50 Behavior-Based Interview Questions

Select questions that match the role. Ask candidates for a specific situation, their own actions, the result, and what they learned. Use the same selected core questions and scoring criteria for everyone interviewing for that role.

OWNERSHIP AND INITIATIVE

1. Describe a time you noticed a work problem before anyone asked you to address it. What did you do?
2. Tell me about a commitment that became difficult to meet. How did you handle it?
3. Give an example of a project you moved forward without detailed instructions.
4. Describe a mistake you owned. How did you correct it and prevent a repeat?
5. Tell me about an improvement you proposed. What happened after your proposal?

PROBLEM SOLVING AND JUDGMENT

6. Walk me through a problem for which the cause was initially unclear.
7. Describe a decision you made with incomplete information. How did you assess the risk?
8. Tell me about a time new evidence changed your recommendation.
9. Give an example of balancing speed, cost, and quality in a decision.
10. Describe a problem you escalated. Why was escalation the right step?

Useful follow-up prompts

What was your responsibility? What did you do personally? How did you measure the result? What would you change?

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COMMUNICATION

11. Tell me about a time you explained a complex issue to someone unfamiliar with the subject.
12. Describe a difficult message you delivered to a colleague or customer.
13. Give an example of a misunderstanding you resolved. What did you change?
14. Tell me about a proposal you tailored for different audiences.
15. Describe a time you listened to feedback that challenged your view.

COLLABORATION

16. Tell me about a project that required coordination across teams.
17. Describe a disagreement with a colleague and how you worked through it.
18. Give an example of helping a teammate succeed without taking over their work.
19. Tell me about a team whose working styles differed. How did you contribute?
20. Describe a handoff you improved so another person could do their job effectively.

Useful follow-up prompts

What was your responsibility? What did you do personally? How did you measure the result? What would you change?

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PLANNING AND EXECUTION

21. Walk me through how you organized a project with several deadlines.

22. Tell me about competing priorities and how you decided what came first.

23. Describe a deadline you missed. How did you communicate and recover?

24. Give an example of spotting a delivery risk early and responding to it.

25. Tell me about a task you stopped or deferred to protect a higher priority.

QUALITY AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL

26. Describe how you caught an error before it affected a customer or colleague.

27. Tell me about a time you improved a checking or quality-control process.

28. Give an example of maintaining accuracy during a busy period.

29. Describe a time the requirements were unclear. How did you confirm the expected result?

30. Tell me about feedback on your work quality and what you did with it.

Useful follow-up prompts

What was your responsibility? What did you do personally? How did you measure the result? What would you change?

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ADAPTABILITY AND LEARNING

31. Describe a time you learned a new tool or process to complete an assignment.

32. Tell me about a project whose priorities changed after work had begun.

33. Give an example of applying a lesson from an unsuccessful approach.

34. Describe a time you asked for help to close a skills gap.

35. Tell me about adapting your approach to a different work setting or team.

CUSTOMER AND STAKEHOLDER SERVICE

36. Describe a time you clarified what a customer actually needed.

37. Tell me about a dissatisfied stakeholder and your response.

38. Give an example of setting realistic expectations when you could not meet a request.

39. Describe how you followed through on a customer issue across multiple teams.

40. Tell me about an improvement you made based on recurring customer feedback.

Useful follow-up prompts

What was your responsibility? What did you do personally? How did you measure the result? What would you change?

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LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

41. Describe a time you helped someone build a skill or confidence.

42. Tell me about aligning a group around a goal when opinions differed.

43. Give an example of delegating work with clear expectations and support.

44. Describe a difficult performance conversation and the follow-up.

45. Tell me about a time you recognized someone's contribution in a meaningful way.

INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBLE WORK

46. Describe a time you raised a concern about a process or decision.

47. Tell me about protecting confidential information while getting work done.

48. Give an example of recognizing the limits of your authority or expertise.

49. Describe a time you chose a responsible approach despite pressure for a shortcut.

50. Tell me about finding an error in a report or tool output that others relied on.

Useful follow-up prompts

What was your responsibility? What did you do personally? How did you measure the result? What would you change?

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