

## INTERVIEWING FOR PROFESSIONALS

*what can I do to make an impact and get the job*

What is an interview?

In common practice, an interview is an interaction where people learn about each other. In common times, this is the action where someone asks questions and the other person interviews. The Learning from each other is (or at least should be) promoting a mutual benefit. The best interviews are a bi-directional flow and should be 'friendly' in nature. Unlike a speech, the interview should stimulate dialogue and exposure to both sides of the relationship.

In current times, interviews can take place in many modalities. The best interviews are face-to-face; however, with technology, we can leverage the internet, smart phones, and video conference systems. Each 'method' has positives and challenges – nothing is ever perfect, but we must work together to make the best of whatever mode we are utilizing. The key measurement for success is interaction. If a conversation is stimulated – and two directional sharing & listening – then the interview was a success.

The content and structure can range from an unstructured conversation to a highly planned and scripted process. Depending on what the desired outcome and context for the discussion. Key is to always prepare, focus, and take the time to put your best persona forward.

*The following guides and documents have been compiled by Jonathan Thalberg, principal, thalbergj consulting. These reminders, guides, checklists, and perspectives are from many articles, tools, and workshops over the past 20-plus years. Keep in mind, there are never any guarantees for employment by applying one methodology over another. You may ask 10 experts for insights; you will receive 50 directives. Be yourself, prepare, and listen. Be professional, focus on your strengths, share your accomplishments. At the end of the day, we are dealing with human emotions and opinions – if you follow these tips and aids, you need to know – you have done all you can. Congratulations on knowing you did your absolute best.*

*Jonathan Thalberg is a coach, a guide, and a strong leader to help you and your teams unpack and discover how your people can be the strongest, the most impactful, and the healthiest they can be. Jonathan can work you're your with leadership team meetings, organizational transformations, and personalized sessions on self-awareness, career development, and all aspects of professional growth. Contact him and unlock your potential today! Remember: Organizational Health is not an event; it is a journey. It's a journey that leads us to remarkable success.*

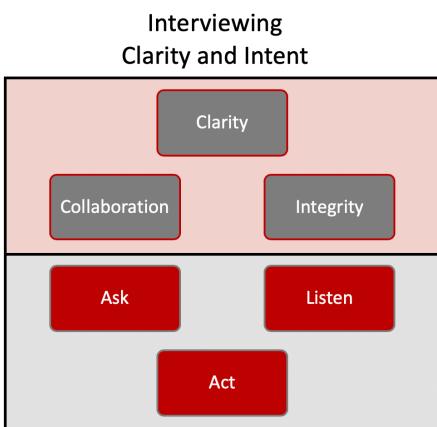
## Leadership Interviews Sample Questions and Potential Answers

Effective leadership interview questions require candidates to provide examples of how they have demonstrated common leadership skills and are asked in the format of competency-based or behavioral interviewing models.

Many times, interviewers will revert to the “old standard” behavioral questions. These will begin with a question beginning: “...tell me about a time when...”. Know that this type of question has the intent to provide insight to the interview as to your past experiences and results. It is a belief that these past behaviors will best predict future performance. A competency-based interview question could be the same structure; however, they are more connected to a specific behavior or value. It is not advised to spend a lot of time figuring out which type of question it is – rather you can focus on your integration of six focus areas.

When you consider the concept of clarity and intent, the model below will help you respond with a laser-like alignment and, depending on the relationship of the discussion, you will provide the best possible answers and the impact of this interview will be as good as you possibly can be.

Briefly, consider the six blocks of this model. Keep in mind that everyone has their own unique and personal style. You may use subtly different words, but the intent is the same. You want to respond to discussion questions keeping in mind the following thoughts.



1. **Clarity.** Utilize succinct examples and language. Without too much context setting, provide measurable and sustainable illustrations of the problem you solved, strategy you built, and measurable results for your business and organization.
2. **Collaboration.** How did you bring the team together? Your examples should demonstrate inclusion and communication. Provide rich, cultural examples as you answer the question. Be careful to not over-illustrate, rather give positive and sustainable impacts to the company, teams, and individuals.
3. **Integrity.** Keep in mind how you can interweave compliance and trust into your examples. Being able to talk about inclusion, and challenges facing a modern enterprise is a benefit to helping an interviewer seeing the executive level impact you have in a growing company.
4. **Ask.** During the interview, engage. Ask questions and seek clarity during the process. It is not a question and answer volley, rather a discovery.
5. **Listen.** Effective listening is not waiting for your turn to speak. Check for understanding, reflect back, and remain attentive.
6. **Act.** Share action plans and steps you have taken to integrate your solutions into your teams and organizations. When at all possible, use data to substantiate your results. Talk about long term impacts and customer satisfaction.

## Sample Leadership Questions and Considerations

Question	Notes and Considerations
How would your staff and colleagues describe your leadership style? Give me an example to support your answer.	<p>The purpose of this question is to find out if the style is consistent with the organizational culture. A strong leader can demonstrate flexibility and understanding of the culture and how they need to, at times, adjust.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> The phrasing is also intended to provide a bit of tension as to "what if they know someone on my team? Will they call?"</p>
What are the most important values and ethics you demonstrate as a leader? Give me an example of these in practice.	<p>Integrity- being truthful and trustworthy and having conviction</p> <p>The effective leader demonstrates values and ethics in personal behavior and integrates these values and ethics into organizational practices and activities. A good leader acts with the courage of his/her convictions. While leaders are open with their employees and model honesty, transparency and fairness, they do not violate confidences or divulge potentially harmful information. A great leader knows how to balance these ethical issues with building a trusting and healthy team.</p>
Name some situations in which a leader may fail. Tell me about a time when you failed as a leader.	<p>A number of factors can fall outside a leader's control such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the available skill pool in the organization</li> <li>• time constraints</li> <li>• the economic climate</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> In answering leadership interview questions that ask about how you respond to difficult challenges focus on how dealt with a missed target – be truthful, show intent, and provide what you learned for the future.</p> <p>Demonstrate how you turned a negative situation into a learning opportunity.</p>
What role does leadership play for a manager? How have you demonstrated this?	<p>Articulate and leverage thoughts around the nuances between leadership and management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to communicate the strategic vision with clarity</li> <li>• to translate the vision into concrete direction and plans</li> <li>• to identify and communicate priorities, short term objectives, timelines, performance measures, clear responsibilities and performance agreements</li> <li>• to provide quality judgment and advice</li> </ul>
Tell me about an innovative solution you developed to an unusual business challenge.	<p>Innovation and creativity are key competencies.</p> <p>Effective leaders promote change and innovation.</p> <p>Building and implementing solutions is a key skill for an effective leader.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> If possible, incorporate GLOBAL examples. Many companies are not just in the United States – how have you built global relationships that solved complex business problems?</p>

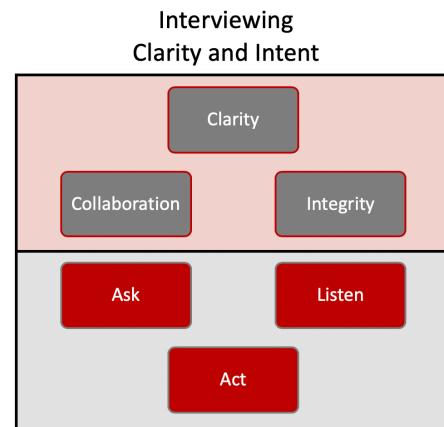
Question	Notes and Considerations
Tell me about a time when the business was in crises. How did you pull people together and build morale?	<p>Share how you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed and implemented effective communication strategies within the organization</li> <li>• removed barriers to collaboration and provide clear direction on priorities</li> <li>• provided clear and honest feedback to inspire trust</li> </ul>
What methods have you used to gain commitments – cross functionally? Globally?	<p>Leaders gain commitment by influencing and persuading the team to set objectives and buy into the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cooperation and cohesion</li> <li>• measurable performance</li> <li>• constructive conflict</li> <li>• inspiration, commitment, clarity</li> <li>• value and engaged teams</li> </ul>
All leaders have to deal with conflict. Share an example where you had to personally resolve an issue within your organization.	<p>Provide your ability to understand and respect different views and sustainably impact the situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate your ability to settle dispute by focusing on solving the problem</li> <li>• what was the impact on the personalities</li> <li>• show how you evaluated and monitored the results</li> </ul>
How do you influence your teams and align them on the strategic objectives / focus for the organization?	<p>Demonstrate inclusion in the decision-making and planning process.</p> <p>Consider examples relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employee success</li> <li>• empowerment</li> <li>• process improvement</li> </ul>
Share how you promote the learning and development of employees?	<p>Be prepared to share examples as to how you have influenced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mentoring and coaching</li> <li>• providing performance feedback both procedural and systemic</li> <li>• leaders as models</li> <li>• long term results</li> </ul>
In your career, what is your most memorable change you implemented in an organization?	<p>Consider the business challenge and/or strategic imperative. Did you have a macro-issue you were addressing? How did you seek clarity, build the solution, and the drive the change initiative?</p> <p>What was the result?</p>

## Know Your Audience

### An Interview Question Guide for Hiring Managers

When preparing for an interview, it's important to consider and understand what the "other side" of the table is doing. With this sort of focus, we can be better prepared. As a candidate, we are told to be prepared. We do practice interviews, study the company, research LinkedIn, seek out folks who we know at the company, and prepare all we can so we can provide the correct, sharp, and example filled responses we can.

The following are sample questions used by hiring managers to help craft questions for interviews that will provide insights into the candidates. The insights from the interviews will hopefully provide understanding so the hiring teams can select the best possible candidate. Investing in practice with these questions provides you with some muscle memory when you may be "hit" with one or more of these questions. Remember the clarity and intent model. This will keep you focused and can allow you to be best prepared to be the best candidate you possibly can be. Practice is always a good thing.



Focus Area	Sample Questions
<b>Educational Background</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the highest level of education you have received?</li> <li>2. List all degrees you have earned. Give the name of the institution from which each degree was earned and the field of study of each degree.</li> <li>3. List any other education or training relevant to the (position title) position.</li> </ol>
<b>Employment Background</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who is your present or most recent employer?</li> <li>2. What are/were your major responsibilities at (present/most recent job)?</li> <li>3. Discuss/determine skills and level of expertise related to (position title). (Insert specific questions).</li> <li>4. Which skills have you acquired in your present or previous positions that make you competitive for this position?</li> <li>5. What do/did you like best about that position? What do/did you like least?</li> <li>6. Which accomplishments in your present position are you proud of and why?</li> <li>7. Why are you planning to/did you leave that position?</li> </ol>
<b>Initiative</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have you found any ways to make your job easier or more rewarding?</li> <li>2. What do you do differently from other people in the same position?</li> <li>3. Have you ever recognized a problem before your boss or others in the organization? How did you handle it?</li> <li>4. What do you do in your job that is not covered in your job description?</li> <li>5. We've all had occasions when we were working on something that just "slipped through the cracks." Can you give me some examples of when this happened to you? Cause? Result?</li> <li>6. In your past experience, have you noticed any process or task that was being done unsafely (incorrectly)? How did you discover it or come to notice it?</li> <li>7. Are you doing a good job? How do you know?</li> <li>8. Give me some examples of doing more than required in your job?</li> </ol>

Focus Area	Sample Questions
	<p>9. Can you think of some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts?</p> <p>10. What new ideas or suggestions have you come up with at work?</p> <p>11. This job requires much time working alone. Tell me about a job or project where you worked unsupervised and were given only general guidelines for job/project completion.</p> <p>12. Have you found any ways to make other employees' jobs easier or more rewarding?</p> <p>13. What career accomplishments are you most proud of? What did you do to change the aspects of your job that you dislike?</p> <p>14. Have you found any ways to make your job easier or more rewarding?</p> <p>15. What do you do differently from other people in the same position?</p> <p>16. Have you ever recognized a problem before your boss or others in the organization? How did you handle it?</p> <p>17. What do you do in your job that is not covered in your job description?</p> <p>18. We've all had occasions when we were working on something that just "slipped through the cracks." Can you give me some examples of when this happened to you? Cause? Result?</p> <p>19. In your past experience, have you noticed any process or task that was being done unsafely (incorrectly)? How did you discover it or come to notice it?</p> <p>20. Are you doing a good job? How do you know?</p> <p>21. Give me some examples of doing more than required in your job?</p> <p>22. Can you think of some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts?</p> <p>23. What new ideas or suggestions have you come up with at work?</p> <p>24. This job requires much time working alone. Tell me about a job or project where you worked unsupervised and were given only general guidelines for job/project completion.</p> <p>25. Have you found any ways to make other employees' jobs easier or more rewarding?</p> <p>26. What career accomplishments are you most proud of? What did you do to change the aspects of your job that you dislike?</p> <p>27. Have you found any ways to make your job easier or more rewarding?</p> <p>28. What do you do differently from other people in the same position?</p> <p>29. Have you ever recognized a problem before your boss or others in the organization? How did you handle it?</p> <p>30. What do you do in your job that is not covered in your job description?</p> <p>31. We've all had occasions when we were working on something that just "slipped through the cracks." Can you give me some examples of when this happened to you? Cause? Result?</p> <p>32. In your past experience, have you noticed any process or task that was being done unsafely (incorrectly)? How did you discover it or come to notice it?</p> <p>33. Are you doing a good job? How do you know?</p> <p>34. Give me some examples of doing more than required in your job?</p> <p>35. Can you think of some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts?</p> <p>36. What new ideas or suggestions have you come up with at work?</p>

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<b>Dealing with Stress and Conflict</b>	<p>1. What pressures do you feel in your job? How do you deal with them?</p> <p>2. Describe the highest pressure situations you have been under recently. How did you cope with them?</p> <p>3. Tell me how you maintain constant performance while under time and work load pressures.</p> <p>4. Describe times in the past year when you have been most upset with yourself at work.</p> <p>5. Describe times in the past year when you have been most upset with someone else at work.</p> <p>6. Describe the last time a person at work (customer, co-worker, boss) became irritated or lost his/her temper. What did they do? How did you respond? What was the outcome?</p> <p>7. Tell me about some situations in which you became frustrated or impatient when dealing with (customers, co-workers, boss). What did you do?</p> <p>8. In your career, what has been your greatest disappointment?</p> <p>9. We've all lost our temper at one time or another. Describe for me the last time you lost your temper. What had occurred? How did you respond?</p>

Focus Area	Sample Questions
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Give me an example of when your ideas were strongly opposed by a co-worker or supervisor. What was the situation? What was your reaction? What was the result?</li> <li>11. What pressures do you feel in your job? How do you deal with them?</li> <li>12. Describe the highest pressure situations you have been under recently. How did you cope with them?</li> <li>13. Tell me how you maintain constant performance while under time and work load pressures.</li> <li>14. Describe times in the past year when you have been most upset with yourself at work.</li> <li>15. Describe times in the past year when you have been most upset with someone else at work.</li> <li>16. Describe the last time a person at work (customer, co-worker, boss) became irritated or lost his/her temper. What did they do? How did you respond? What was the outcome?</li> <li>17. Tell me about some situations in which you became frustrated or impatient when dealing with (customers, co-workers, boss). What did you do?</li> <li>18. In your career, what has been your greatest disappointment?</li> <li>19. We've all lost our temper at one time or another. Describe for me the last time you lost your temper. What had occurred? How did you respond?</li> <li>20. Give me an example of when your ideas were strongly opposed by a co-worker or supervisor. What was the situation? What was your reaction? What was the result?</li> </ol>
<b>Planning and Organization</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do you organize your day?</li> <li>2. How often is your time schedule upset by unforeseen circumstances? What do you do when that happens? Tell me about a specific time.</li> <li>3. Describe a typical day ... a typical week. (Interviewer, listen for planning)</li> <li>4. How do you establish priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.</li> <li>5. What is your procedure for keeping track of items requiring your attention?</li> <li>6. What did you do to get ready for this interview?</li> <li>7. We have all had times when we just could not get everything done on time. Tell me about a time that this happened to you. What did you do?</li> <li>8. Tell me how you establish a course of action to accomplish specific long-and-short term goals.</li> <li>9. Do you postpone things? What are good reasons to postpone things?</li> <li>10. Give me some examples of projects or tasks where you postponed immediate action. Why?</li> <li>11. How do you catch up on an accumulated backlog of work after a vacation or conference?</li> </ol>
<b>Technical and/or Role Specific</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What training have you received in _____?</li> <li>2. Describe how the process can best be performed. Have you discovered any shortcuts? How do they work?</li> <li>3. Describe your experience with the following tools and equipment. (Interviewer, list job related tool).</li> <li>4. Walk me through the procedures you would follow to _____.</li> </ol>

Focus Area	Sample Questions
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. What equipment have you been trained to operate? When/where did you receive that training?</li> <li>6. What equipment did you operate in your job at _____?</li> <li>7. Describe your experience performing the following tasks. (Interviewer, list job related tasks).</li> <li>8. What job experiences have you had that would help you in this position?</li> <li>9. How do you follow the prescribed standards of safety when performing (task) _____?</li> <li>10. Have you ever identified potential malfunctions of equipment? How did you discover the potential malfunction? What did you do to correct the problem?</li> <li>11. Being a _____ certainly requires a lot of technical knowledge. How did you go about getting it? How long did it take you?</li> <li>12. Do you consider your technical abilities basic, intermediate, or advanced?</li> <li>13. On a scale of one to ten, ten being you are a perfect technical match or this position, where would you rank yourself?</li> <li>14. What would you add to or subtract from your technical background to make you more qualified for this position?</li> </ol>
<b>Standards</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are your standards of success in your job? What have you done to meet these standards?</li> <li>2. Bosses sometimes are not satisfied with the way we do certain things or complete certain projects. Can you give me some examples of when this happened to you?</li> <li>3. What do you consider the most important contribution your department has made to this organization? What was your role?</li> <li>4. What factors, other than pay, do you consider most important in evaluating yourself or your success?</li> <li>5. Everyone has to bend or break the rules sometime. Can you give me some examples of when you had to do this?</li> <li>6. When judging the performance of others, what factors or characteristics are most important to you?</li> <li>7. Describe the time you worked the hardest and felt the greatest sense of achievement.</li> <li>8. Tell me about a time when you weren't very pleased with your work performance. Why were you upset with your performance? What did you do to turn around your performance?</li> <li>9. We've all had to work with people who are very difficult to get along with. Give me an example of when this happened to you. Why was the person difficult? How did you handle the person? What was the result?</li> <li>10. When have you declined a work-related decision? Why?</li> </ol>
<b>Teamwork / Getting Along with Others</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We've all had to work with someone who is very difficult to get along with. Give me an example of when this happened to you. Why was that person difficult? How did you handle that person?</li> <li>2. When dealing with individuals or groups, how do you determine when you are pushing too hard? How do you determine when you should back off? Give an example.</li> </ol>

Focus Area	Sample Questions
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. From time to time, all of us are confronted by someone who wastes our time at work. Tell me about some situations like that. What did you do?</li> <li>4. How do you go about developing rapport (relationships) with individuals at work?</li> <li>5. Give me some examples of when one of your ideas was opposed in a discussion. How did you react?</li> <li>6. Describe a situation when you found yourself dealing with someone very sensitive. What happened?</li> <li>7. Describe some situations when you wished you had acted differently with someone at work.</li> <li>8. Tell me, specifically, what you have done to show you are a team player at _____.</li> <li>9. We all have ways of showing consideration for others. What are some things you've done to show concern or consideration for a co-worker?</li> <li>10. When did you last lose your temper at work? Describe the reasons. What was the outcome?</li> <li>11. How do you keep your employees informed with what is going on in the organization?</li> </ol> <p>What methods do you use to keep informed with what is going on in your area?</p>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tell me about a time you had to take a firm stand with a co-worker. What was the situation? What was difficult about the co-worker? What was the firm stand you had to take?</li> <li>2. Describe how you instruct someone to do something new. What were you training them to do? Walk me through how you did it.</li> <li>3. Tell me about a time you had to win approval from your co-workers for a new idea or plan of action.</li> <li>4. Tell me about a new idea or way of doing something that you came up with which was agreed to by the boss. What did you do to get it to the right person? What did you do to get the boss to agree? Be specific.</li> <li>5. Describe any supervisory or leadership training, schooling, or work experience you have had and its relevance to this position.</li> <li>6. Give a specific example of something you have done that demonstrates you are a team player.</li> <li>7. What leadership skills and experience do you have that would qualify you as an effective leader? Be specific.</li> <li>8. What are your long-and-short term plans for your department? Are they in writing?</li> </ol>
<b>Motivation and Drive</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you like best (least) about your job as a _____?</li> <li>2. What were/are your reasons for leaving _____?</li> <li>3. Give me some examples of experience in your job at _____ that were satisfying? Dissatisfying? Why?</li> <li>4. What gave you the greatest feeling of achievement in your job at _____? Why?</li> <li>5. Give me an example of when you worked the hardest and felt the greatest sense of achievement.</li> </ol>

Focus Area	Sample Questions
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. All jobs have their frustrations and problems. Describe specific job conditions, tasks, or assignments that have been dissatisfying to you. Why?</li><li>7. Give me some examples of past working experience that you have found personally satisfying.</li><li>8. What are some recent responsibilities you have taken on? Why did you assume these responsibilities?</li><li>9. Tell me about the most boring job or task you have had. Why was it boring? What did you do about it? How did you handle the boredom?</li><li>10. Tell me about a time when the duties and responsibilities available in a specific position overlapped with duties and responsibilities that brought you personal satisfaction.</li><li>11. Why do you want to be a _____ (title of position)?</li><li>12. Why did you choose this (career, type of work)?</li><li>13. What job values are important to you?</li></ol>

## Keys to Preparing for Interviews

### Quick Preparation

When you find yourself in a situation where you do not have a lot of time to prepare – it happens to everyone. Below is a short list of questions you may be asked in an interview – no matter what the job, these are easy “go to” questions hiring managers or phone screeners may ask.

Take 20 minutes, read through this short list – and mentally prepare a response. It will get you warmed up and ready for a clear, focused, and specific responses.

Take a breath – or a sip of water – you will do fine.

Tell me about yourself.  
Why should we hire you?  
What is your greatest strength?  
What is your greatest weakness?  
Why are you leaving or why have you left your job?  
Share a time you have failed? How did you handle it?  
Why do you want this job?  
How do you handle stress and pressure?  
Describe a difficult work situation and how you got through it?  
Do you work well with other people?  
What are your goals for the future?

## Simple Does Not Always Mean Easy

### Interview Skills You Should Remember

<b>Preparation</b>	ALWAYS prepare. Your answers (and your self-confidence) will suffer if you neglect to properly prepare. Practice makes perfect. When at all possible, ask a colleague or trusted coach to pose as an interviewer. A rehearsal will help you get used to answering questions in real time.
<b>Punctuality</b>	There are very few (if any) excuses that will redeem a late arrival. Do whatever you need to do to get there ten to 15 minutes in advance of your interview time. Leave extra early to account for potential transportation obstacles.
<b>Thinking Before You Speak</b>	A breath, pause, or a “filler phrase” like: “that is a terrific question” can help you gather your thoughts. Know what to do if you really can’t answer a question. You can, based on the context of the interview, be very transparent and vulnerable – say: “wow, that is something I need to think about – I have not experienced that before.” Vulnerability demonstrates humility – it’s not a bad thing, infrequently.
<b>Speaking Clearly, Cohesively, and Calmly</b>	Nerves can get you talking rapidly, and so can the simple desire to convey as much valuable information about yourself as possible. Make a conscious effort to slow down and speak calmly and clearly. It is perceived a more prepared and professional.
<b>Being Confident, Not Arrogant (Assertive vs. Aggressive)</b>	You should be willing and able to promote yourself, your experience and accomplishments; but, make sure you keep that volume down so do not present as come across as arrogant or self-important.  Focus on exuding a kind and balanced sense of confidence, and when you discuss your achievements, be sure to give credit where credit is due in order to show that you’re a team player. Keep a watch for the Assertive vs. Aggressive balance.
<b>Actually Listening</b>	Stay in the moment and don’t let yourself get distracted. Remain engaged and seek clarity where at all possible.
<b>Showing Interest, Without Desperation</b>	No matter how much you want or need the job, refrain from acting desperate. The key is to express earnest interest in the role and in the company, and passion for the work you do. Keep in the back of your mind that you are a valuable asset as an employee.
<b>Knowing More Than Your Elevator Pitch</b>	Although you should be able to give an elevator pitch in which you introduce yourself, recap your experience and promote your most valuable professional assets, make sure you’re comfortable talking about yourself beyond that.  Know how to discuss both your strengths and development opportunities. Emphasize your best qualities and greatest skills, while putting a positive spin on your areas of improvement.  Come prepared to exert some level of control over the conversation. Ask a clarifying question that can show, not only interest, but that you have been listening and you can see how you can contribute.

<b>Expressing Gratitude</b>	<p>Don't underestimate the importance of saying "thank you." As soon as your interview concludes, you should thank your interviewers for their time, and for the opportunity to learn more about the position.</p> <p>Always clarify that you have all contact information. When you get home, you should always follow up with a thank you email.</p>
<b>Conduct Research on the Employer, Hiring Manager, and Job Opportunity</b>	<p>Success in a job interview starts with a solid foundation of knowledge on the jobseeker's part. You should understand the employer, the requirements of the job, and the background of the person (or people) interviewing you.</p> <p>The more research you conduct, the more you'll understand the employer, and the better you'll be able to answer interview questions in context.</p> <p>Seek out people in your network who may have worked at the company you are interviewing at. Keep in mind that things do change – so all input needs to be taken but tempered.</p>
<b>Review Common Interview Questions and Prepare Your Responses</b>	<p>Another key to interview success is preparing responses to expected interview questions. A good tool for remembering your responses is to put them into a story form that you can tell in the interview.</p>
<b>Dress for Success</b>	<p>Plan out a wardrobe that fits the organization and its culture, striving for the most professional appearance you can accomplish. Remember that it's always better to be overdressed than under" and to wear clothing that fits and is clean and pressed.</p> <p>Keep accessories and jewelry to a minimum – do not wear fragrances.</p>
<b>Relaxed</b>	<p>Arriving a bit early is also a chance to observe the dynamics of the workplace – go to the restroom – sit in a sunny spot – and BREATHE. Get a cup of water.</p>
<b>Make Great First Impressions</b>	<p>A cardinal rule of interviewing is to be polite and offer warm greetings to everyone you meet" from the parking attendant to the receptionist to the hiring manager. Employers often are curious how job applicants treat staff members" and your job offer could easily be derailed if you're rude or arrogant to any of the staff.</p> <p>When it's time for the interview, keep in mind that first impressions" the impression interviewers get in the first few seconds of meeting you". You can make or break an interview in the first few moments – be aware.</p> <p>When greeting your interviewer, stand, smile, make eye contact, and offer a firm" but not bone-crushing" handshake. It is not a strength contest. Having a positive attitude and expressing enthusiasm for the job and employer are vital in the initial stages of the interview.</p>
<b>Be Authentic, Upbeat, Focused, Confident, Candid, and Concise</b>	<p>Once the interview starts, the key to success is the quality and delivery of your responses. Your goal should always be authenticity and responding truthfully to the questions. At the same time, your goal is to get to the next step, you want to provide responses that showcase</p>

	<p>your skills, experience, and fit" with the job and the employer. These responses should leverage the clarity and intent model previously described. Provide specific examples of solutions and accomplishments but keep your responses sharp and to the point.</p> <p>By preparing responses to common interview questions you will ideally avoid long, rambling responses that bore interviewers. Keep in mind, no matter how much an interviewer might bait you, never badmouth a previous employer, boss, or co-worker. That should be considered a non-negotiable requirement.</p>
<b>Remember the Importance of Body Language</b>	<p>While the content of your interview responses is paramount, poor body language can be a distraction at best" or a reason not to hire you at worst. Effective forms of body language include smiling, eye contact, solid posture, active listening, and nodding. Detrimental forms of body language include slouching, looking off in the distance, playing with a pen, fidgeting in a chair, brushing back your hair, touching your face, or a list of other inappropriate actions.</p> <p>Pay attention – if the interview puts their feet on the desk that NEVER gives you permission to do the same.</p>
<b>Prepare Insightful Questions</b>	<p>Employers make a judgment about an applicant's interest in the job by whether or not the interviewee asks questions. Even if the hiring manager was thorough in his or her discussions about the job opening and what is expected, you must ask a few questions. This shows that you have done your research and that you are curious. The best approach is to prepare questions to ask days before the interview, adding any additional questions that might arise from the interview during the actual interview.</p>
<b>Sell Yourself and then Close the Deal</b>	<p>The most qualified applicant is not always the one who is hired; the winning candidate is often the jobseeker who does the best job responding to interview questions and showcasing his or her fit with the job, department, and organization.</p> <p>Some compare a the job interview to a sales call. You are the salesperson" and the product you are selling to the employer is your ability to solve the company's issues and propel its success.</p> <p>As the interview winds down, ask about the next steps in the process and the timetable in which the employer expects to use to make a decision about the position.</p>
<b>Thank Interviewer(s) in Person, by Email, or Postal Mail</b>	<p>Common courtesy and politeness go far in interviewing; therefore, the importance of thanking each person who interviews you should come as no surprise.</p> <p>Begin the process while at the interview, thanking each person who interviewed you before you leave. It is also a very good idea to validate their contact information. Writing thank-you emails or notes shortly after the interview will not get you the job offer, but doing so will certainly give you an edge over any of the other finalists who didn't bother to send thank-you notes and it keeps you in their mind.</p>

## Potential Interview Questions

### Executive Competencies

Growing ourselves and others is a key success factor for leaders. Developing others, balancing conflicting business priorities, customer requirements, shareholder concerns, future pressures, and macro-economic conditions all factor in to our leadership profile.

Consider the following questions below and how they can support or illustrate your strengths and development areas within the context of the 7 leadership competencies. (Based on your team, company, or culture, you can always add more.)

It is important to underscore that this is not an exhaustive list. Remember: be prepared to respond to these questions with specifics, clarity, examples, and intent. When at all possible, use data – numbers tell the best story of success.

#### Working with others – building partnerships and trust.

1. Tell me about a time when you had to work with a mix of stakeholders in different functions/regions to drive a common agenda. Walk me through how you cultivated the relationships to establish buy-in.
2. Think back to one of your top customers and provide me with examples of their strategic priorities. What steps did you take to understand these initiatives and what did you do to add value to your customers?
3. Give me an example of a project that you led which required you to work across functions and geographies. What were the obstacles and what did you do to create synergy within the group?
4. Describe a time when cross-functional business strategies did not completely align. How did you influence across the organization to ensure your team members/organization clearly understood what they needed to do to align with the overall business strategy? What changes were made? What was the outcome?
5. Give me an example of a time when you built a team containing very different personalities. How did you leverage their capabilities? What methods did you use to motivate each individual?

## Ambition – drive – motivation.

1. Tell me about a time when your team generated a breakthrough/innovative idea that came to fruition. Describe the critical components and the toughest challenges.
2. Walk me through the steps you have taken to drive quality improvements within your organization. What have been the outcomes?
3. Provide me with an example of a time when you were given an assignment out of your comfort zone. How did you manage the obstacles/challenges and what were the results?
4. Tell me about an experience you had when dealing with a major change within your organization. How did you maintain your effectiveness and composure when working through this transformation?
5. Describe a time when you developed a business solution that had unpopular people-related consequences. What factors did you take into account as you developed the plan? What steps did you take to ensure follow up? How did you sell the idea and get team members on board?

## Making decisions when faced with conflicting priorities. Dealing with bureaucracy and politics.

1. Describe a situation when you had to make an important strategic decision even though you did not have all of the facts. What was the situation? How did you overcome your lack of information?
2. Give me an example of a time when you had to prioritize and work on the “vital few” to achieve a business goal. Walk me through your thought process and your action steps. What was the outcome?
3. Tell me about a time when you demonstrated personal integrity in a business situation. What challenges did you face in the process? How did you integrate your personal values with what was needed for the business?
4. Tell me about a time when your group was assigned multiple priorities by multiple leaders all stressing the importance of their own projects. How did you prioritize the projects? How did you inform the leaders of their project timeframes?
5. Sometimes we are under so much pressure to meet our goals that the values of the organization can be overlooked. Describe a time when you had to go against outside pressures to meet an expectation or goal in order to stay in line with the company values.

### **Vision, strategy, and future proofing the business.**

1. Tell me about a time when one of your business units did not perform to expectations. Why did this happen and how did you turn it around and hold managers accountable for the outcome?
2. Tell me about a time you had to communicate a new directive across different business segments or regions. Describe your follow up actions to address concerns or issues.
3. Tell me about a time when you had to anticipate and overcome potential obstacles to implementing a highly visible, strategic initiative. What were the obstacles? How did you approach the situation? How did you ensure your team understood these initiatives? What was the outcome?
4. As a senior leader, you will be expected to create, communicate and drive a business strategy from top down within your organization. Describe the steps you have taken in the past which demonstrate this skill, as well as describe the outcome of your efforts.
5. Tell me about a time you had to lead a team to meet a new strategic focus. Walk me through how you determined the specific objectives and communicated these to the team. What metrics/management system did you put in place to track the team's work progress?

### **Realism, optimism, confidence. Motivating others.**

1. Describe a situation when your attempt to motivate a person or business unit was rejected.
2. Tell me about a time when your company has undergone a significant transformation or restructuring. How did you personally deal with the change? What did you do to demonstrate your support and commitment within your peer and subordinate workgroups?
3. Give me an example of how you have injected energy and optimism into a project or a team that had particularly low morale? How did your actions affect the team and what were the results?
4. Tell me about a difficult situation when it was desirable for you to keep a positive attitude. What did you do to help build enthusiasm in others?
5. Tell me about a time you were responsible for a major project or initiative that suffered a significant setback. How did you respond? What was the result?

## Humility, integrity, and selflessness.

1. Tell me about a time when you had negative input from your stakeholders as a result of a decision you made. How did you manage this situation?
2. Provide me with an example of the time when you took full responsibility and accountability for an error. What were the outcomes and lessons learned?
3. Give me a specific example of a situation when you were given developmental feedback as a leader by your subordinates. What were your reactions and how did you respond? What avenues have you created to allow your team to provide feedback and input?
4. Describe a situation in your career when a team member proposed a creative new idea contrary to the conventional way of operating in your organization. What was your response?
5. Tell me about a recent occurrence that you would describe as a developmental experience. What did you take away from this learning?

## Level 5 leadership - selflessness

1. Tell me about a time you had to manage an employee who was difficult to get along with. How did you coach them to change their behavior, plus address the rest of team to value and accept their work?
2. Give me a specific example of how you have helped create an environment where differences were valued, encouraged, and supported. What did you do to bring convergence to the group?
3. Tell me about a time when you acknowledged publicly the work of your subordinates and provided them with appropriate rewards or visibility.
4. Tell me how you have structured performance discussions with your team members in the past. What message did you relay during these sessions to encourage strong performance?
5. Tell me about a time when you encouraged or sponsored a diverse team member who may have lacked confidence to progress their career. What did you do and what was the outcome?