Examples of interview questions

Ref: HR/KNW

**General**
1. Why do you want this position? Why are you the best person for this job?
2. Why should we hire you?
3. What is your long-range objective? Where do you want to be 3/10 years from now?
4. Why do you want to work here?

**Adaptability and Managing Change**
1. Tell me about the last time you had to cope with a significant change to your daily activities.
2. Tell me about a time when you experienced change. How did you feel about the change? To what extent were you able to adapt? What did you learn from the situation?
3. Tell me about a time when you found it difficult to accept change. What did you find most difficult? What was the outcome of this situation? With hindsight, what would you have done differently?
4. Give a recent example of where you have been required to significantly adapt a plan in order to respond to changes within the environment. Explain how you adapted the plan and the reasons for adapting it the way you did. What impact did your decision have on the outcome?

**Analysing and Solving Problems**
1. Can you give me an example of when your manager was absent and you were forced to make a decision? What did you take into consideration? How did you analyse the situation? What alternatives did you consider? What was the effect of your decision?
2. Give me an example of a poor decision you have made in the past. What happened? What did you learn from this experience?
3. What has been the most difficult situation in which you had to collect information?
4. Describe a recent project which required you to collect a lot of different/large amount of information. How did you know you had the appropriate information? How did you know you had enough information? Where did you get the information from?
5. Give me an example of when you have questioned the validity of information given to you. What did you do to check the facts?
6. Tell me about an important decision you had to make. How did you make that decision? What information did you collect?
7. What has been the most intellectually challenging/technically demanding task that you have undertaken recently? How did you approach it and what was the outcome?
8. Tell me about a time where you had to look at the problem from a strategic/wider perspective.
9. Tell me about a time when you’ve been able to apply learning from past experiences to design a solution to a current problem or issue. What factors did you take into account?
10. Tell me about a situation where you have had to break down a problem into smaller parts. What did you do? What was the outcome?
11. Give an example of when you have been required to generate a number of options for dealing with an issue (or recommendations). Explain the options available and describe how you weighed them up in order to make a decision. Which option did you decide to follow and why?

12. Give an example of when you had to gather information critical to the implementation of a business-wide strategy. Which areas did you investigate in order to gather the information and why?

13. Describe one of the most difficult decisions you have had to make in the workplace. How did you overcome some of the hardships?

14. Tell me about a work emergency or crisis which you had to handle. What was your role? What did you do?

15. Describe a time when you achieved what others thought was near impossible? What feedback did you receive?

**Energy**

1. Describe a time when you have been particularly motivated to achieve a goal.

2. Tell me a time when you went “an extra mile” for your employer.

3. Tell me about a time when you had to demonstrate high levels of drive to achieve a goal.

4. Tell me about a task which required a high degree of concentration for a period of time.

**Initiative**

1. Describe a time when you have sought new responsibility or volunteered to do something which was normally outside your role.

2. Describe a time when you used your initiative to achieve a result.

3. What kinds of problems have people recently called on you to solve? Tell me how you solved the problem.

4. Tell me about a time where you had to bend the rules to get something done. What was the outcome?

**Integrity**

1. Describe a time when you challenged someone because they had broken or contravened the company’s values all policies.

2. Can you tell me about a time when you were asked to do something that you didn’t agree with. Why and what did you do?

**Resilience**

1. Describe a time when you failed to complete a task on time. Why?

2. Can you describe an area of your work that requires a great attention to detail? How have you ensured accuracy in the past?

3. Give an example of a task which you have found particularly challenging. What was difficult? What did you do to overcome the obstacles?

4. Give me an example of when time pressures prevented you spending a lot of time on a task. What implications did this have on your work?

5. Describe a situation when you were faced with someone not providing you with what you needed. What did you do? What was the outcome?

6. Describe a situation in which you had to work under pressure. How did you react?

7. Give me a recent example of when you have experienced a set back.

8. Give me an example of when you were unfairly criticised. How did you respond?

9. Tell me about a time when you became disheartened with a task.
10. Describe an occasion when something at work was causing you to feel negative or fed up. How did you approach this?

11. Describe an occasion when you had difficulties working with a team. Why and how did you respond?

12. Give an example of a time recently when you used the advice and ideas of others when dealing with a task. Why did you decide to use their advice? What would have been the result if you had not?

13. Give an example of working in a team where your personal interests have been subordinated to the wider team interest. How did you feel about this?

14. Give me an example of where achieving a result has depended on you understanding someone else’s point of view.

15. Give me an example of what you organised for the induction of a new member of staff. What were your aims?

16. Give an example of how you went about coaching someone on a work matter. What was the situation?

17. Give me an example of how you recently gave feedback to someone. How did you go about it? What did you say?

18. Can you tell me about a time when you had to deal with poor performance within a project or team? What effect did this have in the team? Did you achieve a solution?

19. Tell me about a time when you had to motivate a team/person to carry out an unpopular or difficult task.

20. Tell me about a person who, as a result of your coaching, has improved their skills or performance.

21. Give an example of a large task you have delegated recently. What issues did you consider?

22. Recall a time when you made what you consider a mistake or a bad decision on the job. How did you handle the situation?

23. Have you ever had a conflict with a boss or colleague? How was it resolved?

24. Describe a time when you responded to change in your workplace/environment?

25. How do you manage giving critical feedback?

26. Tell us about a time when you had to resolve a conflict or handle a grievance? Outline the steps you followed to ensure a positive outcome.

**Task Management**

1. How important are details to you? Why or why not? What role do you think organisation plays or should play in this position?

2. What does it mean to you to be organised? How do you prioritise your workload?

3. Give me an example of an important task you have had to plan and organise. What mechanisms did you put in place to ensure you met your targets/deadlines?

4. Describe a time when you were faced with a number of tasks, all which needed to be completed in a very short period, some of which were interesting and others which were important. How did you tackle these tasks? What was the rationale underpinning your approach?

5. Give an example of how you prioritise your work. Give an example of a time when the priorities you have made proved to be the right/wrong ones. What impact did this have on the outcome?

6. Tell me about how you prioritised one day last week.

7. Describe a piece of work you have been responsible for from start to finish. How did you plan? What were your deadlines? How did you ensure you met your deadlines?

8. In your present job what is your top priority? How did you establish that?

9. What is the single biggest work project you have been responsible for completing in the last year? Tell me how you went about planning it. Did you develop contingency plans? What were they? What difficulties or obstacles did you face? How did you deal with them?
10. Give an example of when you failed to meet a deadline. How did you feel?
11. Tell me about a time when lines of communication or control were not clear. What did you do?
12. How do you ensure accuracy in your work? Give me an example of a situation where accuracy was critical.
13. Provide an example of a time where an error was discovered in your work. How did you handle the situation?

**Communication**
1. Give me an example of when you have written an important letter to a client. How did you ensure it was clear to the reader? What feedback did you receive?
2. Give me an example of when you had to explain something difficult over the telephone. What was difficult? Would you act differently next time?
3. Describe a task or presentation which you have given recently. How did you prepare, who was the audience, how did they react?
4. Tell me about a time when you found it difficult to keep someone's attention. What did you do?
5. Tell me about a time when you had to communicate a complicated idea to others. How did you go about this? How did you plan to communicate this so they understood? How did you check they understood?
6. Tell us about a time when you had to brief another person or team. How did you structure this communication? How did you plan to cope with queries or conflict? What did you learn from this?

**Influence**
1. Tell me about a time when you had to persuade a colleague/s to your point of view. What positive messages and benefits did you outline and why?
2. Think of a time when you had to argue a case and outline the obvious arguments. How did you outline the less obvious arguments? What arguments did you use to win the case and why? When developing lines of argument, to what extent do you involve others?
3. Describe a time when you had had to develop a long term and strategic influencing strategy. What did you do? Who was involved? How did you ensure success? What indirect influencing methods did you use?

**Teamwork**
1. Describe a time when you contributed to the success of a team.
2. What do you like most about working with others? What least?
3. Describe a time when you have worked in an unsuccessful team. Why was it unsuccessful? What did you personally do to help the situation?
4. Give me an example of how you have responded to a colleague who seemed overworked or stressed.
5. Describe the most successful team you have been in. Why was it so successful? What was your contribution to its success? What did you learn from this experience?
6. Give me an example of when you had to support others in a team.
7. Tell me about the best team that you have worked in and why it stands out positively in your mind.
8. How well do you work with others? What do the words "team player" mean to you?
9. How important is recognition to you?

**Knowledge and Continuous Learning**
1. What has been your greatest achievement/success to date?
2. What would your current/previous supervisor say were some of your strengths?
3. What specific training would you require if you were successful in this position?
4. How do you exceed expectation in your current role?
5. Tell us about a process you have streamlined to make it more efficient
6. How do you learn new things?
7. Tell me how you prepared for your last appraisal. What did you do?
8. Give me an example of when you have taken active steps to improve your performance.
9. Give me an example of how you have set your own objectives or development plan.
10. Tell me about any ideas you have put forward to make your job more rewarding.
11. Can you give me an example of how you have assessed the learning and development needs of your team?
12. Tell me about how you have assisted your staff to achieve their development goals and objectives.

**Leadership**

1. Give me an example of how you have given clear direction to your staff and empowered them to achieve their objectives.
2. Tell me about how you have communicated your company’s vision and how you have encouraged others to work towards this.
3. Can you give me an example of how you cascade business objectives to your staff.
4. Tell me about how strategic decisions you have made have helped your company gain competitive advantage.
5. Tell me how you have balanced global and local needs effectively.
6. Can you give me an example of how you have taken responsibility for identifying and developing future leaders.
7. Provide an example of a team performance issue that you resolved. What was the situation? In hindsight, is there anything you would do differently now?
8. Describe your management style.
9. What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have?

**Client service**

1. Tell me about a particularly difficult situation with a client/customer. What did you find difficult to handle? How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?
2. Tell me about a successful client relationship. Why was it successful? What did you do?
3. Tell me about a time when you obtained feedback from a client on the service you were providing.
4. Tell me about an achievement for a client of which you are proud.
5. Give me an example of a time when you have exceeded customer expectations. What did you do? How did you know that it exceeded expectations?
6. Give me an example of when you have gone out of your way to assist a client. What did you do?
7. Tell me about a time when you have exceeded your customer’s expectations?
8. Tell me about a client relationship which was hard to establish and how you did it.
9. Describe a situation when you have had to deal with an angry or difficult client? (Picture the person)... why were they angry, how did you calm them down, what did you learn?
10. What is the most difficult situation that you have been in with a client? Why, how did you deal with this, was the outcome satisfactory?
11. Give examples of ways in which you have used information on customer needs to make improvements to the service you provide.
12. Give me an example of a time when you had to listen very carefully to a client. How did you check whether you had all the information?
13. Describe a time where you had to use a different approach to deal with a particular personality.
14. Give an example of when you made use of a contact in order to obtain something that you wouldn’t normally be able to obtain. What impact did this have on the outcome of the project?
15. Give me an example of a situation where you had to strike a balance between client support and professional detachment.
16. Have you ever been in a position where you have needed to challenge a decision made by a superior or management? What factors and evidence did you take into consideration before you made the decision? What was the outcome?
17. What is your definition of "excellent" client/customer service? Tell me about a time when you went beyond the call of duty to help a client/customer?
18. Describe a situation that illustrates how you developed a positive relationship with a client.

**Business Management**

1. Give an example of when you have used your knowledge and understanding of an industry and its environment to produce a coherent and unique business strategy. What knowledge and understanding did you rely on?
2. Give an example of developing an entirely new approach to a business issue. How did this differ from conventional thinking?
3. Give an example of an instance where you have identified underlying concerns and needs within the market place. What have you done to align the organisation’s strategies to meet these? How successful have your initiatives been and what sort of impact have they had?
4. Tell me about how you have managed risks within a business context.
5. Give me an example of how you have managed projects/engagements ensuring delivery is consistent and meets clients requirements and/or profits are maximised.
6. Describe how you have determined the type and level of skills required for a project/engagement and how you have allocated staff.

**Business Development**

1. Describe how you have identified business development opportunities to promote your company in the marketplace.
2. Tell me how your understanding of the marketplace has impacted on the development of new products and services.

**Innovation and Knowledge Sharing**

1. Give me an example of a situation where you have thought of a new or creative way of dealing with a problem at work. How did you go about this? How did you obtain support from colleagues and managers? What were the business implications?
2. Give me an example of where you have improved existing systems/procedures.
3. Can you give me an example of when you had to work without any guidance?
4. Give me a recent example of when you have brought an original perspective to a project.
5. Give an example of a decision you have taken which has had an impact on the operation of other business divisions within the organisation. How did you consider the impact in arriving at a final decision?
6. Describe a time when you made a conscious effort to share information or knowledge in order to help others to succeed.

**Technical Expertise**

1. What technical problems are the most challenging for you?
2. What are your technical strengths and weaknesses?
3. How does your level of knowledge compare with that of your peers?
4. What feedback have you received about your technical skills?
5. Describe an occasion when colleague sought your advice or experience.
6. What have you done in the past in order to acquire extra knowledge?
7. When advising, how do you know your information is up to date?
8. How do you keep up with advances in your field?
9. Which specialist or technical magazines do you read?
10. How do your efforts of keeping abreast technically compare to your colleagues?
11. Describe an occasion when you felt that your level of specialist knowledge was insufficient.