on the suggestions and ideas of others to lead to new approaches and improvements.

*Questions:*

1. Describe a work-related project you have completed that required creativity to accomplish to your and others' satisfaction. What was different or unique about your ideas or processes?
2. Give an example of an innovative idea that you used to overcome an obstacle you faced in completing a project. How did the idea differ from the norm?
3. Recall a time when you were involved in a brainstorming session. What were your contributions? How receptive were you to the ideas of others? Did any useful ideas come out of the session?

*Response:*

Candidate's response should show they are willing to discuss innovative solutions to extraordinary challenges. Their examples should contain examples of unique work processes that were developed or employed to overcome problems.

## Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

### For Your Reference: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

#### Customer Service Orientation

*Definition:*

Prioritizes the needs of customers; balances organizational policy and customer interest; provides outstanding service to internal and external customers.

*Questions:*

1. Can you tell me about a time when you did something outside of the routine activities assigned to you for the benefit of the customer? What was their reaction? Did they appreciate your efforts?
2. Give an example of a time you initiated contact with a customer you had no previous contact with? What methods did you find effective or ineffective?
3. Give me an example of a time you had to turn down a request from a valued client. What were the reasons you had to turn down the request? How did you attempt to resolve the situation?
4. Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or client. Were you able to retain their business?

*Response:*

Candidate should show they are able to keep balance between company policy and the interest of customers. Candidate's answer should show they are accommodating and eager to assist customer needs while being cautious enough not to promise more than they can deliver.

#### Impact & Influence

*Definition:*

Impacts the company through appropriate behavior and manner and by responding positively to others; uses facts to support arguments and presents information in a logical way; is able to persuade others to adopt his/her position.

*Questions:*

1. Describe a project or idea that was implemented or carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts. How did others recognize your contributions?
2. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way. How were you able to maintain others' confidence in your point of view?
3. Give me an example of a time when you felt you led by example. Were you assertive? How did others react?

*Response:*

Candidate should display knowledge of where their skills work best. They should have examples of how their unique skill set has assisted in the completion of a project in a team environment.

## Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

### For Your Reference: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

#### Initiative

*Definition:*

Makes active attempts to influence events to achieve goals; self-starting rather than passively accepting; takes action to achieve goals beyond standard expectations.

*Questions:*

1. Describe a time when you were unmotivated to get a job done. How did you complete the project?
2. Give an example of a time when you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision involving work. Did others approve of your plan of action?
3. Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year. How did you weigh your options?
4. Tell me about a time when you did more than was expected of you. How were your extraordinary efforts noticed by your managers or peers?
5. What is your first reaction when your senior manager assigns a task that you think is impossible? What steps do you take in developing a plan of action?

*Response:*

Candidates answer should show consistency in initiating positive actions. Candidate should provide examples where they were able to start projects on their own or motivate others to do so without the prompting of managers.

#### Integrity & Ethics

*Definition:*

Stays within legal and ethical guidelines when dealing with workplace challenges; shows reliability, consistency and demonstrates respect for others; understands how the impact of their actions could affect the company.

*Questions:*

1. Give a specific example of a policy you conformed to with which you did not agree. Did you end up regretting your decision? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever faced a situation at work or in school where you believed that actions of an individual or team you were involved with were not in compliance with that institution's ethics? What actions did you take?
3. Have you ever faced a situation when you had to take a longer way of doing something in order to adhere to proper professional standards? Did others disagree with your assessment of the situation?
4. Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision where there was a possibility of an adverse reaction. How did you manage the situation?

*Response:*

Candidate should provide examples that show an understanding of the significance of work standards, ethical standards, and laws relating to the business. Candidate should be able to integrate these areas into their work processes.

## Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

### For Your Reference: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

#### Job Satisfaction

*Definition:*

Takes personal satisfaction in performing tasks and responsibilities related to their job; enjoys the challenges associated with work and seeks out new areas of personal development through their job.

*Questions:*

1. Describe a time when you set your sights too high. Now describe a time when you set them too low. What did you learn from each situation?
2. Give examples of your experiences in a job (or at school for recent graduates) that were satisfying. Give examples of your experiences that were dissatisfying.
3. Give me an example of a time when a project really excited you. Did it influence how you approached the task?
4. Have you found any ways to make a job you were not enthusiastic about more rewarding? What about the job did you initially not find interesting, and how did you deal with the situation?

*Response:*

Candidate's answers should show that they take pleasure in setting ambitious goals, working hard, and keeping up with work-related trends.

#### Leadership & Management

*Definition:*

Manages team through efficient delegation of tasks, conflict management, and thoughtful leadership; keeps reports and team focused on key objectives that drive performance and competitive advantage; develops an environment conducive to developing strong working relationships.

*Questions:*

1. Describe a decision you made while in a leadership position that was unpopular and how you handled implementing it. How did your team react?
2. Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead in a professional (or academic for recent graduates) setting when others were not. How were your actions received by others?
3. Have you had to convince a team to work on a project they weren't enthusiastic about? How did you do it?
4. In a supervisory or group leader role, have you ever had to discipline or counsel an employee or group member? What was the nature of the discipline? What steps did you take? How did that make you feel? How did you prepare yourself?

*Response:*

Candidate should enjoy assisting others in their personal development towards achieving common goals. They should provide examples of times they were able to effectively delegate tasks to complete projects. They should be able to resolve disputes among team members and assign unpopular jobs without raising significant dissent.

## Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

### For Your Reference: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

#### Planning & Organization

*Definition:*

Establishes a course of action for self to accomplish specific goals; plans proper assignments for personnel and appropriately allocates resources; manages time, resources and agenda effectively to avoid waste.

*Questions:*

1. Recall a time when you were assigned what you considered to be a complex project. Specifically, what steps did you take to prepare for and finish the project? Were you happy with the outcome? What one step would you have done differently if given the chance?
2. Tell me about a time when you delegated a complex project effectively. What were your personnel and resource constraints?
3. What steps do you follow in studying a project before making a decision on how to approach that project? Do you apply this process to all projects, or does it vary from task to task?
4. Describe a time at work where you had to juggle several projects at the same time. How did you organize your time?

*Response:*

Candidate's answer should show that applicant knows how to plan ahead, make good decisions, analyze possibilities, and effectively accomplish the maximum workload.

#### Teamwork

*Definition:*

Addresses conflicts and disagreements that affect team cohesiveness in a proactive manner; works effectively with others in the organization and outside the formal lines of authority (i.e., peers, other units, senior management) to accomplish organizational goals; considers the impact of their decisions on others and shares credit with others for team accomplishments.

*Questions:*

1. Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to a compromise as part of a team in order to accomplish a project on time. How did you overcome challenges?
2. Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle interactions with that person?
3. Who is the best supervisor you have worked for? What about their managing style appealed to you?
4. Give an example of a time you had to approach a member of another team or function within your company for assistance on a project. How did you go about making the request?

*Response:*

Candidate should value working relationships, understand how important working relationships are for the company, and demonstrate they are prepared to work at making relationships function well.

## Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

### For Your Reference: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

#### Technical & Professional Knowledge

*Definition:*

Understands technical and professional information necessary for job; learns and applies technical and professional skills; seeks to stay current with developments in fields related to job.

*Questions:*

1. Give an example of a time you introduced or applied a new concept or development in a related field of study to a work project. What were the main challenges, and how did you overcome those challenges?
2. Give me an example of an assignment that involved learning a new technical skill or development. Did you attempt to learn it yourself, or did you reach out to a teaching source?
3. Tell me about a time when it was necessary for you to communicate technical information to an audience. How did you develop your presentation?

*Response:*

Candidate should be able to explain how they compile facts and figures for preliminary analysis through specific knowledge. Their examples should show they are able to process new developments in their field and integrate them into their work processes.

#### Understanding of Organization & Industry

*Definition:*

Chooses educational and professional path relevant to position and industry; understands the organization's goals and is able to integrate into personal goals.

*Questions:*

1. Discuss the decisions you have made that have led you to seek a job at this company. How have your work and education experiences affected your decisions?
2. Discuss the decisions you have made that have led you to seek a job in this industry. How have your work and education experiences affected your decisions?

*Response:*

Candidate should be able to definitively explain the decisions they made that have led them to seek a job in this industry and organization. They should have done their research professionally and have a clear understanding of what working in the industry and organization entails.

## Guide to Interview Questions for Hiring Managers

### For Your Reference: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

#### Work Standards

*Definition:*

Sets high goals or standards of performance for self, subordinates, others and the organization; experiences dissatisfaction with average performance; addresses others when their standards are affecting team performance.

*Questions:*

1. Describe a situation in which you found that your work product was not up to your supervisor's (or professors', etc.) expectations. What happened? What action did you take?
2. Describe a time when you were not very satisfied or pleased with your performance. What did you do about it?
3. Describe an occasion when you had to give an explanation of what you could realistically deliver to a manager. Why was it important to articulate your capabilities?
4. Tell of a time when you worked with a colleague who was not completing their share of the work. Who, if anyone, did you tell or talk to about it? Did the manager take any steps to correct your colleague? Did you agree or disagree with the manager's actions?

*Response:*

Candidate's answer should show planning, ability to prioritize, productive amount of energy, company commitment, and a high personal standards for his or her work.