

99 of the Best Interview Questions + the Killer Question Every Recruiter and Hiring Manager Should Ask



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Including focused questions and probes



The manner in which we ask the questions in an interview is as important as the questions themselves.

Candidates need to concentrate on answering your questions not deciphering them.

Use easy to understand words and keep the sentences simple. Use open ended questions that require more than a simple yes or no response.

This booklet contains a list of sample interview questions to make sure the interview template you currently use is the best it can be and not missing any essential elements.

DO NOT ASK ALL 100 QUESTIONS!

Simply select the ones you feel work best for you and your business and then add them to your existing list.

Best Regards

David Beck

Managing Director

The rpc Group of Companies



“Describe a problem you encountered at your current job...”

1. Who would give you the best reference and why?
2. Who would give you the worst reference and why?
3. What have you done to generate more income for your company?
4. What have you done to save costs for your company?
5. What have you done to save time by increasing workflow for your company?
6. What have you done that has caused you to stand out amongst your peers?
7. Walk me through your progression in your current job, leading to what you currently do on a day-to-day basis
8. What does “Good” look like in your current role?
9. What are the key KPI’s that you are working with to maximise you / your team’s performance?
10. Describe a problem you encountered at your current job and how you solved it
11. What are your short-term and long-term goals?
12. The three most important duties we want you to perform are _____, _____ and _____

What experience have you had that would qualify you to perform these tasks?



13. What other background or experience have you had that would be useful to my client?
14. What personal goals did you set when you took on your last job?
15. How well did you accomplish them?
16. What were your favourite and least favourite subjects in secondary school/university? Why?
17. What were your grades in your favourite and least favourite subjects?
18. What subjects did you do best in? Poorest in?
19. Why did you decide to go to university?
20. What was your Degree in?
21. What type of extracurricular activities did you participate in? Why did you select those?
22. What career plans did you have at the beginning of university?
23. What career plans did you have when you graduated?
24. What did you gain by attending secondary school/university?
25. If you had the opportunity to attend secondary school all over again, what, if anything, would you do differently? Why?
26. How did secondary school/university prepare you for the 'real world'?
27. Describe your studies in the area of (whatever field the job opening is in).
28. How do you feel your studies in this area have prepared you for this job opening?
29. When did you decide that you wanted to do a degree in?



30. Who were your favourite and least favourite teachers in secondary school/ university? Why?
31. Describe your study habits in secondary school/university?
32. Describe any part-time jobs you had while attending secondary school / university?
33. Which of your part-time jobs did you find most/least interesting?
34. How did you spend your summers while attending secondary school / university?
35. Why did you work while attending secondary school / university?
36. What plans do you have, if any, to continue with school?
37. What did you find to be most difficult about working and attending school at the same time?
38. What advice would you give to someone who wanted to work and attend school simultaneously?
39. Please describe your activities on a typical workday
40. What is your description of the ideal manager? Subordinate? Co-worker?
41. What kind of people do you find difficult / easy to work with? Why?
42. What did you like most / least about your last job?
43. What's is your description of the ideal work environment?
44. What motivates you? Why?
45. What makes you an effective supervisor?
46. What is the greatest accomplishment of your career to date? Why?



- 47. Describe a situation at your last job involving pressure. How did you handle it?
- 48. What do you feel an employer owes an employee?
- 49. How do you feel about work related travel?
- 50. Describe your past experience with work-related travel in terms of duration and frequency?
- 51. How do you feel about relocation? Are there any places where you would not be willing to relocate?
- 52. What were some of the duties of your last job that you found to be difficult?
- 53. How do you feel about the progress that you have made in your career to date?
- 54. What are some of the problems you encountered in your last job?
- 55. How does your present job differ from the one you had before it?
- 56. Of all the jobs you have had, which did you find the most / least rewarding?
- 57. In what ways do you feel your present job had prepared you to assume additional responsibilities?
- 58. What has been the most frustrating situation you have encountered in your career to date?
- 59. Why do you want to leave your present job?
- 60. How did you feel about the way in which your department/division was managed at your last job?
- 61. If I were to ask your Line Manager to describe your work, what would they say?
- 62. What would you do if?



“What do you consider to be your greatest strength?”

- 63. What does the prospect of this job offer you that your last job did not?
- 64. What are you looking for in a company?
- 65. How does your experience in the military relate to your chosen field?
- 66. What immediate and long-term career goals have you set for yourself?
- 67. What would you like to avoid in future jobs?
- 68. What are your salary requirements?
- 69. Who or what has influenced you with regard to your career goals, in what way?
- 70. To what do you attribute your career success thus far?
- 71. What do you consider to be your greatest strength?
- 72. What are the areas in which you require improvement? How would you go about making these improvements?
- 73. How would you describe yourself as a Manager? Subordinate? Co-worker?
- 74. What aspects of your work give you the greatest satisfaction?
- 75. How do you approach tasks that you dislike?
- 76. How do you manage your time?



77. What is your management style?
78. What did you learn from each of your previous jobs?
79. What do you look for when you hire people?
80. Please give me some examples of decisions you have made on the job? What were the ramifications of these decisions?
81. How do you go about making a decision?
82. How would you describe your delegation skills?
83. How would you describe your standards of performance both for yourself and for subordinates?
84. How would you describe your relationship with your last supervisor?
85. Please give me an example of a project that did not turn out the way you planned. What happened?
86. Why are you applying for a position with our company?
87. How long would you expect to work for us, if hired?
88. Why did you go to work for your last employer?
89. What is your greatest responsibility at your present job?
90. Describe your progression at your last job?
91. What have past employers complimented/criticised you for?
92. How does this opening fit in with you career objectives?
93. What types of work-related situations make you feel most comfortable/uneasy?



- 94. What can you do for us that someone else can't?
- 95. What important trends do you see in our industry?
- 96. What's currently showing on your Personal Development Plan (PDP)?
- 97. What's your approach to the development of Managers within your current team and give examples of success?
- 98. How do you encourage them to develop themselves?
- 99. Are you currently pursuing an interest in any other jobs?

And the Killer Question – Number 100, the one that Karren Brady (Baroness Brady of Knightsbridge) Vice Chairman of West Ham Football Club and one of Lord Sugar's Advisers on BBCs The Apprentice, asks every person she interviews for a job

The question is *"Tell me something about my business I don't already know"*

Depending how the Interviewee responds to that question determines whether the interview continues!



“Tell me about a time when you felt like a leader”

Job-Specific Focused Questions

Sometimes you might need to gather information on a specific competence which is critical for the job,

For instance, if ‘group management’ is seen to be the most critical competency for the job, ask questions which specifically seek out this skill:

‘Tell me about a time when you managed a group to do something’

‘Tell me about a time when you managed a group most effectively’

Take a look at these sample questions for other possible competencies.

Achievement Orientation:

‘Tell me about a time when you took a risk’

‘Tell me about a time when a project you were doing just wasn’t working out right’

‘Tell me about a seemingly impossible situation which required you to do something’

Initiative

‘Tell me about a time when you saw an opportunity to do something’

Concern for Order/Quality

‘Tell me about a time when a client or customer wasn’t getting the service, they deserved from you (or your work unit)’

‘Describe a situation when you had to take steps to improve the quality or accuracy of information.’

Directing Others

‘Tell me how you dealt with assigning an unwelcome job’

‘Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult employee’

‘Tell me about a time when you felt like a leader’

Organisational Awareness

‘Describe a time when you had to deal with ‘organisational politics’

‘Tell me about a time when you had to rely on your knowledge of organisation (internal or external) relationships and networks to get something done (or to gain information)’

Use of Influence Strategies

‘Tell me about a time when you had to impress someone to achieve a work-related objective’

‘Tell me about a time when you had to influence someone or a group of people to achieve a work related objective’

‘Tell me about the most effective plan or tactic you have implemented to persuade a subordinate, manager or client, or to gain their support’



Developing Others

'Tell me about a time when you helped someone learn something'

'Tell me about the last time you adopted the role of mentor/coach/helper to a subordinate'

'Tell me about your most effective performance in helping a subordinate achieve a goal'

Application of Technical Expertise

'Tell me about a time when you were the only one who had the technical knowledge needed to do the job'

'Tell me about a time when a person did not know what they needed to know and you did'

'Tell me about a time when you knew you had the answers'

Concern for Personal Impact

'Describe a situation where you achieved the desired result by calculating in advance the effect of your words or actions'

Analytical thinking

'Tell me about a situation where you did not have enough information or data to achieve your objective'

'Tell me about a time where you had to make a decision under pressure'

Self-Confidence

'Tell me how you dealt with an uncertain situation'

'Describe an unfamiliar situation where you had to step into to achieve an objective'

'Tell me about a time when you took responsibility for a difficult situation or problem with a client (or staff)'



Focussed questions are designed to uncover particular competencies...

Interpersonal Sensitivity

'Tell me about the co-worker you like least, how did you deal with the situation?'

'Tell me about your most trying situation with a client'

Focused questions are designed to uncover particular competencies and also bring out additional competencies.

Always prepare and determine which questions you are going to ask prior to the interview and remember to ask each interviewee the same focused questions to ensure a valid selection process.

Interview Probes

Probes are questions which invite the interviewee to say more about a particular event and thus provide behavioural indicators.

Probes are non-leading questions and will therefore give you additional information without leading the candidate in a specific direction.

To control the flow of the interview, use probes such as the following:

- Can you tell me more about that?
- What happened next?
- What did you do next?
- Can you tell me what you were thinking before the meeting/presentation?

- What was going through your mind prior to the meeting?
- What did you say?
- How did you respond?
- What were the outcomes/results?

To help move the interview along, use prompts such as 'what happened next', 'What did you do next?' or 'What did you say next?'

If the candidate uses the term 'we' when talking about an event or activity, ask them to specify their role in the event/activity.

Key incidents are likely to be a rich source of behaviour indicators and should be probed.

Key incidents may include:

- A meeting that the candidate attended where a decision was made
- A critical manager/subordinate interaction
- A critical client interaction

If the candidate mentions a meeting, ask

- What were you thinking prior to the meeting?
- What did you say at the meeting?
- What did you say to your Manager / Subordinate?

Special thanks to Roy Ripper, Recruitment Guru for his input into this document

PS : If you enjoyed reading this guide, why not head over to The rpc Group of Companies **Blog Page** where you can view an array of content on Recruitment, HR and Management.



Need Help With Your Recruitment?

You can get in touch with the rpc team in multiple ways.

Call us on: **+ 44 (0) 23 8022 4654**

Alternatively, email us on info@therpcgroup.co.uk

Do also **follow us** on LinkedIn. We have our own Group on LinkedIn entitled “The rpc Group of Companies”.

You can also follow us on Twitter [@therpcgroup](https://twitter.com/therpcgroup)

We have a Facebook page **“The rpc Group”**, click on “Like” and two Groups, one called “rpc Group of Companies” and the other “Friends who like The rpc Group of Companies” both of which you can apply to join.

And an Instagram page [@rpcrecruitment](https://www.instagram.com/rpcrecruitment)

If you wish to follow me personally (David Beck), my Twitter account handle is [@rpcrecruiter](https://twitter.com/rpcrecruiter).

My Instagram account name is [beck1084](https://www.instagram.com/beck1084) and I have a Facebook page **“David Rpc”**, click on “Friend Request”

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Thank you for taking the time to read this guide.

Best Regards

David Beck and Anita Searle

Co-Directors

A Division of The rpc Group of Companies

