

# Sample Interview Questions

## Sample “beginning” questions:

- Let’s open up with your interest in this role and our organization—tell me more about that and why you feel your background and experience are uniquely suited to being successful here.
- Having read the job description, where would you see yourself able to “hit the ground running” if you were to be hired?
- Where would you anticipate encountering the steepest learning curve in this job? What skills/ experience do you hope to gain working at our organization?



## Sample “track-record” questions:

- Tell me about your current/most recent role at XYZ organization. How big is your team? Budget? How does your work fit into the organization’s overall structure?
- Why did/would you leave [name of most recent or current organization]? (This will help you understand the arc of his or her career and ascertain if the moves make sense. In essence, “did this person really pursue growth in each career move or is he or she on a sideways or downward career spiral?”)

## Sample “results” questions:

- What do you see as your top three achievements or legacies in your role at XYZ organization? Why?
- What do you see as your greatest challenges/failures in your role at XYZ organization? Why?
- Describe the role in which you have been least effective. Why?
- Walk me through the best example of (growth, turnaround, etc.) that you led. What did it take?
- Tell me about a time when, because of your analysis, there was a major change of strategy, operations, or key decisions in your organization.
- How do you plan your work? Prioritize your work?
- If your most recent manager had to characterize your strengths and weaknesses, what would he or she say?
- Have you ever been in a situation where the goals were not clearly defined? How comfortable were you? How did you work through this?
- Describe a typical day at your previous (or current) position.

**Sample questions to understand a candidate's ability to manage and work in teams:**

- What was the highest performing team in which you worked? What was your role? What was your contribution?
- Give me an example that describes your working style (e.g., probe for independent versus collaborative; deadline-focused versus not, etc.)
- What is different about the way you and your current or previous manager manage people?
- Tell me about the best and worst direct reports you have ever managed. How did you work with them? What do you look for in colleagues you recruit?
- Give me an example of how you have provided professional development opportunities to your team members.
- Give me an example of persuading a colleague or team member to change his or her approach. How did you do it?
- If your most recent manager had to characterize your ability to work in a team, what would he or she say? And those who reported to you?
- How do you give feedback? How do you take feedback? Provide examples.
- What is your leadership style? How has your leadership style evolved over time?

**There are also some specific questions appropriate for candidates who are looking to “bridge” from the for-profit to the nonprofit world:**

- Tell me more about your volunteer experience and why you think it has prepared you for a full-time nonprofit role.
- What (volunteer-related) results make you proud? How did that work help you refine what you're now looking for in a nonprofit role?
- Why do you want to work in the nonprofit sector? What do you think would be different about it compared to your role in the for-profit sector?
- How do your experiences translate to this role at our organization?
- Why does our mission resonate with you?
- How do you define consensus-driven decision making? When have you seen this work? What has been your experience of the complexities of consensus decisions?

**Sample “cultural fit” questions:**

- What do (or did) you enjoy most and least at your current (or previous) job?
- If we asked your colleagues what they might want to change about you, what do you think they would say?
- What is important to you in a workplace?
- What is your biggest pet peeve in a workplace?
- What qualities do you look for in a manager? In a colleague? In a direct report?

**Other questions:**

- Where do you see yourself in three to five years?
- If relocation might be necessary, “do you envision any obstacles in relocating?”
- Are you comfortable with the compensation range for this position?
- Is there anything at all that I haven’t asked you that you want to be sure is part of this interview process?

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