I wish I’d asked…….
Employee Interview Questions

Using the same old interview questions? Unsure of what to ask job candidates? Not getting to the information you wanted?

These sample questions were offered by members of an ASAE listserv in the spring of 2006. They have not been reviewed by an HR professional or attorney for legal concerns.

1. Have you ever been a volunteer, served on a committee or a board of directors?
2. When do you feel that you are the most productive?
3. What did the organization chart look like at your previous job? Please draw it.
4. What conditions in the organization really help you excel at working? What conditions do you find distracting?
5. If you were an animal, which one would you be? (The most amazing answers: rat and snake!)
6. Discuss a time when your integrity was challenged. How did you handle it?
7. What would you do if someone asked you to do something unethical?
8. Have you ever experienced a loss for doing what is right?
9. Have you ever asked for forgiveness for doing something wrong?
10. In what business situations do you feel honesty would be inappropriate?
11. If you saw a co-worker doing something dishonest, would you tell your boss? What would you do about it?
12. What brings you joy regarding your career?
13. If you took out a full-page ad in the newspaper and had to describe yourself in only three words, what would those words be? (Or, what word(s) would be on your customized bumper sticker?)
14. How would you describe your personality?

15. What motivates you the most?

16. If I call your references, what will they say about you?

17. Do you consider yourself a risk taker? Describe a situation in which you had to take a risk?

18. What would be your ideal work environment?

19. Describe what kind of people with whom you would rather not work?

20. What types of responsibilities would you like to avoid in your next job?

21. What are two or three examples of tasks that you do not particularly enjoy doing? How do you remain motivated to complete those tasks?

22. What types of people bug you? How do you deal with them?

23. Tell me about a work situation that irritated you?

24. Have you ever had to resolve a conflict with a co-worker or client? How did you resolve the issue?

25. Describe the appropriate relationship between a supervisor and subordinates.

26. What sort of relationships do you have with your associates, both at the same level and above and below you?

27. How have you worked as a member of teams in the past?

28. Tell me about some of the groups from whom you’ve had to get cooperation. How did you go about gaining that cooperation? (techniques)

29. What is your management style? How do you think your subordinates perceive you?

30. As a manager, have you ever had to fire anyone? If so, what were the circumstances and how did you handle it?

31. Have you ever been in a situation where a project was returned for errors? What effect did this have on you?

32. What previous job was the most satisfying and why?
33. What previous job was the most frustrating and why?

34. Tell me about the *best boss* you ever had. Now tell me about the work boss. What made it tough to work for him/her?

35. What do you think you “owe” to an employer? List 3 elements.

36. What do you feel an employer “owes” you?

37. When was the last time you were criticized? How did you handle this criticism?

38. What have you learned from your mistakes?

39. Tell me about a situation where you “blew it.” How did you resolve it or correct it in order to save face?

40. Tell me about a situation where you abruptly had to change what you were doing.

41. If you could change or reverse a career decision you made during the past two years, what would that be?

42. Tell me about a time when you had to work on a project that didn’t work out the way it should have. What did you do?

43. If you had the opportunity to change anything in your career, what would you have done differently?

44. When was the last time you “broke the rules” (*thought outside the box*) and how did you do it?

45. What have you done recently that was innovative?

46. What was the wildest idea you had in the past year? What did you do about it?

47. Give me an example of a time when someone brought you a new idea, particularly one that was odd or unusual. What did you do?

48. If you could do anything in the world, what would you do?

49. Describe a situation in which you had a difficult (management) problem. How did you solve it?
50. What is the most difficult decision you’ve had to make? How did you arrive at your decision?

51. Describe at least three situations in which you worked under pressure and successfully met the deadlines.

52. Were you ever in a situation in which you had to meet two different deadlines given to you by two different people and you couldn’t do both? What did you do?

53. What type of approach to solving work problems seems to work best for you? Give me an example of a tough problem you solved.

54. When taking on a new task, do you like to have a great deal of feedback and responsibility at the outset, or do you like to try your own approach?

55. You are on the phone with another department resolving a problem. The intercom pages you for a customer on hold. Your manager returns your monthly report with red pen markings and demands corrections within the next hour. What do you do?

56. Describe a sales presentation when you had the right product/service, and the customer wanted it but wouldn’t buy it. What did you do next?

57. How do you measure your own success?

58. What is the most interesting thing you have done in the past three years?

59. What are your short-term and long-term career goals?

60. Why should we hire you?

61. What responsibilities do you like and want; and what kinds of results do you expect to achieve in this job?

62. What do you think it takes to be successful in an organization like ours?

63. How did the best manager you ever had motivate you to perform well? Why did that method work?

64. What is the best thing a previous employer did that you wish everyone did?

65. Of what are you most proud in your career and outside of work?

66. What is important to you in a job?
67. What to you expect to find in our organization that you don’t have now?
68. Is there anything you wanted me to know about you that we haven’t discussed?
69. What questions do you have?
70. Everyone has areas they would like to change or improve. What are some of yours?
71. How did you get from (first job listed on resume) to (current position)?
72. If you were hiring someone for this position, what qualities or characteristics would you look for?
73. What are you looking for in your next position?
74. What is the major asset(s) that you can bring to our organization?
75. Why are you interested in a position with our organization?
76. How would your best friend describe you?
77. If you could have made improvements in your last job, what would they have been?
78. In what way would you like our organization to assist you if you were to join us? What do you hope to gain from the relationship?
79. What has been the most interesting job or project so far in your career?
80. What do you really want to do in life?
81. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
82. Why did you choose this career? (Did you choose this career?)
83. Why are you looking for a position now?
84. Have you ever had difficulty with a supervisor? How did you resolve the conflict?
85. What’s more important to you – the work itself or how much you’re paid for doing it?
86. What would your last boss say about your work performance?
87. What motivates you to go the extra mile on a project or job?
88. What unique qualifications and experience do you have that makes you a great candidate for this position?
89. How do you determine or evaluate your success?
90. What qualities do you think it takes to be successful in an organization like ours?
91. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
92. Have you ever been fired or forced to resign?
93. What are the attributes of a good leader?
94. What qualities should a successful manager possess?
95. What do you owe your employer? (“Owe” being defined in many ways.)
96. What does your employer owe you?
97. How would you describe the workload in your current (or most recent) job?
98. Which is more important: creativity or efficiency? Why?
99. What’s the most recent book you’ve read? Why did you select it?
100. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her.
101. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
102. Do you have plans for continued study and professional development? If so, please describe your desired plan for education over the next 3 years.
103. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable? (Social environment? Office environment?)
104. What can you tell me about this organization in which you are applying for a position?
105. What are your expectations regarding promotions and salary increases?
106. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
107. What have you accomplished that shows your initiative and willingness to work? Did you reference this accomplishment on your resume?
108. What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
109. How do you keep your skills fresh?
110. What was the most important lesson you learned at your former/current job?
111. What skills are you looking to improve or gain by taking this position?
112. What was the hardest decision you ever had to make?
113. What tips and tools do you use or recommend for managing your time?
114. How would you approach this job differently than other people?
115. [We ask each applicant two sets of questions: One set is derived from the job description and is asked of every applicant for that job. The second set is from the individual's resume.]

116. We send out a packet of information ahead of time, and we expect applicants to do some research on their own. Consequently, the question, “Give me your elevator speech on what you’ve read and researched about our association....” [This focuses on an application’s research skills, ability to articulate and persuade under pressure, and how well they assimilate information from a variety of sources.]

117. One question to ask every applicant, no matter the job, is "How do you define quality?" Ask this to: (a) see if they believe quality is measurable; if they don't, they may not be successful here, and (b) because it opens the conversation to talk about how our members expect quality.

118. ALWAYS ask this important question: "What questions do you have for me?" If the applicant says, "nothing," then that applicant is most likely not going to make it this organization.

119. What do you want out of your next career move?
120. What would you like to accomplish that you were unable to accomplish in your previous position?
121. What have you learned about our organization from other employees, colleagues, clients or others?

122. How much time do you think you spent on research and preparing for this job position and interview?

123. What interests you least about your current or previous jobs?

124. What has brought you to this career crossroads?

125. Please share an experience in which you completed a project despite obstacles.

126. We have an "extra mile" policy. Would previous supervisor(s) describe you as a person who can go the distance?

127. Can you describe a time when you didn't perform to expectation -- yours or others?

128. Tell me about a time when your communication skills were challenged when working with a customer? Coworker?

129. What do you like best about working with people/members? Least?

130. Describe your ideal day on the job:

131. What aspects of your work give you the most confidence? Least?

132. What skills and special talents do you possess that would be advantageous in the job for which you are applying?

133. What newspapers and magazines do you read? What book(s) are you reading now?

134. How have you invested in your own continuing education and career development?

135. How would you describe your problem-solving process?

136. Describe an experience when you failed to resolve a conflict.

137. If you joined our staff, what would you do to get a firm grasp on our organization, our clients, and the profession of association management?

138. Why do you think some good companies/products fail?

139. Can you describe a time when you had to alter your leadership/management style?

140. Knowing what you do about our company, if you started today, what would you tackle first?
141. "How have the areas for which you are responsible, in your current association/organization, changed and advanced during your tenure as a result of your leadership?"

142. In your work with us what would you consider priority your assigned deadlines or responding to a special member request?

143. Depends on their level of experience but I might ask: What are key communications that an association should make to its members?

144. What would you do if a board member makes a direct request of you that you are unsure of the answer?

145. Do you have a current passport?

146. Do you hold any certifications? What are they?

147. Tell me something from your last performance review that was presented to you as an area you need to work on with which you disagree.

Advice: To me, the very best interviewing technique is to not come prepared with a set of questions that you are hoping to stump someone with or that you can see how well they memorized all the answers to the stock questions. It's sooo much more effective to just have a natural conversation about the job with no prepared set of must-ask questions. The candidate relaxes and realizes that you are truly looking for a win/win and you get to see the real person, not the nervous wall of defense.

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