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# Interviewing Questions



Questions should be directed to determine work-related skills. Questions that could be construed to be discriminatory such as questions on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, marital status, age, or handicap must be avoided, as they are most certainly illegal. Please review this with your legal counsel prior to using.

*Execupro, Inc.*  
301-589-3532

## APPLICANT-RELATED QUESTIONS

### A. Education/Training

1. What were your major courses of study in school?
2. Why did you choose these courses?
3. What was the most important thing you learned in school?
4. Why did you go to University X
5. Do you plan to finish your college education while you are working?
6. Did school meet your expectations or were you disappointed?
7. How did you pay for your college education?
8. To what extent do your grades reflect how much you learned?
9. Do you feel your education was worthwhile?
10. What was your overall grade point average?
11. What subject did you do best in? Why?
12. What subject did you have the most trouble with? Why?
13. What subject did you like best? Why?
14. What subject did you dislike the most? Why?
15. Were you involved in extracurricular activities? If so, which ones?
16. What prompted you to choose \_\_\_\_\_ as your major?
17. Can you forget your education and start from scratch?

### B. Work Experience

1. What were your major responsibilities at your last job?
2. At the job before that?
3. Which of your previous jobs did you like (dislike) most? Why?
4. What was the most rewarding experience at work?
5. What do you find most satisfying in a job?
6. What was your single most important accomplishment for the company at your last job?
7. Why did you leave company X?
8. Why do you want to change jobs?
9. What was the toughest problem you had to solve?
10. How did you solve it?
11. Have you held other positions like the one you are applying for? Tell me about them.
12. If yes, what is the most important thing you learned that you can bring to this job?
13. What were the biggest pressures on your last job?
14. If there were two things that you could change on your last (present) job, what would they be and how would you change them?
15. Why do you think you were successful in your last job?
16. Please describe your last (or present) boss' management style.
17. What other people do you deal with in your present (last) job?
18. If I asked your last boss to evaluate your performance, what do you think he/she would say?
19. What qualifications do you have that will make you successful in this field?
20. What has been the most interesting job or project in your career?
21. What was your boss' title and what was his/her function?
22. Please describe a typical day on your current job.
23. What aspects of your current job do you consider most crucial?
24. What are the most repetitive tasks in your job?
25. What special knowledge or skills did you need to perform these duties?
26. What decisions or judgment calls did you have to make in these areas?
27. Did you work alone on your previous job?

### **C. The New Job and the Future**

1. Why do you want to work for this company?
2. This job means that you will have to relocate; what problems do you see for your family?
3. This job has a lot of travel; how will you handle that?
4. After a description of the job: How do you see yourself fitting in with this job?
5. What skills did you learn on your last job that you could use here?
6. Why do you want to do what we do at this company?
7. How do you think your education will help you on this job?
8. Where do you want to be five (ten) years from now?
9. What would you do if you were fired in two years?
10. What kinds of additional education, formal or informal, do you think you need to meet your career goals?
11. If you went to work for us today, what job would you like to hold in three to five years?
12. How long do you plan on staying with us?

### **D. Supervisory/Management Skills**

1. Tell me about a situation where you had to pull a team together successfully.
2. How do you define the job of the manager?
3. Who reports to you and what functions do they perform?
4. What has been the employee turnover in your department over the last two years?
5. To what do you attribute this turnover?
6. What do you do to actively retain employees?
7. What programs have you put in place to motivate the employees who answer to you?
8. What are the typical problems and grievances that your employees bring to you?
9. How do you go about assigning and scheduling projects and assignments?
10. What other organizational responsibilities do you have besides managing your department?
11. Describe your management style for me.
12. How do you measure your success as a manager?
13. What patterns have you observed in the turnover in your department?
14. How many people have you hired in the past two years? Into what positions?
15. What training have you performed on other people? How do you measure its success?
16. How do you determine what individuals need what training?
17. How do you plan your daily activities?
18. If you are hired for this job, how will you approach the first thirty days?
19. How do you keep your present staff informed of new developments and organizational decisions?
20. Describe the relationship you feel should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him/her.
21. What aspects of this job do you feel are most crucial?
22. Tell me about the best manager you ever had.
23. Tell me about the worst manager you ever had.
24. Describe an innovative change that you implemented in your last job.
25. Have you ever had to make unpopular management decisions? Tell me about one of these situations and how you handled it.
26. How long will it take you to make a contribution in this position?
27. How do you cope when a decision has to be made and no procedure exists?
28. How, specifically, do you contribute to and atmosphere of teamwork?
29. How do you define leadership?
30. What is your philosophy of business?
31. What can a department do to build teamwork?
32. What is the most creative work project you ever completed?
33. Do you manage your time well? Explain.
34. What are your views on quality?
35. Describe a time when you were able to have a positive influence on others.
36. How flexible are you? Explain.
37. What can be done about employees entering the work force without proper skills?

38. Do you train others well? Give me an example of your effectiveness.
39. How well do you think on your feet? Explain.
40. What level of management are you most comfortable with? Most uncomfortable?
41. Do you set goals for yourself?
42. What have you done to reach them?
43. How many hours a week do you find it necessary to work in order to get your job done?
44. What have you done to become more effective in your position?
45. Tell me about a directive that really challenged you.
46. In what areas could your boss have done a better job?
47. If you could have made one constructive suggestion to management, what would it have been?
48. Tell me about a program that you introduced to improve morale.
49. Tell me about how you motivated your staff when faced with a specific tight deadline.
50. What method have you found successful in setting job objectives for subordinates?
51. What method did you use in performing salary reviews?
52. How did you schedule projects, assignments and vacations?
53. How do you characterize your management style?

**E. Communication Skills**

1. When you are assigned to work with new people, how do you go about getting to know them and how they work?
2. How do you get along with your present boss?
3. What type of person is the hardest for you to get along with?
4. Tell me about your experience in working on teams.
5. What can you contribute to a team?
6. What do you get out of working on a team?
7. Do you prefer working alone or with others?
8. What kind of people annoy you the most? (Note: The applicant is probably the opposite of the type of person given as a response).
9. What type of person would you least like to work with? Note: Again, the candidate is probably the opposite of the kind of person given as a response).
10. How did you get along with your former boss?
11. Tell me about a work situation that required excellent communication skills.
12. What sort of person do you enjoy working for?
13. How well/often do you communicate with the person who receives the output of your work?
14. Define cooperation.
15. How important were communication and interaction with others in your former job?
16. What other titles and departments did you have dealings with? What were the difficulties you encountered there?
17. What was more important on your job, written or oral communication?
18. Do you prefer to speak with someone or send a memo? Explain.
19. When do you have trouble communicating with people? Explain.

**F. Conflict/Persuasion Skills**

1. Have you ever been in a dispute with a supervisor? What was it about and how was it resolved?
2. Have you ever been in a dispute with a co-worker? What was it about and how was it resolved?
3. Describe the best person who ever worked with you.
4. How do you handle conflicts?
5. What are the disadvantages of your chosen field?
6. Tell me about a time when you needed to get an understanding of another's situation before you could get your job done. How did you get the understanding, and what problems did you encounter?
7. Are you able to predict a person's behavior based on your reading of them?
8. When you joined your last company and met the group for the first time, how did you feel? How did you get on with them?
9. How would you define a conducive work atmosphere?

10. As a member of a department, how do you see your role as a team builder?
11. Tell me about a time when you came up with a new idea or method. How did you get it approved and implemented?
12. Can you think of another idea or project that was rejected? Why was it rejected and what did you do about it?
13. I would be interested in hearing about an occasion when your idea or work was criticized.
14. What are some of the things about which you and your boss disagreed?
15. What are some of the things that your boss did that you disliked?

### **G. Personal Traits**

1. What kind of person do you get along with best?
2. What ways do you find to tolerate others who have different backgrounds and values from yours?
3. What makes a job enjoyable for you?
4. What do you want out of a job?
5. What qualities would you bring to the job that others would not?
6. Where do you feel that you need to improve?
7. If you worked for the perfect boss, what would this person be like?
8. What do you consider important on a job?
9. How do you define doing a good job?
10. Under what conditions do you work best?
11. How have the jobs you've held in the past prepared you for larger responsibilities in a new position?
12. What goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you set for yourself over the next ten years?
13. What is your greatest strength? Worst deficiency?
14. Are you willing to relocate for the company?
15. What books or magazines do you read?
16. What do you think are the most serious problems facing business today?
17. What are you best known for?
18. From whom have you learned the most?
19. Tell me about a time when you conformed to a policy with which you disagreed.
20. What American businessperson do you most admire and why?
21. Have you ever taken a public speaking course?
22. What do you do to keep in good physical condition?
23. What are the disadvantages of your chosen field?
24. What other functional, day-to-day activities are you involved in that we haven't discussed?
25. Tell me about a responsibility you have enjoyed.
26. Describe a project that required a high amount of energy over an extended period of time.
27. What did you do to keep your enthusiasm up?
28. Tell me about an occasion when your performance didn't live up to your expectations.
29. What books have had the greatest impact on your business life?
30. How long will you stay with the company?
31. How do you take direction?
32. For what have you been most frequently criticized?
33. Recall for me a time when those around you were not being as honest or direct as they should have been. What did you do?
34. When was the last time you really got angry? Explain.
35. In what ways did your manager contribute to your decision to leave your last job?

### **H. Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Skills**

1. Tell me about a specific situation where you prevented a problem before it occurred.
2. What is the most difficult task you have had to complete? Explain in detail.
3. What do you do when you're having difficulty solving a problem?
4. What is the biggest decision that you have had to make in the last year?
5. What kinds of things do you find difficult to do?
6. What kinds of decisions do you find particularly hard to make?
7. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a particularly difficult grievance.

8. How do you make important decisions?
9. What is your normal course of action when you find that you have made a mistake?
10. Tell me about a time when you overcame objections of other people and convinced them that your plan was best.
11. Tell me about a time when you had to make a quick decision and how you went about making it.
12. What problem-solution situation are you most proud of?
13. Describe a situation that required you to use fact-finding skills.
14. What was the last truly innovative suggestion you made for your firm?
15. What has been your most important work-related idea?
16. What was the most complex report you had to write?
17. Who caused you the most problems in executing your tasks? With whom are you most comfortable?
18. Where/to whom do you turn for help? How do you overcome a problem?
19. Tell me about a time when you failed to reach a goal.
20. How many projects can you handle at a time?
21. Describe a typical day for me. What things do you normally experience in getting things done?
22. Think of a situation where things got out of control. Why did it happen and what was your role in the chain of events?
23. What do you do when you have a great deal of work to accomplish in a short time-span?
24. What do you do when a decision has to be made and no procedure exists?

## **JOB-RELATED QUESTIONS**

A variety of job related questions are listed below. You may find some of these questions, or variations of them, helpful in obtaining information from applicants.

### **1. Questions To Learn How The Applicant Regards Current Or Past Positions**

- A. Would you tell me about your present (last) position?
- B. Would you describe your typical workday?
- C. What activities did you enjoy the most at your last job?
- D. What do you consider the most critical elements in the successful performance of your present (last) job?
- E. What do you feel you do best? Why?
- F. What job functions are most difficult for you? Why?
- G. What problems do you encounter on the job? Which frustrate you the most? Why? How do you deal with them?
- H. What was your greatest contribution in your present (last) job?
- I. How have you improved your position from the one you originally accepted?
- J. How have your previous positions prepared you for more responsibility?
- K. What are the reasons you left your last job?
- L. To what extent do you feel your job progress in the past has been in keeping with your ability?

### **2. Questions To Probe The Applicant's Relationships With People**

- A. How would you describe your supervisor?
- B. What do you feel are your supervisor's greatest strengths? Why? Weaknesses? Why?
- C. In what ways has your supervisor supported your performance?
- D. For what kinds of things have you been praised? Criticized?
- E. How would you characterize your co-workers?
- F. What disagreements have you had with your co-workers?
- G. How would you describe your relationships with other departments?
- H. What kind of people do you enjoy working with? What kind do you find difficulty?
- I. What do you consider essential in the management of people?
- J. What kind of committees have you worked on? What did you contribute?

**3. Questions To Explore Aspirations**

- A. What is most important to you on a job?
- B. What do you want from this job that is lacking from your present (last) one?
- C. What position do you expect to hold five years from now?
- D. What are you doing to achieve your career goals?
- E. What are your salary expectations? On what do you base them?

**4. Questions To Stimulate Self-Assessment**

- A. As an employee, what do you consider your greatest strengths?
- B. In what areas would you most like to improve? Why?
- C. What motivates you?
- D. Why did you select this particular field of work?

**5. Questions To Determine How The Applicant Would Apply Skills, Experience & Knowledge To The Vacant Position**

- A. What attracts you to the job for which you are applying?
- B. What do you believe qualifies you for this position?
- C. What elements of this job would be new to you?
- D. What additional training do you feel is required to achieve full proficiency?