

Welcome to your guide...

50 SENIOR MANAGER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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SENIOR MANAGER INTERVIEW

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Q1. Introduce Yourself.

Sample Answer:

Thank you for inviting me to be interviewed for this senior management position today. I am a seasoned professional with a track record of successfully leading teams and driving strategic initiatives. Over the years, I've been fortunate to work across diverse industries, honing my skills in areas such as project management, process optimization, and team development.

For instance, during my time at Company A, I led a cross-functional team that revamped an underperforming product line. Through strategic marketing and customer feedback integration, we achieved a 25% sales increase within a year. Moreover, at Company B, I played a pivotal role in navigating a complex merger, successfully integrating disparate systems and cultures while exceeding synergy targets by 15%.

What truly fuels my passion is the opportunity to create an environment where collaboration and innovation thrive. I am drawn to challenges that push the boundaries of what's possible, and I thrive in dynamic, fast-paced settings. This is why I am genuinely excited about the possibility of contributing my expertise to this team, leveraging my experience to help shape and achieve the ambitious goals that lie ahead.

Q2. Why have you applied for this position?

Sample Answer:

I'm excited about this Senior Management role with your company for a number of reasons. Firstly, your company's commitment to fostering creativity and embracing challenges aligns perfectly with my values.

The opportunity to spearhead strategies that will not only shape the company's future but also empower individuals to thrive resonates strongly with me. Your team's reputation for its dedication and expertise is impressive, and I'm confident that my blend of experience and leadership style can contribute to its continued success. I'm genuinely thrilled about the prospect of joining your company and taking both the team and the organization to new heights.

I am genuinely excited about the opportunity to contribute to your company's growth and success in a senior management capacity. Your organization's reputation for innovation and commitment to driving industry change strongly resonate with me. Having successfully led cross-functional teams in my previous roles, I am drawn to the strategic challenges this position offers. I am eager to leverage my experience in aligning teams with strategic goals and optimizing operational processes.

The prospect of collaborating with a talented team and shaping the company's future direction is both motivating and aligned with my career aspirations. I am confident that my track record in delivering results, combined with my passion for creating dynamic work cultures, makes me an ideal fit to lead and drive excellence within your team.

Q3. What is your leadership style?

Sample Answer:

My leadership style is rooted in collaboration and empowerment. I believe in setting a clear vision and goals while providing my team with the autonomy and support they need to excel. I value open communication and actively listen to my team's ideas and concerns, fostering an environment where diverse perspectives are embraced.

I'm a firm believer in leading by example, rolling up my sleeves alongside my team to tackle challenges. Adaptability is key to my approach – I adjust my leadership style to suit the situation, whether it's guiding through a crisis or nurturing creativity during times of growth. Ultimately, I find fulfilment in not only achieving outcomes but also in helping individuals develop and reach their potential.

Q4. What can your team learn from you?

Sample Answer:

From my experience, my team can learn effective problem-solving, strategic thinking, and adaptable leadership. I emphasize a holistic approach to challenges, encouraging them to analyze situations from multiple angles and propose innovative solutions. I also prioritize strategic thinking, helping my team understand the broader implications of their work within the larger organizational context.

Moreover, I believe in leading with flexibility, showing how to navigate change gracefully and remain resilient in the face of uncertainties. My commitment to transparent communication and active listening can also serve as a valuable lesson, fostering a culture of openness and collaboration.

Overall, my goal is to inspire my team to not only achieve their immediate objectives but also to develop skills and qualities that will contribute to their long-term success and growth.

Q5. Describe a time when you have resolved conflict in a team.

Sample Answer:

SITUATION: In my previous role as a Senior Manager, I encountered a situation where two team members had conflicting opinions on the direction of a critical project. The conflict was impacting both team morale and project progress.

TASK: My task was to resolve the conflict and guide the team towards a productive resolution while ensuring that the project stayed on track.

ACTION: To address the conflict, I initiated one-on-one conversations with each team member, aiming to truly grasp their perspectives and motivations. This helped me identify common ground and potential areas of agreement between them.

Subsequently, I organized a team meeting designed to foster open dialogue and collaboration. During the meeting, I created a safe space for both individuals to express their viewpoints without interruption. By emphasizing shared objectives and the intrinsic value of their diverse perspectives, I skilfully guided the discussion towards points of consensus. This process facilitated a collaborative approach, leading to the development of an innovative solution that ingeniously integrated elements from both team members' initial proposals. This resolution not only improved overall team morale but also contributed to the project's enhanced outcomes.

RESULT: The approach led to the successful resolution of the conflict. The team members were able to collaboratively develop an innovative solution that incorporated aspects of both their initial ideas. This not only improved team morale but also enhanced the project's outcomes.

REFLECTION: This experience highlighted the significance of addressing conflicts promptly and fostering open communication. It underscored the value of leveraging differences as strengths, which ultimately strengthened the team's cohesion and contributed to better project results.

Q6. What's the first thing you do in the role if we hire you?

Sample Answer:

If I get to become your senior manager, I will do three things when I first start working in the role. Number one, I will obtain a thorough brief from you, the company directors, to establish the most pressing issues that require my attention. I will also determine what the strategic vision is of the company and establish what I can do to help you achieve your commercial objectives. Number

two, I will then meet with my team or department and I will observe them in action. I think it's really important when you first start working as a senior manager that you sit down and observe your key members of staff in action because that enables you to establish their work ethics, their standards, identify the strengths and weaknesses of your team, and also determine any areas for opportunity and growth. And then number three, I will set out my expectations. What do I want my team or department to achieve and how are we going to achieve it? I will also delegate tasks, assign responsibilities, and then set about leading and managing the team and also motivating them towards achieving the strategic vision of the organization.

Q7. Why do you want to be a senior manager?

Sample Answer:

I want to be a senior manager, primarily because of the level of responsibility that comes with the role. I am the type of person who thrives on leading difficult teams. I can do that due to my unique management approach and also the fact that I have high levels of confidence and I also want to be accountable at the highest level possible within an organization. I enjoy the challenge of having multiple targets and objectives that I need to achieve. As a senior manager, you really get to influence the key decision-makers within an organization. I believe I will get huge amounts of job satisfaction as your senior manager and also, finally, outside of work, I have personal goals that I want to achieve, and those goals will only be able to be realized if I have the position of a senior manager.

Q8. What are the most important qualities needed to be a senior manager?

Sample Answer:

You need a diverse set of qualities in order to be a competent senior manager. You need to be commercially driven and also strategic in your approach to work. You have to take a holistic approach to managing your team or your department. As a senior manager, you need to be a really good trainer, motivator, facilitator, and outstanding leader. Everything that happens within your team or department is your responsibility. You have to take ownership of everything. As a senior manager, you have to be able to conduct performance reviews regularly and also delegate tasks based on team members' strengths. As I mentioned, you have to take ownership of everything. You have to make decisions that are based on data, facts, and evidence, and you also, at times, have to make unpopular decisions that are in the best interests of the organization. You have to sell your vision and remind your team or department of your vision and

what your long-term objective is. You have to utilize an inclusive style of management that gives opportunity to all team members. You also have to recruit a diverse workforce to enable the company to achieve its goals, and you have to be able to retain staff, motivate them and also not be afraid to promote talent through the organization. And finally, as a senior manager, you have to have the quality of understanding the benefits of change, be able to sell a change to your team or departments, and also drive it through.

Q9. Why do you want to leave your current job?

Sample Answer:

My employer has been great. They've been really supportive, and we've achieved many fantastic things together whilst I've been working there. However, I am now ready for a change and the step-up that comes with being a senior manager. I believe I have so much more to offer. I have watched your company from afar and I've been impressed with your innovative approach and your forward-thinking style of business. I would see my long-term future here with your organization because I think there's lots of opportunity for growth within this industry, and I believe I can help you as a senior manager to capitalize on those opportunities.

Q10. What was the last book you read?

Sample Answer:

The last book I read was called Extreme Ownership by a former US Navy Seal called Jocko Willink. It is a brilliant book. It's fantastic. Extreme ownership means that you learn the skill of owning everything that goes on in your world. You take responsibility for everything that happens both in your personal life and your work life, too. It's about taking responsibility for how you act, the decisions you make, and also the teams that you lead and their actions, too. You are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of your objectives. There is no room for blame. The book again is called Extreme Ownership by Jocko Willink.

Q11. How would you help to scale our business as a senior manager?

Sample Answer:

To help scale your business I would, first of all, make sure I had a plan in place of what I wanted to achieve, and by when. If I do join the company, I will sit down with you, the company directors, to determine my revenue targets and the time frame I would have to achieve them. I would then look for opportunities for growth within this industry, and I would determine what other high-

performing organizations are doing to be successful because, at the end of the day, success leaves clues. I would then determine what our customers want. I would communicate with our customers. Could we offer them different products and services? Could we upsell to our customers to help scale the business? More importantly, could we more effectively market existing products and services on social media to quickly increase revenue? I would also make sure my team members have the right training. I would motivate them, and I would also ask them for ideas. I would brainstorm ideas with my team members because at the end of the day, they too have experience and they might have some good ideas to help the organization grow. Your team or department must be on board for any scaling to work. Finally, I would make sure that we, as an organization, are prepared for success. Is the customer service infrastructure in place to deal with the increase in sales because you have to make sure, even though you are scaling your business, you still provide outstanding customer service? I would also make sure that I looked for ways to help the company save money, too, because scaling a company is not just about increasing revenue. It's also about making sure that you are frugal with resources and supplies because that helps you to increase profit margins.

Q12. You are managing an important team project when three team members go off sick. They can't be replaced and the deadline can't be changed. What would you do?

Sample Answer:

In that type of scenario where I lost three members of my team and the project deadline could not be moved, I would, first of all, revisit my initial plan of action. I would determine whether there were other team members who could take on the additional responsibilities. I would also then seek to outsource certain tasks and responsibilities. I believe a really important skill as a senior manager is outsourcing. You can hire experts and contractors on websites such as Upwork.com. I could hire designers, developers, and marketers. If I could outsource critical tasks from the project where possible, that would still help me to complete the project on time. I would also not be afraid to get hands-on myself. If there were any tasks or responsibilities I could do, I would not be afraid to do them. I would see whether any project team members could work extra hours, but above all, I would make sure I did everything in my power to get the project finished on time without excuse and to the required standard.

Q13. What are your values as a company leader?

Sample Answer:

I have 7 important values that I always adhere to as a company leader. These are, that I will always act with HONESTY AND INTEGRITY in everything I do. If the company leader cannot do this, his or her staff cannot be expected to do the same. The second value is that of LEAD BY EXAMPLE. This is especially important when holding meetings with your managers and supervisors. The third value I abide by is ACCOUNTABILITY. As a company leader, I am accountable to you and will always work hard to achieve the company goals and objectives. The fourth value is CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT, not only of myself but also of my staff. I feel it is important to be open to change and to also inspire your staff to be the best they can be. The fifth value is TEAMWORK, as it is not possible to achieve your goals without others. The sixth is CREATIVENESS AND BEING INNOVATIVE. Whilst I am a creative leader, I want to encourage my staff to be innovative and have the freedom to come up with new ideas that will benefit the organization. Finally, the seventh value is that of a COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER. Without customers, there is no business and they will be core to everything we do if I am your company leader.

Q14. Why should we hire you as a senior manager?

Sample Answer:

You should hire me for several reasons. The first reason is that I already have the skills, qualities, knowledge, expertise, and experience to match the job description. You will be getting somebody who is ready-made for the senior manager role. You should also hire me because I am commercially driven. Everything I do within this role will be geared towards helping your organization achieve its commercial and financial objectives. You should also hire me because I believe I am an outstanding leader. I take ownership of everything and I will motivate my team to make sure they deliver everything that is required on time and to exacting standards. Finally, you should hire me as your senior manager because I want to build a long-term career with your organization. That means I will always embrace change. I will consistently add value to the organization and I will develop and grow as the company grows, too.

Q15. How would you build positive relations with your team or department?

Sample Answer:

There are 3 specific areas I will focus on if I am successful in this role which will ensure I build and maintain long-lasting positive relations with my staff. These are STANDARDS, RECOGNITION, and CONSISTENCY. In respect of standards, it is important you set the bar

high when you start and show your team you will only accept the highest standards possible. This is, effectively, leading by example. The second area, RECOGNITION, is all about giving your staff the opportunity to thrive in their role, and when they do achieve something of significance, you recognize it and you reward them. If staff feel valued and recognized, they will work effectively for you. Finally, it is absolutely vital within this type of senior management level role that you are CONSISTENT at all times. All staff must be treated consistently and fairly. I believe if you do those three things, you will be able to build positive relationships with your staff and you will empower them to achieve great things for the organization.

Q16. What qualities & attributes make a good leader?

Sample Answer:

I fully understand the qualities and attributes required to be both a good leader and also one that is successful. Perhaps the most important attribute is understanding the impact your actions and your performance within the role will have on overall company performance. If you are not capable of leading by example, and also acting as a positive role model for the organization, I don't believe you can succeed. More notably, you have to take responsibility for everything that happens within the company; you have to be a great communicator because what you say and what you write, can have a massive impact on your staff and on external stakeholders. You also have to inspire, motivate and lead your team towards the company objectives and hold people accountable for their own actions. I also feel one of the most important qualities is being able to visualize your goals, and then work intensely to achieve them. You have to recognize the qualities in your staff and give them the opportunity to thrive within their role, and also finally, be adaptable to change at all times. The only way a company such as yours can continue to grow, develop and be a leader within its industry, is to continually learn and adapt to the everchanging environment in which it operates.

Q17. Are you a risk taker?

Sample Answer:

The short answer is yes, I am a risk-taker. However, before I take any type of risk I will conduct a thorough risk assessment to ensure I am not putting the organization under undue stress or taking a risk that could have potentially extreme and negative consequences for my employer. Before taking risks, I would utilize a risk assessment process that weighed up the risks versus the benefits; the possibility of things going wrong; if things did go wrong, what would be the

connotations for the organization, and also how I could use strategies and techniques to minimize the risk as much as possible. Then, once I have gathered all of the facts available, and utilized my risk management process, I would make a decision that was in the best interests of the organization. I believe taking risks is an important part of managing an organization. However, foolish and ill-thought decisions based on gut feelings or past experiences are something I would never make. Any risk I take would be based on an assessment of the facts available to both my team and me, and the reputation of my employer and the good of the organization would always come first.

Q18. What are your long-term goals and how do you plan to achieve them?

Sample Answer:

My long-term goals are to stay with your organization in the position I am being interviewed for today. For me, this is the pinnacle, and whilst I am still enthusiastic and driven, I want to focus entirely on achieving your organizational objectives and bringing long-term success to the company. In terms of how I would achieve this, this would be done by building a strong and driven team around me, who are all focused intently on the organizational aims and objectives. I would also build a strong culture within the organization that encourages innovation and recognizes hard work and professionalism. I plan to work for you for many years to come, and I would look forward to building a long-lasting strategic vision for the organization that ensures you maintain your position as an industry-leading organization.

Q19. How important is company culture to you and what steps would you take to maintain your desired culture?

Sample Answer:

Company culture is really important to me and I believe it is absolutely vital in assisting senior managers and Directors achieve the organization's aims and objectives. If you create a strong and positive culture within your organization, not only will your staff be more productive and happy within their roles, but you will also encourage innovation, invention, and inclusiveness. There are many ways to develop a strong culture, and these are openness, engagement with your staff, encouraging innovation, including all team members within the decision-making process, focusing on quality, providing open and honest feedback, recognizing and developing talent, and also a commitment to continuous improvement. If I am successful today at the interview, I will spend approximately 4 weeks assessing and monitoring the current culture within

the organization before deciding on and implementing any necessary changes. This approach will allow me to develop and maintain a strong and positive culture so we can all successfully achieve the organizational objectives.

Q20. Tell me about a time when you managed a difficult team or department.

Sample Answer:

Perhaps the toughest team I had to manage was in the early days of being a manager. It was a fast and steep learning curve and I made some mistakes that I have since learned from. The team had just lost a long-serving manager and there were some people within the team who were set in their ways. I went in with new and fresh ideas and changed a number of things, perhaps too quickly. The team made it difficult for me to implement the changes I wanted to make and the team meetings I held were a laborious and challenging process. However, I persevered, learned from my mistakes, and managed to eventually turn things around. I started to get the team on board and listened to their ideas and suggestions. After 6 months of hard work, we had the best performing team within the organization and it was the start of a very productive environment where everybody felt valued and appreciated. I learned a tremendous amount from that experience and whenever I go into a new team now I have a set approach that works well.

Q21. What's your management style?

Sample Answer:

My management style is a combination of different key elements that are designed to achieve results. I am firm, and I am a manager who sets high standards. I am also decisive in my decision-making and somebody who expects their team to continually improve, evolve and develop. I achieve this by being supportive of my team, but at the same time, I expect nothing but hard work and commitment from my team members. I always strive to get the best from my team and will always deliver the best results for my employer.

Q22. What do you dislike the most about management?

Sample Answer:

There isn't much about management I dislike. However, if I had to choose one thing, it would be when the completion of your task or project is dependent on external stakeholders whose appetite for completion isn't in sync with your own. Having said that, I feel over the years I have

developed strong interpersonal skills and persuasion techniques to get external stakeholders and organizations to help me achieve my own managerial aims and objectives.

Q23. Tell me about a time when you used your initiative to solve a team management issue or problem.

Sample Answer:

When I first started working as a manager in my previous role, I held an initial staff meeting soon after starting. I was aware that there were a number of problems between some members of the team. The team wasn't working as effectively as I wanted it to, so we all discussed ways in which we could improve. The actions of the team were starting to have an effect on the team's performance, so I decided to take the initiative to resolve the issue. I facilitated the meeting and asked everybody to share their views and opinions. I listened to each person individually and tried to encourage people to come up with solutions in order to improve the team's effectiveness. A positive point that came from our discussions was that people felt the previous manager didn't hold enough meetings to talk about the problems we all face and how we could support each other as a team. Communication had clearly been an issue up until that point. With immediate effect, I decided that we would hold bi-weekly meetings to discuss issues, gather and share information, and look for ways that the team could support each other in completing and meeting our strategic aims and objectives. Since the initial meeting, the team has moved forward significantly and is now working far more effectively.

Q24. Why do you want to be a senior manager with our company?

Sample Answer:

During my research into your company, three things stood out. Firstly, the way in which you strategically manage and run your business is exemplary. There are lots of positive comments made online about your organization, and this demonstrates you are a great company to work for that cares about the service it provides. Secondly, the 'latest news' section on your website tells me you are innovative and forward-thinking, which makes you even more attractive to work for. Finally, I want to stay in a management role for a long time and gain stability with my employer. You are clearly a leader in the industry and that fills me with confidence that I will be able to thrive in the role of manager and be able to contribute positively by leading the team towards achieving your company goals and targets.

Q25. How would you monitor the performance of your team?

Sample Answer:

I monitor the performance of team members by first of all setting them targets to achieve or projects to complete within a set timeframe. That way, I have something to measure their performance against. I also always ensure I conduct 6-monthly appraisals of each team member. Whilst the appraisals do take time to complete properly, I feel they are absolutely vital for monitoring a team member's performance. The appraisal is always a two-way discussion and it gives the appraisee the opportunity to discuss things that might be hindering them within their role. So, to summarize, I monitor the performance of my team by setting goals and targets and also by conducting regular, two-way appraisals.

Q26. Describe a time when you failed as a manager.

Sample Answer:

I don't fail often as a manager, but I can remember one particular time when I made a mistake that I learned a tremendous amount from. It was when I first achieved promotion into a new leadership role and I was keen to make a positive impact for my CEO. Unfortunately, I didn't take the time to get to know the team and I immediately made changes that weren't particularly helpful. This had the negative effect of demotivating the team and I then had the challenge of winning them back around and getting them on my side. I learned a huge amount from this experience and I am now a much more competent leader. I always find out as much as possible about a team before making changes and this enables me to work with each team member's strengths whilst also getting to know the areas they need to improve on, too. Being honest with yourself, and also being able to reflect and learn from every experience is something I feel is vital to being an outstanding leader.

Q27. How would you manage an underperforming member of your team or department?

Sample Answer:

I have been in this situation before, so I have an example of how I motivated someone who was underperforming. A few years ago I joined a new team and one of the first tasks I undertook was to carry out appraisals with each team member. One team member, in particular, appeared disinterested and his attitude towards the team goals was poor. I started off by trying to get to know what motivated him by asking probing questions. It soon became clear that his skills, and more importantly his key strengths, were not being utilized. I immediately assigned him to a new project that was based on his strengths and skillset. I also gave him responsibility for overseeing

the delivery of that particular project. I immediately noticed a difference in his behaviour and performance. After 4 weeks, he had completed the task successfully. In fact, he delivered the task 2 weeks ahead of schedule. He went on to be an outstanding team member. As your manager, it would be my responsibility to empower and motivate my staff and I would achieve this by getting to know them individually and aligning tasks with their core strengths.

Q28. How would you delegate responsibility in this senior management role?

Sample Answer:

Whenever I take on a new management role, I, first of all, assess the strengths and weaknesses of each team member. I also get to know what motivates each member of the team, as this enables me to delegate the right tasks and projects to the right people. I then sit down with each person and explain the vision and strategic goal of the organization to give them a thorough understanding of what we are all working towards and what we want to achieve. I then delegate the task and give the individual a thorough brief, what the expectations are, and also a strict timescale for them to work to. I find this approach to delegation to be highly effective and it also enables me to put trust in that individual and their ability to deliver.

Q29. How would you persuade people within your team to buy into your vision?

Sample Answer:

I believe I am a good negotiator and I have the ability to motivate and persuade people to share and follow my vision. For example, whilst managing a team recently during a difficult project, a senior member of the team made it clear he did not believe the path we were taking was the correct one. I took the time to listen to his concerns and made him aware that I valued his seniority, experience, and opinions. Once I had listened to his views, I then explained why I felt his suggested route would not work. I provided evidence based on my experience of why his suggested route would not work. I then began to explain why I felt my plan would work and that I needed him to be directly involved in order for it to be a success. I asked him to take a proactive role in managing part of the project and explained to him how his expertise would be integral to the successful delivery of the project. By empowering him, and by utilizing his experience and skills, I managed to win him round and he helped to successfully deliver the project on time and within budget.

27. What's the difference between leadership and management?

Sample Answer:

The difference between leadership and management is that leadership is inspiring, motivating, and directing a team of people towards achieving a set goal, project, or target, whilst management is making effective use of the resources, tools, and people you have at your disposal to achieve the same company goal, project or target. I believe that to be effective, you need to have a strong balance of both leadership and management skills within the Team Leader role in order to be successful.

Q31. Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?

Sample Answer:

I see myself working for you, as a competent and professional manager, or even perhaps having obtained advancement within your company to a senior level. Having researched your organization in detail, you are clearly an innovative and forward-thinking company that has exciting plans for the future. I see my career development and progression solely with your company and I am genuinely excited to work for you, if you feel of course, that I am a suitable fit for your team and organization.

Q32. How would you motivate your team?

Sample Answer:

I would motivate the team in 3 ways. Firstly, I would get to know their strengths, weaknesses and also what drives and motivates them both personally and professionally. I believe that getting to know these important factors gives you the information you need to get the most out of a team member. Secondly, I would set goals and targets for each team member and also inform them what the company goals were and the reason why we were working towards these goals. I feel strongly that, if you inform people, you empower them. Finally, I would praise and reward people when they successfully reach their goals or targets. People respond well to praise whenever it is deserved. If you fail to recognize the achievements your team makes, they will soon become demotivated and feel devalued.

Q33. What's your biggest weakness?

Sample Answer:

I find it difficult at times to wait for others to come back to me when the completion of my own task depends on them. This demonstrates that I can be impatient at times, and one particular

external company commented during a telephone conversation that she found me quite pushy to deal with at times. I stressed to her that my pushiness was simply down to me wanting to get the job done for my employer as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Q34. What are the fundamentals of a great team or department?

Sample Answer:

A great team or department has a clear brief that everyone understands and believes in. A great team has the right training and direction. It has a definitive leader who has a clear goal and promotes accountability, including taking ownership of everything. A great team will have diverse skills, qualities, and experience and have a clear organizational objective. Tasks will be delegated based on strengths, and everyone will have the proper training to deliver on the team's goals. Finally, a great team or department will be free to express themselves creatively, object to the working method when they have a better idea, and be positive about change, cost savings, and efficiency.

Q35. How do you overcome a failure?

Sample Answer:

Failure is an opportunity to grow, improve, develop, and share. I overcome failure by taking responsibility for it, analysing what went wrong and why, what steps can be taken to improve, whether there is a training need, and who I can share the lessons I have learned with so they can improve too.

Q36. In order of priority, what are most important aspects - people, processes, and communications?

Sample Answer:

People are the most important because without this valuable resource you cannot get things done. Second is communication. You can have robust and effective processes but if communication is inaccurate or untimely, you will fail in your objectives. Although they are work in tandem with each other, I would put them in order of people, communications and then processes.

Q37. How do you make decisions in the workplace?

Sample Answer:

I make decisions based on my employers short, medium, and long term goals. These will be at the forefront of every decision I make. I will also make decisions based on the time we have available, the resources I have at my disposal, and what is in the best interests of the organization. I am not afraid to make unpopular decisions but every important decision I do make, I will try to communicate the reason for it to my team so they can learn and understand more about our objectives.

Q38. What's the first thing you will do as a senior manager if we hire you?

Sample Answer:

If I get to become your senior manager, I will do three things when I first start working in the role. Number one, I will obtain a thorough brief from you, the company directors, to establish the most pressing issues that require my attention. I will also determine what the strategic vision is of the company and establish what I can do to help you achieve your commercial objectives. Number two, I will then meet with my team or department and I will observe them in action. I think it's really important when you first start working as a senior manager that you sit down and observe your key members of staff in action because that enables you to establish their work ethics, their

standards, identify the strengths and weaknesses of your team, and also determine any areas for opportunity and growth. And then number three, I will set out my expectations. What do I want my team or department to achieve and how are we going to achieve it? I will also delegate tasks, assign responsibilities, and then set about leading and managing the team and also motivating them towards achieving the strategic vision of the organization.

Q38. Tell me about a time when something went wrong at work and you took control.

Sample Answer:

In a previous role, I was concerned about the service our customers were receiving. The poor customer service was a result of a supplier who continually let us down with late product deliveries and products going out of stock. Nobody in the company seemed phased by this issue but I knew this had the potential to quickly damage the company's reputation, so I decided to take control. I asked a team member to research alternative suppliers that had a reputation for quality and reliability and to then send me a list of those they felt were suitable. Whilst they were carrying out that task, I created a draft contract that the new supplier would need to sign. Once I received the list of potential suppliers I interviewed each one clearly outlining the terms they would need to adhere to and how important a consistently reliable service was to our business. I then chose the supplier I felt was the best for our company, they signed the contract, and I informed our current supplier they were no longer needed. Following that decision, our customer service ratings increased significantly which further helped to boost sales and revenue.

Q39. How would you respond to someone who disagreed with your decision?

Sample Answer:

I am always open to considering alternative ways of working as a leader. Therefore, I would listen to their suggestions and ideas, assess them, and then decide whether their approach to work was more beneficial. If I felt it wasn't, I would thank them for their contribution, and explain why I believed my original decision was the best.

Q9. Tell me about a time when you faced an unexpected setback. What was the situation and how did you react.

Sample Answer:

I was working on an important project in my last role when all of a sudden we lost two important members of the team to sickness. We were seven days away from the project deadline, and I wasn't prepared to extend it because that would impact other areas of the company. I decided to reassess our plan. I identified several technical areas of the project that could be outsourced to

online contractors. I gave a team member the task of finding a suitable contractor and issued them with a detailed brief to work to. I then asked which team members were prepared to dedicate extra hours to the project in the evenings leading up to the deadline and three volunteered in addition to myself. By remaining calm and responding positively to the unexpected setback, we were able to still get the project finished on time and to the expected standards.

Q41. Tell me about a time when you were able to influence someone by only asking questions.

Sample Answer:

I was attending a meeting with other team members where we were discussing the action plan for the creation of a new company product. Halfway through the meeting, one team member suggested we could save money if we used a cheaper product part. Everyone in the meeting felt this was a good idea but I disagreed. I asked him three questions. The first question was, could we be sure that by using the cheaper part the product would be safe? The second question was, how would product reviews and customer trust be impacted if someone found out the part we had used was cheap, especially when we were going to charge a high price for the product? Finally, the third question I asked was, were we satisfied that using a cheaper product part was in line with the company's customer service charter and values? By asking these three simple questions, I convinced everyone that using a cheaper product part was not a good idea and the risks to the business were too great.

Q42. Tell me a time when you had to make a decision with limited information.

Sample Answer:

In a previous role, I was often required to make quick decisions without much information. One particular situation involved a client requesting important changes to a project we were working on for them and they needed an answer within the hour. Normally, I would take the time to calculate a cost-based exercise to determine the impact on our budget and the profitability whenever a client requested additions or changes. However, this was not possible. I weighed up the risks of losing the client for future projects as they had already spent a considerable amount of money with us over the years. On that basis, I agreed to the changes but reiterated there would not be anymore. I only ever make quick decisions if the risk of not doing is at the detriment

to the organization I am working for. I will always balance risks versus benefits in any situation like this that I am presented with.

Q43. As a leader, it is better to be feared or loved?

Sample Answer:

In my opinion, it is better to have a fine balance of both. I believe that, if you are feared, people may not feel motivated to work for you, and conversely, if you are loved, some people may take advantage of your good nature and your work can suffer as a result. An effective leader is someone who clearly defines the expectations and standards from the get-go, but who is also approachable and can use competent leadership and motivational skills to drive their team forward to achieve the vision of the company.

Q44. Tell me about a time when you challenged someone's behavior that was unacceptable?

Sample Answer:

I was working in a shop one day and a member of the public came in to complain about some goods he had bought the previous day. Whilst the shop assistant was dealing with the gentleman, he started to swear and use inappropriate language which was clearly designed to intimidate the girl helping him. Other shoppers also looked concerned about the type of language he was using. I immediately walked over to the customer and asked him, in a calm but firm tone, to refrain from using that type of language. I explained that the company had a strict policy in respect of how our members of staff were to be treated, and that his current choice of language was well outside of that policy. As soon as I challenged him, he apologized and calmed down. The shop assistant then went on to deal with his complaint in a professional manner and the customer left the store with their complaint resolved to their satisfaction. I would always immediately challenge inappropriate behavior in a calm, confident and non-confrontational manner.

Q45. Tell me about a time when you turned around an underperforming team?

Sample Answer:

I joined a new team as their supervisor and the company CEO informed me they had not performing to the required standards. To turn around the team, I started off by carrying out in-depth appraisals with each team member to both assess their current levels of performance and to also see which areas they could improve upon. Once all of the appraisals had been carried out, I held a collective team meeting whereby I laid down the expectations of the team moving forward, and the targets I expected them to meet. I then stated I would hold weekly team meetings whereby their collective performance would be monitored and assessed. As the weeks progressed, the team slowly started to turn things around and their performance/output improved significantly. After six months had passed, my CEO called me in to praise both me and the team on the change of direction and positive output he had witnessed.

Q46. When have you used effective leadership skills at work?

Sample Answer:

I can remember being part of a team in a previous organization and it was clear that a number of

team members were not working as hard as they could have done. I felt it was my responsibility to raise my concerns with the team, with a view to improving the performance and the output of team as a whole. I called a team meeting and started off by asking if everyone was satisfied with how we were progressing. Two team members raised concerns about the lack of productivity, and I used this as an opportunity to encourage everyone to talk openly about the problems. After a few minutes of open discussion, it became apparent that some people felt ill-equipped to carry out their roles properly due to a lack of training. I then went away and raised these concerns with the company directors, who in turn facilitated the appropriate training for those team members who needed it the most. I feel I am someone who can recognize problems and issues within a team and would always utilize effective leadership skills in the role of manager.

Q47. Explain a time you experienced conflict with someone at work.

Sample Answer:

Whilst I am someone who works hard to avoid any form of conflict or negativity, there are times when you have to embrace it as a manager in order to move things forward positively. One particular time, my team were dealing with a difficult and verbally aggressive client. The client was someone we had not worked with before, so we were unaware of how his negative behavior would impact on the team. A valued member of my team approached me to raise her concerns about the manner of the client's communication style. After reviewing some of the telephone calls and emails between the client and my team, I decided to speak to the client to resolve the issue. During the call, I explained to him how it was important for us to have a positive working relationship and that my team deserved a respectful method of communication. Initially, the client became agitated with me, but I stood by my principles and went on to explain that whilst we fully appreciated and wanted his business, we could only work with him if he agreed to a more amicable and respectful manner of communication moving forward. Eventually, the client backed down and agreed with my request. After a few weeks had passed, I invited the client in to our office so he could meet the team face-to-face and see how hard we had been working on his project. During the visit, the client obtained a totally different viewpoint of our company and the communication was very friendly and positive moving forward. I would always tackle confrontation or conflict in a calm, confident and resolute manner and I would always put the organization at the forefront of everything I do.

Q48. How would you deliver constructive feedback?

Sample Answer:

When giving constructive feedback I would always follow five key steps. Step one is to ask the person for permission to sit down face-to-face with the person to talk about their performance. This is a powerful and quick way to build trust. Step two is to talk about the positives and how you are used to seeing them perform a certain way. Step three is to explain what you have observed and it is important to give them examples. During step four, I would also explain the impact of their actions. Finally, step five is where I would give clear goals for them to work towards to achieve the desired improvement.

Q49. How would you manage underperformance in a team?

Sample Answer:

As soon as I identified the underperformance, I would tackle it immediately. I would sit down with the member of my team, explain what they were doing wrong, and give them the opportunity to explain why they were not performing to my expected standards. It's important to establish the reason for the underperformance because they might have genuine reasons for it. They may have personal problems, or they may feel they don't have the right training. Once the reason was established, I would put a plan of action in place to get them up to speed within a strict timescale and monitor them closely moving forward.

Q50. That's the end of your interview. Do you have questions for the panel?

Sample Answer:

QUESTION – Who is your greatest competitor and how could I help you in this role to better them?

QUESTION – What are the plans for the company over the next few years?

QUESTION – What are the strategic aims of the organization over the short, mid, and long term?

How to Use These Interview Questions and Answers:

These interview questions and answers are intended to guide you in your preparation for your job interview. These questions have been picked by the How2Become team because we believe that they are the best representative of what you will face in your interview.

The sample answers in this resource are collated from years of experience and research in the recruitment sector. The answers confidently display the appropriate qualities and competencies that the interviewer expects from successful candidates.

Read the sample answers carefully, and take note of what skills and competencies they demonstrate. You might notice that, when the question asks for examples, the answer uses the STAR method to construct the response:

Situation. Start off your response to the interview question by explaining what the 'situation' was and who was involved.

Task. Once you have detailed the situation, explain what the 'task' was, or what needed to be done.

Action. Now explain what 'action' you took, and what action others took. Also explain why you took this particular course of action.

Result. Explain to the panel what you would do differently if the same situation arose again. It is good to be reflective at the end of your responses. This demonstrates a level of maturity and it will also show the panel that you are willing to learn from every experience.

In order to get the best possible results, apply this system to your own examples and experiences in working life. These sample answers are intended to inspire you to create your own responses to the questions.

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