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Job Interviews

Amazon Leadership Principles Interview Questions

A   **Anonymous**
May 15

I'm getting ready for an upcoming interviews at AWS.

AWS   Leadership Principles   Amazon   Interview

Questions

1. What are some of the most commonly asked Amazon leadership principle questions?

   30 words minimum.

2. What's the best strategy/framework to answer leadership principle questions?

   30 words minimum.

3. If you don't have a relevant story or situation for a leadership principle, what do you suggest - Making up something or honestly telling them I've never faced that situation?

   30 words minimum.

2 Answers

A   **Amazon**
May 17

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1. What are some of the most commonly asked Amazon leadership principle questions?

For Amazon LP behavioral competency interview, the exact phrasing of the question can change, but the central idea as defined within the descriptions of each LP would remain the same. For example, Customer Obsession could have something to do with a time when you took customer feedback or learnt from their pain-points and changed a process. For Dive Deep, you might have solved a complex problem by getting into layers of the issue. For Bias for Action, you might have prioritized quick & scrappy solution to move forward faster. For Ownership, you might have gone above and beyond your call of duty. For Earn Trust, you might have resolved a conflict/disagreement with a teammate/stakeholder. The sample list from the official interview bank is confidential, but I hope with my 5 directional examples, you have some idea on how a particular Leadership Principle is tested.

2. What's the best strategy/framework to answer leadership principle questions?

For scenario-type questions ("Tell me about a time when..."), perhaps you may have heard about the STAR method, and you should have at least 2-3 stories for each competency that you can confidently narrate and respond to follow-up questions. Spend 30-seconds setting the "S"ituation, another 15-20 sec to list the "T"asks ahead of you, then 60-75 sec to talk about all the "A"ctions you took, and summarize with a punch 10-15 sec "R"esult. That way, you'll articulate a powerful narrative from your professional experience where you have demonstrated the competency in question in 150-200 seconds (maximum 5 mins), and allow the interviewer to get deeper into any particular area that they are curious about. The best strategy to execute this would be to pick achievements you are most proud about and are aware of the deepest details about, this is come across as really positive during your interview.

3. If you don't have a relevant story or situation for a leadership principle, what do you suggest - Making up something or honestly telling them I've never faced that situation?

Great question! First of all, I think you should prepare a diverse set of stories and practice narrating them so that even if you don't get an exact response for the question asked, you may be recycle another example to fit the situation. This reduces the risk that you don't have any relevant example narrative at all. However, should you be in a situation where you don't have a perfect answer, but you can think of 2-3 weak answers, you can take advice of the interviewer in real-time (something like, "Hmm, interesting question. Couple of examples come to my mind; one instance when I investigated into root-cause of variable cost increase year over year, there's another one where a certain internal customer was unhappy with the delay in project deadlines, and lastly there's one where we didn't have any reference data to execute a new launch and I had to use my judgment to move forward. Which one would you like me to expand on?") and it will not only be very well received, but you'll get a instant sense of what your interviewer prefers. Lastly, I'd like to emphasize that there's a reason why Amazon does not focus too much on your skill-sets or your ability to respond to hypothetical case-studies: it wants to test you based on how you reacted to certain situations in your past professional life, and would you be able to demonstrate that competency when you're an employee. Therefore, I'd strongly recommend against making something up totally randomly, because interviewers are trained to ask follow-up questions, and you'll find yourself trapped in a hole (after which you should stop digging further!)

A   Anonymous ★★★★★

This answer was amazing. Thank you for all the advice. I'll study up and structure my answers better. Hopefully that works better for me.

B

Brandon   Amazon
May 15

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1. What are some of the most commonly asked Amazon leadership principle questions?

The most common questions will be Behavioral questions that start with "Tell me a time when..." to gauge how you handled yourself in different situations. Although there are any number of questions that can be asked, all of the questions will focus in on Amazon's Leadership Principles. Reviewing the definitions of the LP's will help frame your responses in the right context that the interviewers will be looking for.

It would be best to prepare for questions that ask about a difficult interaction and how you overcame it, a situation that you went above and beyond a given request, a situation where you were able to think outside the box to meet a deliverable, and a situation where you disagreed with a manager or peer. It is also good to know that not all responses you give have to be work related, they can be personal situations too.

2. What's the best strategy/framework to answer leadership principle questions?

It is best to respond to each Behavioral question for the Leadership Principles using the STAR method. STAR can be defined by three parts:

(1) SITUATION/TASK - The beginning of your story; Describe the situation/task you faced and the context of the story. This should answer the Where/When/Why. (Where did this occur; When did it happen; Why is it important).

(2) ACTION - The middle of your story; Describe the actions that you took. Answering the What/How/Who. (What did you personally do; How did you do it; Who else was involved).

(3) RESULT - The end of your story; Describe the results you achieved. Answering how you measure this success. It is important to note that specific results ($, #, %, time) are better received answers.

Be prepared to answer any follow up questions the interviewer may have.

The interviewer will be trying to relate your response to a specific Leadership Principle(s). They are trained to ask probing questions to ensure you give a response towards a specific LP. They may even challenge your response to provoke a deeper dive in to your situation to see how you handled yourself in the story.

3. If you don't have a relevant story or situation for a leadership principle, what do you suggest - Making up something or honestly telling them I [...] er faced that situation?

Do not lie! Interviewers will be asking follow-up questions and even dive deep in to your response. When you make up a story, and they catch you in a lie, the result will not be good for you.

You can use a personal situation to answer a question, not every story has to be work related. For example, if the question is asking for a time where you had to get specific approvals or manager buy-ins, you can relate this to a time you convinced a group of friends to eat pizza for dinner instead of tacos. (I actually gave this response to an interviewer at Amazon before and the creativity of my interpretation of the question was better received than the answer itself)

In the event that you have not faced a specific scenario, I suggest telling the interviewer that you have not experienced that situation. You can ask if they have another question they could ask instead. I would not worry too much on this happening, most of the questions asked will be generic enough to relate to some situation in your life. And those questions which are more specific tend to only be asked as follow-ups to the story that you are telling.

A   Anonymous ★★★★★

Great insight on Amazon LPs. I'll try to convince my friends to eat pizza tonight. Cheers!

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