



# Top 10 Must-Ask INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



# 1. Describe your ideal role?

This question is at the top of the list because it's a good opener after exchanging the normal pleasantries. Asking this gives you a great deal of insight into the candidate because it will uncover whether they've properly read the job description, they meet the criteria for the job, and if they will be a match for company culture. They might have the skills and experience for the role, but you can determine very quickly from this whether they've researched the role and are willing to stick around for the long haul.

# 2. Is there anything about yourself or your skills that you would like to change or improve?

This question is my version of the generic 'what are your weaknesses and strengths?' question. It's my way of getting the candidate to discuss their strengths and weaknesses without directly asking. In my experience, nine out of ten people believe there is no room for improvement, but that's not often the case. Self-awareness and self-perception are very important and if a candidate doesn't have these qualities, they often don't go far in the recruitment process.

### **3. How would you describe your learning style? How do you learn best?**

Everyone learns differently and knowing how your candidate learns best will help to determine if they're the right fit for the organisation, a particular team or even the manager. Asking this question often prompts the candidate to reflect on a role they've excelled in because of the way they were taught. This is also where having a complete understanding of the role and organisation is essential because you are looking for someone who will be able to adjust to and thrive under the organisation's management style.

### **4. What sort of management style gets the best out of you?**

Management style comes in many different forms and knowing the type that the candidate will be most exposed to will help you make the right decision in filling the role. The most common candidate response is that they don't like being micromanaged. The answer to this question often helps the interviewer understand how the candidate deals with job pressure, how they work with others and what drivers make them thrive or deflate. Having this insight will help you decide if the candidate is best suited for the position.

## **5. In your opinion, what makes a team function successfully**

Working in teams is a fundamental part of every business and teams functioning successfully is a testament to those working in them. There are positives and negatives about teamwork, and this question gets the candidate talking about how they work with others. Understanding how a candidate works in a team will help you decide whether their personality is the missing piece for the team in which the role sits. It's important to remember that the better team players often have a well-developed sense of self-perception and self-awareness.

## **6. Tell me about an experience with a difficult customer or a day where you've had to reprioritise everything?**

Everyone has had a day that has completely turned upside down without warning. I've found that asking this type of specific-scenario question transitions the interview smoothly into the nitty-gritty behavioural side by getting the candidate to explain how they've dealt with a difficult or seemingly impossible situation. Often candidates can't recall a specific situation they've been in at work, whilst other candidates can recall blow-by-blow details of the 'difficult customer' and what was said, how they resolved the problem etc. The answer to these questions will tell you volumes about them as a person and what you can expect from them in your job and environment.

## **7. How do you stay up when work becomes a grind?**

I've asked this question both in face-to-face and online scenarios now and the difference in answers has become quite evident of the times we're living in. Before COVID-19, this question often provoked answers that focused more on exercise as a stress reliever whereas now it's relaxing activities like reading or watching a TV show have become prominent. I've found that candidates are usually honest with this question, and they go on to discuss how they positively manage that stress.

## **8. Tell me about a piece of feedback that has impacted your career the most?**

This is one of my favourite questions to ask because there's no right or wrong answer to it. However, it does uncover how they've been managed in the past, for example, have they had a great manager who's been invested in their success and mentored them, or have they not been so lucky? I find that candidates pick either a negative or positive experience and the answer is very telling of how they overcome challenges or celebrate their victories.

## **9. What has been the most important accomplishment or achievement of your career?**

By asking the candidate to reflect on their career so far and their accomplishments, there is a small moment where you can see the wheels turning as they sort through them. It's quite fascinating to watch as they select what they're going to share with you. Some candidates give you an impressive and flashy example which is perfectly fine, while others give you a small victory that means a lot to them. In my experience, this is where you find out what they value in their career.

## **10. Is there anything from a previous role that has been frustrating that you don't want to be a part of your new one?**

Changing direction and turning to the past will allow the candidate to speak about what has frustrated them in previous roles they've had. This allows you to hear about the colleague they didn't get along with, the unbearable workplace culture they've experienced, or the pay rise they didn't get which is really at the heart of them being on the job hunt. This question will give you a clearer idea of where they've come from, how they've dealt with challenges in similar circumstances they'll be working in, should they be successful.

No two interviews are the same even if the questions are. As an employer, you must be prepared for anything. Remember these questions are a guide to help you understand a candidate's motivation for applying and decipher critical information from their answers to help you select the right person for your job vacancy.





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