



Sample Interview Question Guide

For effective interviewing of potential hires, it is important to understand the types of interview questions and their researched effectiveness.

In studies it has been found that behavioral and competency interview questions yield a predictive validity for job success of 55%. Behavioral and competency interview questions are gaining greater acceptance as interviewers are trained and experience good results with hires. Credential, experience and opinion types of questions have a predictive validity for on the job success of just 10%, but are commonly used in interviews and may still help the hiring manager gain additional information about the applicant.

Brainteaser and Case types of interview questions are not job-related and have a low predictive validity and are not recommended.

The following types of interview questions are Recommended:

1. **Behavioral:** This type of question objectively measures past behaviors as a predictor of future results.
What were the steps you followed to accomplish a task?
Can you give a specific example of how you did something?
2. **Competency:** The purpose of this type of question is to align the applicant's past behaviors with specific competencies required for the position.
Can you give me a specific example of your leadership skills?
Explain a way in which you sought a creative solution to a problem.

The following types of interview questions should be used on an infrequent basis or as an "ice-breaker":

1. **Credential Verification:** This is also known as resume verification.
What was your degree?
How long were you with XYZ Company?
2. **Experience Verification:** This type of questions subjectively evaluates features of the applicant's background.
What were your responsibilities in that position?
What did you learn in that class?
3. **Opinion:** This type of question subjectively analyzes what the applicant thinks or how they would react in a situation.
What are your strengths and weaknesses at work?
What would you do in this type of situation?

The following types of interview questions are NOT recommended as they are not job-related and have a very low predictive validity:

1. **Brainteaser:** The purpose of the question is to evaluate the candidate's mental calculation skills or creative ability to formulate an equation.
What is 1000 divided by 73?
2. **Case:** The purpose is to evaluation the candidate's problem-solving abilities and how they would analyze and work through a potential case.

How many gas stations are there in Europe?

What is your estimate of the global online retail market for books?

3. **Dumb:** The purpose is to get past pre-programmed answers to find out if the candidate is capable of original thought.

What kind of animal would you like to be?

What color best describes you?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS MUST BE:

1. Based on experience, skills, duties, and attributes in the job description, job-related
2. Open-ended questions (to get the candidate to talk)
3. Past performance related (behavior/competency)
4. Measurable and scored numerically
5. LEGAL

SUGGESTED BEHAVIOR/COMPETENCY QUESTIONS:

CUSTOMER SERVICE:

- *Please give an example of a time when you did not meet a client/customer's expectation. What happened and how did you resolve the situation?*
- *Describe a time you had to interact with a difficult client/customer. What was the situation and what was the outcome?*
- *How do you prioritize your client's/customer's requests?*
- *Describe a time when it was especially important to make a good impression on a client/customer. How did you go about doing this?*
- *Please give me an example of a time you had to explain something fairly complex to a client/customer who was frustrated. How did you handle the situation?*

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS/CONFLICT:

- *Please give examples of a time you had to work closely with someone at work whose personality was very different from yours. What was the situation and what was the outcome?*
- *Give me examples of times you faced a conflict while working on a team in a work situation. How did you handle the situations?*
- *Describe a time when you struggled to build a relationship with someone important in a work situation. What was the outcome?*
- *Tell me about a time you addressed an issue with a colleague, and in retrospect wish you had handled it differently. What did you learn from the situation?*

ADAPTABILITY, FLEXIBILITY

- *Please tell me about a time you were under a lot of pressure at work. What was the situation and what was the result?*
- *Describe a time your team or department was undergoing change. How did the change impact you and how did you adapt?*
- *Please give an example of a time you had to think quickly in a difficult or awkward situation at work. How did you handle it?*
- *Tell me about a time you failed at work. What was the situation, the results and what did you learn?*

- *Tell me about a time your work to-do list became overwhelming. What did you do to resolve the situation?*
- *Give me an example of a time you were able to successfully persuade someone to see things your way at work?*

WORK PRODUCT

- *Tell me about a time you set a goal for yourself at work. What steps did you take to meet the goal?*
- *Describe a time you were the technical expert at work. What did you do to make sure everyone was able to understand you and learn?*
- *Tell me about a time you had to rely on written communications to explain your ideas or work or to train a colleague.*
- *Describe a time you saw a potential problem at work and took the initiative to correct it instead of waiting for someone else to do it.*
- *Tell me about a presentation you gave that was successful and why it was successful?*
- *Please give an example of a time you were able to be very creative at work. What was challenging about the situation and what was the outcome?*
- *What skills and experience do you bring to this position?*
- *How do you stay current in your professional field?*
- *Please describe your most significant work accomplishment that relates to the duties of his position.*
- *Please provide specific examples of your use of XYZ software.*

SUPERVISION STYLE

- *Tell me about a time you had to work under close supervision. How did you handle this type of supervision?*
- *Tell me about a time you worked very independently, with little direct supervision or guidance. How did you handle this time of supervision?*

TEAMWORK

- *Please give an example of when you have worked as part of a team at work?*

MULTI-TASKING

- *How do you manage interruptions at work when you are trying to focus on a task?*
- *Give me an example of a time you managed multiple responsibilities and work tasks. How did you prioritize and meet the requirements of the various tasks? How do you manage changes to the priorities?*

MANAGER

- *Please give an example of a challenging situation you resolved as a manager.*
- *Please give examples of how you set and measure performance goals and development for your employees.*
- *Please give examples of when you have managed a work project successfully.*

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- *How do you build consensus when facing disparate opinions/choices at work?*
- *Please give examples of how you work with others who are different from you.*
- *Please give examples of how a diverse team impacts the work product.*
- *Our statement of commitment: “Texas A&M University is committed to enriching the learning and working environment for all visitors, students, faculty, and staff by promoting a culture that embraces inclusion, diversity, equity, and accountability. Diverse perspectives, talents, and identities are vital to accomplishing our mission and living our core values.” Is included on the job requisition. If you are hired, as an employee how would you support this commitment?*

ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Generally, any question that is personal in nature would be an illegal question. Please refrain from writing down personal information if a candidate discloses during the interview.

- Have you ever been arrested?
- Are you married? Are you single?
- What religious holidays do you practice? What is your religion?
- Do you have children? Do you have reliable childcare?
- What country are you from? Are you a US Citizen?
- Is English your first language?
- Do you have any outstanding debt?
- Do you socially drink? Do you use drugs? When was the last time you used illegal drugs?
- How long have you been in the workforce?
- What type of discharge did you receive from the military?

If you are trying to determine if someone will be able to work certain hours, overtime or weekend work, you can frame the questions in a different manner to make them legal.

Ask:

- This position requires weekend/Sunday work. Will you be able to accommodate this requirement?
- This position requires occasional overtime after 5:00 pm or before 8:00 am. Will you be able to accommodate this requirement?
- This position requires you be available to be on site after a call within 30 minutes. Will you be able to accommodate this requirement?

As long as the question is job-related, you should be legal.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact:

RECRUITMENT & WORKFORCE PLANNING

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