

Risk Communication and the Job Interview: The Most Frequently Asked Questions During Job Interviews

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Question Categories

ADAPTABILITY
ANALYTICAL SKILLS
ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORK
CAREER GOALS
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CLOSING QUESTIONS

Job Interview Questions by Category

ADAPTABILITY

1. How adaptable are you?
2. Can you give us an example of your adaptability?
3. How well do you adapt to rapidly changing circumstances?
4. When was the last time there was a significant change to your job?
5. Did you view the change as positive or negative?
6. Why and what did you do in response to the change?
7. How would your co-workers describe your behavior during the last major change in the work environment in your current position?

ANALYTICAL SKILLS

1. Can you tell us about your analytical skills?
2. Are you analytical?
3. Give us one example of your analytical abilities?
4. What steps do you take when analyzing complex problems?
5. How would you rate your analytical ability?
6. Why do you give yourself such a rating?
7. How would your supervisor rate your analytical ability?
8. Can you tell us about a particularly difficult problem you analyzed and what was your recommendation?
9. Can you tell us about a situation where the analysis you performed was incorrect?
10. What would you have done differently in your analysis to have avoided being incorrect?

ATTITUDE

1. Can you describe your attitude toward your job?
2. Can you describe your attitude toward the organization you work for?
3. How would your co-workers describe your attitude toward your job?
4. How would your supervisor describe your attitude toward your job?
5. How do you maintain a positive attitude towards your work?
6. When was the last time you were angry at work?
7. What types of things make you angry? At work? At home?
8. How often do you get angry at work?
9. Can you tell us about a situation in which your attitude had a positive impact on your co-workers?
10. Can you tell us about a situation in which your attitude had a negative impact on your co-workers?

CAREER GOALS

1. What are your professional goals?

2. Where do you want to be 5 (10, 20, 30) years from now in your career?
3. What are your long-term career goals?
4. At the end of your career, what would you like to say you accomplished?

CHANGE

1. What changes have occurred in your current job?
2. How do you deal with change?
3. Can you tell us about any change you have brought about in your job?
4. What do you think of the changes that have occurred in your current job?
5. What type of change would you view as a positive change in your current job?
6. What type of change would you view as a negative change in your current job?
7. How do you feel when management announces a change that affects your work?
8. How do you deal with a work environment that is continually changing?
9. How do you feel about working in an organization where the work flow is always changing?
10. Do you like to do different tasks at work?
11. Do you like an ever-changing variety of work?
12. Can you tell us about your experience in working in a rapidly changing work environment?

COMMUNICATIONS

1. How do you effectively communicate with others?
2. How important is listening to effective communications?
3. What are some of the characteristics of a good listener?
4. Can you tell us about a situation where you demonstrated good communications skills?
5. Can you tell us about a situation where you demonstrated poor communications skill?
6. What changes would you make in your communication style?
7. What are the characteristics of a good communicator?
8. How would you rate your communications skills? Why?
9. How can a supervisor establish effective communications with staff?
10. What means of communication should be used to effectively establish a new work policy?
11. Are there different considerations in communicating to groups of employees versus individual employees?
12. What are some good rules to keep in mind when directing employees?
13. In what circumstances is written communication better than verbal communications?
14. What are some good rules for communicating bad news to employees?
15. What would you say to a person who needs to be laid off due to budgetary problems?
16. What would you say to a person who needs to be laid off due to work performance or disciplinary problems?

17. What are some rules for communicating bad news to employees?
18. What are some rules for good non-verbal communication?
19. What are some good rules for writing a letter to an upset client or customer?
20. How would you tell your supervisor that you failed to complete an assignment by the due date?
21. How do you think your current supervisor would rate your communications skills?
22. What are some rules for e-mail communication?
23. What are some rules for establishing good rapport with people over the telephone?

CONFIDENCE

1. How much confidence do you have in yourself?
2. Can you tell us about a situation that would demonstrate your self-confidence?
3. Can you tell us about a situation that would demonstrate the level of confidence your supervisor has in you?
4. Can you tell us about a situation that would show the confidence your co-workers have in you?
5. Can you tell us about a situation in which you had little or no confidence in yourself and how did you overcome it?
6. In which situations are you the most confident?
7. In which situations are you the least confident?

CONFLICT

1. How do you deal with conflict?
2. How much conflict do you have in your current job? What is the source of that conflict?
3. How much does conflict affect you?
4. Can you tell us about a situation that involved conflict and how you resolved that situation?
5. When was the last time you encountered conflict on the job? What happened?
6. Can you tell us about the last time you had a conflict with a coworker? What was the conflict about? How much of the conflict was due to something said or done by you? How well do you think you handled the conflict?
7. Can you tell us about a conflict that you have had with a client or customer? What was the conflict about? How much of the conflict was due to something said or done by you? How well do you think you handled the conflict?
8. Can you tell us about the last time you had a conflict with your supervisor? What was the conflict about? How much of the conflict was due to something said or done by you? How well do you think you handled the conflict?
9. Can you tell us about the last time that you had a disagreement with your supervisor? What was it about? Were you able to resolve the disagreement?
10. Can you tell us about the last time that you had a disagreement with a coworker? What was it about? Were you able to resolve the disagreement?

11. Can you tell us about the last time that you had a disagreement with your supervisor? What was it about? Were you able to resolve the disagreement?
12. In which work situations do you typically encounter conflict?

CREATIVITY

1. Do you think of yourself as creative?
2. Can you give us examples of your creativity in your current job?
3. Can you describe a situation where you came up with a creative solution to a work problem?
4. Can you describe a situation where you came up with a creative solution to a client or customer problem?

CURRENT JOB

1. Why did you choose your current job?
2. Why do you want to leave your current job?
3. Will your current supervisor be surprised by your leaving?
4. What aspect of your current job do you enjoy the most?
5. What aspect of your current job do you enjoy the least?
6. If you could eliminate any one of the duties or responsibilities on your current job, which duty or responsibility would that be?
7. What career or promotional opportunities have you created for yourself in your current job?
8. When was your last promotion? Why were you not promoted sooner?
9. When was the last time that you left work at the end of the day very happy?
10. When was the last time that you left work at the end of the day very unhappy?
11. Can you describe for us a typical day in your current job?
12. What do you believe has been your most significant contribution in your current job?
13. What frustrates you the most about your current job?
14. In what ways have you grown in your current job?

CUSTOMER/CLIENT RELATIONS

1. What do you believe is involved in good customer/client service?
2. What do you think your customers/clients would say about your work?
3. Can you tell us about a situation you handled that provided extraordinary or superior service for a customer/client?
4. Can you name three criteria for establishing excellent customer/client relations?
5. What questions would you put in a customer/client satisfaction survey?
6. How do you measure customer/client satisfaction?
7. What steps have you taken to establish excellent customer/client relations in your current job?
8. Can you tell us about how you handle a dissatisfied customer/client?

9. Can you tell us about your work experience in handling a dissatisfied member of the general public?
10. Can you tell us about a situation in which you dealt with an irate customer/client? Is there anything you would have done differently?
11. How do you handle complaints?
12. A customer/client calls while you are in an important staff meeting and demands to speak to you immediately. What would you do?

DECISION-MAKING

1. What type of decisions do you make in your current position?
2. What decisions are easiest for you to make? Why?
3. What decisions are the most difficult for you to make? Why?
4. How would you rate a job that requires you to constantly make decisions?
5. How do you feel about being held responsible for the decisions you make?
6. How do you go about making difficult decisions?
7. Which decisions do you tend to put off?
8. What steps are involved in making a decision?
9. When making decisions, are you methodical?
10. What information do you typically need before you make a decision?
11. Can you tell us about the most difficult work decision you ever had to make?
12. Can you us an example of your ability to make decisions under pressure?
13. Can you tell us about the worst work decision you ever made?
14. Can you tell us about the best work decision you ever made?
15. Can you tell us about the last time you decided not to make a decision about an important work issue? How did it turn out?

DETAIL

1. How do you feel about performing tasks that require a great deal of attention to detail?
2. Do you consider yourself a person that attends to detail?
3. Can you give us an example of your ability to deal with a project requiring a high degree of attention to detail?
4. To what extent are you willing to sacrifice attention to detail and quality in order to meet a deadline?

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. How does your education qualify you for this job?
2. How has your education prepared you for this job?
3. Why did you choose the school you attended?
4. What aspect of your education applies to this position?
5. What training have you received that qualifies you for this job?
6. What have you done outside of formal education to improve yourself?
7. What training opportunities have you taken advantage of and why?

8. What additional education and training do you think you will need if you get this job?
9. What education and training do you think a person needs to successfully perform the duties of this job?
10. Which courses did you take that will contribute most to your performance in this job?
11. What was the single most important lesson you learned in school?
12. What were your career goals in school?
13. What extra-curricular activities did you engage in during your school years?
14. In which instances did you undertake a leadership role in school?
15. Can you describe for us the most rewarding experience you had in school?
16. Who was your best teacher in school? Why?
17. How do you think your teachers would describe you?
18. Which courses did you find the most challenging? Why?
19. Which course did you find the least challenging? Why?
20. Did you ever fail a course in school? Why?
21. Why were you not the first in the class?
22. Why did not get all A's in your courses?
23. What courses did you find most boring?
24. Did your grades in school get better or worse over the years? Why?
25. Did you find school challenging?
26. If we were to ask your teachers what single positive quality you possess most, what would they say?
27. If we were to ask your teachers what single negative quality you possess most, what would they say?

EXPERIENCE

1. Can you tell us about your experience for this job?
2. How does your experience qualify you for this job?
3. What activities do you do well?
4. What activities do you not do well?
5. What is the most difficult assignment you ever had?
6. What steps have you taken to improve your job skills?
7. What contributions have you made to the operation of your work group?
8. How has your current position prepared you to take on greater responsibilities?
9. What areas of your work experience are unrelated to this job?

FAILURE

1. How do you deal with failure?
2. How do you deal with rejection?
3. Can you tell us about a situation in which you failed?
4. What have you learned from the failures in your life?
5. What is the greatest failure you have ever had in your life? What would you have done differently?

6. What do you consider your greatest work failure? What would you have done differently?
7. What do you consider your greatest educational failure? What would you have done differently?
8. What is your greatest work regret?
9. What is your greatest personal regret?
10. What decision or action in your career are you the least proud of?

GENERAL

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. Can you describe for us your personality?
3. How would others describe you?
4. What do you like best about yourself?
5. What do like least about yourself?
6. What do others like best about you?
7. What do others like least about you?
8. What sets you apart from others?
9. What is more important to you, salary or job satisfaction?
10. How do you define success?
11. How do you define failure?
12. What skills and abilities do you have?
13. Which skills do you have that are related to this job?
14. Can you recall a work incident where you made a major mistake?
15. What is the biggest work mistake you ever made? What did you do after the mistake was made? What did you learn from this mistake? What would you have done differently to have avoided making the mistake?
16. What types of mistakes worry you most?
17. What work decision are you the least proud of? Why?
18. Can you tell us about a difficult situation you encountered in your current job and how you resolved it?
19. Can you describe your ideal job?
20. Can you describe your worst nightmare job?
21. What decision or action in your career are you most proud of?
22. What do you feel is your greatest life accomplishment?
23. What do you feel is your greatest work accomplishment?
24. Can you tell us about the passion in your life as it relates to your work?
25. What are your professional goals?
26. If you had a choice, all considerations aside, what would you do for a livelihood?
27. What aspects of your work do you get the most excited about?
28. If you were to start your own business, what would you do?
29. Can you tell us about the last book that you read?
30. In what areas do you set an example for your co-workers?
31. Can you rate yourself from one to ten on your work ethic with ten being best?
32. Can you tell us about a time when you felt that you were working too hard?

33. Can you tell us about a time when you felt that you were not working hard enough?
34. In what professional area have you improved the most in the past few years?
35. What is the most common misperception about you in the workplace?
36. Which organizations are you a member of?
37. What are your feelings about relocating if you are hired?
38. How successful do you think you have been in your career up to now?
39. In what ways have you changed over the course of your career?
40. What do your co-workers respect most about you?
41. Can you tell us about the most significant compliment or commendation that you received from a supervisor?

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS/WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHERS

1. What do you think your current supervisor would say about your interpersonal skills?
2. What do you think your current co-workers would say about your interpersonal skills?
3. What would your current supervisor say about your personality - both positive and negative?
4. What would your subordinates say about your personality - both positive and negative?
5. What would your co-workers say about your personality - both positive and negative?
6. What three words would you use to describe yourself?
7. What three words would your current supervisor use to describe you?
8. What three words would your co-workers use to describe you?
9. What one thing would your current supervisor say is your greatest weakness?
10. How do you maintain effective working relationships with others?
11. How would your best friend describe you?
12. How would your worst enemy describe you?
13. What situations make you lose your temper?
14. Can you tell us about the last time that you lost your temper?
15. Can you tell us about your worst supervisor?
16. Can you tell us about your best supervisor?
17. Can you tell us about a situation in which your work was criticized?
18. How do you handle difficult people?
19. Can you tell us about a work instance where you persuaded a co-worker to do something other than what they originally wanted to do?
20. What type of people do you work best with?
21. What type of people do you work poorly with?
22. Can you tell us about a situation in which you had to work with someone that you did not like?
23. Can you tell us about a situation in which you had to work for a supervisor that you did not like?
24. How do you handle difficult people?

25. Can you describe for us your ideal co-worker?
26. What are the most important qualities your co-workers should have?
27. How do you go about creating a rapport with others?
28. Do you consider yourself competitive?
29. Can you tell us about a time when you told your supervisor he or she was wrong?
30. Can you tell us about a time when you told a coworker he or she was wrong?
31. When was the last time you apologized to your supervisor? What happened?
32. When was the last time you apologized to a co-worker? What happened?

INITIATIVE/RISK

1. What do you do at work when you do not know the answer to a question and there is nobody around to help?
2. What do you do at work when you do not know the proper procedure to follow?
3. Do you ever volunteer for more work? Can you give us an example?
4. Do you ever volunteer for new assignments? Can you give us an example?
5. How concerned are you that work assignments be done well?
6. How concerned are you that work assignments be completed on time?
7. Can you tell us about a situation that demonstrates your initiative?
8. How do you show initiative in your current job?
9. Can you give us an example from your current job that demonstrates your ability to work independently?
10. How do you feel about working by yourself with minimal structure?
11. How do you feel about working with minimal supervision?
12. How much supervision do you require?
13. Do you consider yourself a risk-taker?
14. Can you describe the greatest personal risk you have taken?
15. Can you describe the greatest work risk you have taken?
16. Can you describe the greatest risk you have taken which resulted in failure? What would you have done differently?

INTEGRITY

1. Do you think of yourself as a person of high integrity?
2. What does "integrity" mean to you?
3. To what extent are you willing to sacrifice integrity?
4. If you found out that a co-worker was stealing from work, how would you handle the situation?
5. If you found out that a coworker was spending a large amount of work time pursuing personal interests, how would you handle the situation?
6. If you found out that a co-worker was having substance abuse problems, how would you handle the situation?

JUDGEMENT

1. Do you consider yourself assertive?

2. What was the last time you were assertive at work?
3. Under what circumstances is it acceptable to deviate from organizational policy?
4. What is common sense?
5. Can you tell us about a situation where you used common sense in your current job?
6. To what extent do you exercise independent judgment in your current job?
7. Under what circumstances should you go over the head of your supervisor?
8. Can you give us an example of a good work decision you have made?
9. Can you give us an example of a bad work decision you have made?

MOTIVATION / SELF MOTIVATION

1. What motivates you?
2. What things bore you most?
3. How do you motivate yourself to complete unpleasant assignments?
4. What aspects of your current job are difficult for you to get motivated for?
5. Can you give us an example of your ability to be a self-starter?
6. Can you tell us about the last time you felt unmotivated at work.

MULTI-TASKING

1. Can you tell us how you multitask on a typical day in your current job?
2. How do you manage multiple tasks?
3. Can you give us examples of your ability to multitask?

ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING

1. Do you consider yourself to be an organized person?
2. How do you organize and plan your average work day?
3. Do you become upset when your plan for the day has to be changed?
4. Do you maintain a to-do list?
5. How do you prioritize items on your to-do list?
6. Do you plan your activities on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis?
7. If you are given several assignments that need to be done on the same day, how do you prioritize the assignments?
8. If you receive telephone calls from different people, each asking that you return their call immediately, how will you prioritize the return telephone calls?
9. How do you schedule large projects?
10. How do you schedule vacations?
11. Do you schedule vacations in consultation with your supervisor?

PRESENTATION SKILLS

1. How would you rate your public speaking ability?
1. Can you take us through the steps you go through in preparing for a presentation?

2. What actions do you take during when participants start to talk during your presentation?
3. What actions do you take when participants stop paying attention to your presentation?
4. Can you tell us about your public speaking experience?
5. What was the most difficult question you have fielded during a public speaking engagement?
6. What was the most challenging presentation that you have ever made? What did you do to meet the challenge?
7. Can you tell us about the worst presentation you have ever made? What did you learn from that experience?

PRESSURE/STRESS

1. How do you react under pressure?
2. How well do you handle pressure?
3. Do you work well under pressure?
4. What gets you upset?
5. How do you maintain your calm?
6. How do you calm down others?
7. Can you tell us about the pressure you encounter in your current job?
8. How do you handle pressure in your current job?
9. What types of pressure do you expect in this job?
10. How well do you work under tight deadlines?
11. How well do you work under tough and demanding supervisors?
12. Do you feel more pressure from working with tight deadlines or working with people?
13. What would your co-workers say about your performance under pressure?
14. What would your current supervisor say about your performance under pressure?
15. Can you give us examples of work situations where you were under intense pressure? How did you handle the situation?
16. Can you tell us about the last time that you failed to meet a deadline?
17. What experience have you had in pressure situations?
18. Can you provide us with an example of how you handled yourself in an emergency or other high-pressure situation?
19. If you supervisor asks you to delay your vacation, what do you do?
20. What steps do you take to work more efficiently and reduce interruptions when working under a tight deadline?
21. Your supervisor has given you a rush assignment. The assignment is in conflict with an assignment given to you by your supervisor's boss. What do you do?
22. How do you deal with multiple priorities?
23. How do you deal with conflicting priorities?
24. What do you find most difficult about prioritizing your work?
25. Your supervisor gives you a list of prioritized activities that differs from your own list. What do you do?
26. How do you deal with stress?

27. How do you help others deal with stress?
28. What are some constructive methods for dealing with stress?
29. Can you tell us about last time you experienced stress on the job?

PROBLEM-SOLVING

1. Can you provide us with an example of your problem-solving abilities?
2. What are the essential elements of effective problem solving?
3. Can you tell us about a situation in which you were required to analyze and solve a complex problem?
4. What are the benefits of collaborative problem solving?
5. Can you tell us about the most challenging problem you have had to solve?
6. Can you tell us about a problem you encountered at work that you were unable to solve?
7. Can you tell us about the last time you were frustrated while solving a problem?
8. What do you do when you have difficulty in solving a problem?

REFERENCES

1. What do you think your references say about you?
2. What will your references say is your greatest weakness?
3. What will your references say is your greatest strength?
4. What will your references say about your reliability and dependability?
5. What will your references say about your integrity?
6. What will your references say about your skills?
7. Why did you choose the references that you have provided us?
8. Have you used these references before?
9. Why did you not include [insert name] as a reference?

RELIABILITY / DEPENDABILITY

1. How many times have you been absent for work in the past 6 months?
2. How many times have you been late to work in the past 6 months?
3. How do we know that we can rely on you?
4. Can you give us examples which demonstrate your reliability and dependability?
5. Your supervisor gives you an assignment that will require you to work late. However, you have an important personal engagement. What will you do?
6. If completing an important project or assignment interferes with your vacation plans, what do you do?

RESPONSIBILITY

1. How well do you handle responsibility?
2. What does being responsible mean to you?
3. Can you tell us about a situation that resulted in your receiving greater responsibility?

4. How do you demonstrate responsibility in your current job?
5. Briefly, describe the most significant responsibility you have had in your career?

RESUME

1. Can you take us through your resume?
2. What are you most proud of on your resume?
3. What part of your resume would you identify as a weak point?
4. What should we focus most on in reviewing your resume?
5. How well does your resume relate to this job?
6. On what terms have you left your previous jobs?
7. Have you ever been suspended or terminated from a job? What happened?
8. What steps have you taken to improve your resume?
9. If you could change anything on your resume, what would it be?
10. Are there any gaps in your resume? If so, what are they and why do they exist?

SALARY AND BENEFITS

1. What salary are you seeking?
2. What benefits are you seeking?
3. What is your current salary?
4. What are your current benefits?
5. Why do you think we should offer you the salary and benefits you are seeking?
6. Is there anything about the benefits that you are seeking that is non-negotiable? What is it?
7. Do you think salaries should be based on performance?
8. When was your last salary increase? What did you do to earn it?

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

1. What is your greatest strength?
2. What are your three greatest strengths?
3. What can you contribute to our organization?
4. Why are you the best candidate for this job?
5. What part of your current job are you the most comfortable with?
6. What are your strong points? How have they helped you to succeed?
7. What is your greatest weakness?
8. What are your three greatest weaknesses?
9. Which is the worst of your three greatest weaknesses and why?
10. What part of your current job are you the least comfortable with?
11. What have you done to overcome your weak points?
12. What is it about yourself that you would most want to improve?
13. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

TEAMS

1. What are the characteristics of a successful team?
2. How do you contribute as a team player?
3. Can you tell us about the most successful work team of which you were a member? What role did you play? What made the team successful? What did you contribute?
4. Can you tell us about the most unsuccessful work team of which you were a member? What, if anything, could you have done differently to help the team?
5. When working in teams, are you generally the leader or a follower?
6. Do you work better working on your own or as part of a team?
7. What can you contribute to help establish more effective teams in our organization?
8. What factors do you consider in assembling a team?
9. What are the characteristics of an effective team leader?
10. What are the characteristics of an effective team player?
11. What qualities do you have that make you an effective team player?
12. Can you describe pitfalls to be avoided in building an effective team?
13. Can you tell us about the last time you were a member of a team and you disagreed with a decision or action taken by the team? How did you resolve this disagreement?
14. Can you describe your ideal team?
15. To what extent are you willing to compromise for the good of the team?
16. One of the members of your team only does what is absolutely necessary. What would you do?

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CLOSING QUESTIONS

1. Are you interviewing for other jobs?
2. How many organizations are you interviewing with?
3. If you get a job offer from another organization, will you take it or will you wait for the decision about this job?
4. If you are considering other jobs, what do they have that we do not have?
5. If you get this job, how long do you plan to stay with us?
6. What sets you apart from the other candidates for this job?
7. Why should we hire you over others?
8. How does this job fit with your career goals?
9. What aspects of this job are most to your liking?
10. What aspects of this job are least to your liking?
11. Which is more important to you -- more responsibility, more pay, more opportunity, greater challenges?
12. Do you have anything to add to that you have told us in this job interview?
13. Is there anything you talked about in this interview that you would like to address again?
14. Have we missed any questions?
15. Is there anything about your work history that we should have covered?
16. Is there anything else we should know about you?

17. Do you feel that the questions we asked you were fair?
18. Why do you think you should get this job?
19. Do you have any closing comments?
20. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask us?