

Checklist: The Right Interview Questions to Ask

You will want to put a great deal of thought into the types of questions you will ask applicants during an interview. Decide what skills are most important for the position, and then fashion queries aimed at assessing those skills in each person. The following questions are grouped according to skills. Keep in mind that these suggestions are merely a starting point from which to draw up your own.

Employment history

1. If you had to evaluate the performance you have shown in your present job on a scale of 1 to 10, how would you grade yourself and why?
2. Which accomplishments in your present job are you proud of and why?
3. What skills have you acquired in your present job that make you the right candidate for this job?
4. What are your long-term goals?
5. Describe a recent event in your job that really challenged your capabilities.
6. What extracurricular activities do you pursue?
7. Name a businessperson you admire and explain why.
8. Why do you want to leave your present job?
9. How did you hear about this opening?
10. What have you heard about our company that leads you to believe you would like to work here?

Communications

1. Are you more comfortable working on a team or on your own?
2. What types of people do you find difficult to work with?
3. Do you prefer communicating with other employees in writing or orally?
4. How often do you like to meet with your supervisor?
5. If you had a far-out idea for a new project, how would you go about communicating it to your co-workers and supervisors and getting it approved?

6. Describe what you consider to be the perfect boss.
7. How would you rate yourself as a public speaker?
8. Are you comfortable communicating your ideas during meetings?
9. How do you approach the writing process? Trace your thought process through to the final product.
10. If you had bad news to deliver to a customer or an employee, would you deliver it through e-mail, a memo, a personal note, a voice mail, a phone call or in person? Why?

Organization

1. What hours do you prefer to work?
2. At what time of the day do you feel you do your best work?
3. How do you go about planning your schedule for the day?
4. Do you manage your time effectively?
5. If your boss came in to chat and you were under time pressure to finish a project, what would you do?
6. How do you relieve stress on the job?
7. Do you have any objections to putting in overtime?
8. What tasks in your present job do you consider to be a waste of time?
9. Do you consider yourself efficient? Why?
10. If you were given a long-term project, how would you approach the work?

Motivation

- 1.** Tell me about a situation where you really blew it. How did you handle it, and what did you learn?
- 2.** What motivates you to do your best?
- 3.** If you are having a slow day at work, what do you do to keep busy?
- 4.** Think of a major accomplishment you had in your present job. What aspect did you find most satisfying?
- 5.** What makes you angry at work? How do you handle those situations?
- 6.** Would you consider yourself successful?
- 7.** Would you consider yourself underemployed if you accepted this position?
- 8.** How do you measure up against your peers?
- 9.** If you could buy any skill that you don't possess, what would it be?
- 10.** What tactics should a supervisor use to get the best out of you?

Managerial

- 1.** What qualities do you possess that would make you a good manager?
- 2.** Tell me about the best manager you ever had and what you learned from this person.
- 3.** Tell me about the worst manager you ever had and what you learned from this person.
- 4.** How would you go about motivating a non-productive employee?
- 5.** How do you create an environment that fosters teamwork?
- 6.** How do you orient new employees?
- 7.** How would you handle a conflict between your employees?
- 8.** How would you react if one of your employees went over your head with a complaint?
- 9.** How do you reward workers for a job well done?
- 10.** Tell me about an unpopular management decision you had to make and how you handled it.