

Welcome to your guide...

# 15 DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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**Q1. What is your understanding of diversity?**

**Sample Answer:**

Diversity means that everyone is unique in their own right and that we should all recognize that everyone has individual differences and needs. A diverse organization will strive to employ people from varying genders, religions, race, education, sexual orientation and other attributes. Society is diverse and it is my strong opinion that to serve its customers well, and to provide exceptional levels of service, the organization should be diverse, too. Diversity means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing all of our individual differences. A diverse workplace helps facilitate staff retention and it also encourages open dialogue and communication which can only be a good thing for any organization.

**Q2. What is respect and dignity and how would you demonstrate this in the workplace?**

**Sample Answer:**

All members of staff are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect at all times. This means no form of discrimination, harassment or any other form of unwanted behaviour should be tolerated. The same rules apply when dealing with customers or clients. Respect and dignity must be applied at all times and it should be embedded within the culture of an organization. I would demonstrate respect and dignity in the workplace by treating everyone with respect, being polite and courteous, and being respectful and accommodating of people's differences, including job roles, grade levels and ability levels.

**Q3. What are the different ways we can promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace?**

**Sample Answer:**

There are many different ways we can promote diversity and inclusion. However, for any of them to be effective, it needs to come from the top and all managers must believe in diversity and inclusion and the benefit they both can bring. We can encourage diverse and innovative thinking by creating a culture that means there's no such thing as a stupid question or a stupid idea! People should not be afraid to contribute. If they feel comfortable contributing, they will bring great ideas to the table! We can build a workforce that is multi-generational. There is a tendency for organizations to employ one generation, where it is clearly more productive, more creative and more innovative to employ people from different generations. After all, we are all unique in our own way and we can bring different skills, qualities and ideas which, in turn, will help an organization grow. We can ensure the organization is serious about anti-discriminatory policy by getting rid of superficial procedures that are written down but not taken seriously. We can ensure the workplace is totally inclusive by catering for everyone. For example, if a member of staff needs to pray, or a mother needs to look after her child, let's provide these facilities. We should seek to eliminate bias during the appraisals process and especially during promotion assessments. Other

methods include the use of outside facilitators for focus groups. By using an outside facilitator, employees may be more comfortable speaking freely, and the outside company will maintain a neutral position. We should encourage more one-to-one discussions between staff and managers so we can assess what people genuinely care about. And finally, we should create an open dialogue about equality of pay, which is absolutely fundamental to creating a diverse and inclusive organization.

**Q4. What is “reasonable adjustment” in the workplace?**

**Sample Answer:**

A reasonable adjustment is effectively a change in the workplace to reduce the effect of (1) a job applicant's disability when applying for a job role, or (2) an employee's disability to enable them to do their job more effectively. There are three ways a reasonable adjustment can be applied, including: (i) to the workplace, (ii) to the way that things are done at work through policies or procedures or (iii) to ask someone to help the member of staff or the person applying for a job.

**Q5. You overhear a work colleague in the canteen making an inappropriate or derogatory remark. What would you do?**

**Sample Answer:**

I would challenge it straight away. The worst thing you can do in this type of scenario is to either ignore it, laugh at it, or even join in! It needs to be stopped straight away. On that basis, I would remain calm, I would use open body language and non-confrontational communication and I would simply state that the comments were not acceptable in the workplace and that I did not want to hear them again. The reason why I would act there and then and say this in front of other people, is so that everyone is aware that this type of behaviour is unacceptable and there is no room for it in any organization.

**Q6. What experience do you have of working with people from different backgrounds?**

**Sample Answer:**

I have lots of experience working with people from different backgrounds. I treat everyone fairly and where appropriate I make adjustments for others' situation or circumstances. For example, I was working in a restaurant and a new member of the team joined. He was from Romania and his English was not particularly great. I started out by introducing myself before carrying out a familiarisation tour of the restaurant and the staff. To help me communicate, I download a translate app onto my iPhone and when he didn't understand a sentence or phrase, I simply translated it for him. Over the next six weeks I supported him in his role and answered any questions he had about working practices and also about the

English culture. A few months on and he was fully settled into the role and we're actually still very good friends to this day.

**Q7. Tell me a time when you supported diversity in an organization?**

**Sample Answer:**

Whilst working in a previous organization I felt the team lacked awareness in diversity and inclusion. It was an issue because when a new member of the team joined who was from a different background, nobody seemed to want to cater for their needs. In fact, I personally got the feeling other people felt they were a hinderance. I approached my line manager and I explained to her the situation and how I felt we all staff would benefit from diversity and inclusion training. I pointed out the options available and the costs to deliver the training. In the end we agreed I would undertake the training by attending a face-to-face course, and I would then cascade the training down to others in the organization. This was a great move, because six months on, the culture within the organization had changed dramatically, for the better!

**Q8. Tell us a time when you led a diverse team to a positive outcome?**

**Sample Answer:**

I was leading a team of people and I wanted to improve the organization's effectiveness and efficiency in a number of different areas. To achieve my goal, I started to hold weekly focus group meetings with everyone where I encouraged all team members to talk openly about how they felt with regard to our performance and working conditions, etc. After the second meeting, things started to get really interesting. People started to open up and it became clear that some members of the team were not happy with the organizational promotion procedures and also in respect of equality of pay. By holding the focus group meetings, I actually got a lot more than I had anticipated. Over the weeks and months that progressed we managed to influence the senior management team to make some positive changes to internal procedures and practices that helped to make the workplace more inclusive and fairer.

**Q9. Tell me a time when you supported diversity in the workplace?**

**Sample Answer:**

I currently work as an office administrator for a small architect design business in London. We have an open plan office and there are 27 staff in total. It's a busy and friendly office and we are always taking on new staff to cope with our expansion plans. Last month, a new member of the team joined. She was going to be working as an admin assistant, just like me, and I was keen to help her settle in and show her



the ropes. When she arrived, she came into the office in a wheelchair. I introduced myself to her straight away, made her feel welcome and said that I would show her to her new workstation. As we made our way over to her desk, which was at the other end of the office, I suddenly realised that she would potentially have problems making her way to the toilets and also the kitchen area. Whilst our office building is equipped to accommodate people in wheelchairs, I felt the desk we had provided her with was not really in the best location. I decided to make a suggestion to her. Basically, my desk is located not too far away from both the toilet facilities and also the kitchen area, and I told her that I was going to swap desks with her to make her life a bit easier in the office. She told me that I didn't need to do that, but I insisted. I told her that we were a very welcoming office and any other member of staff would also do the same. I then took the lady back over to my office space and started to move my things over to where her desk was located. It only took me twenty minutes to move all of my things to the new desk and I could sense the lady was pleased that I insisted on moving her to the better location. A few other members of the office team saw what I was doing, and they joined in by helping me move my things to the new desk. This small act had a big impact on helping the new member of staff to settle in. Not only did she feel more valued and appreciated, but it also helped to make her recognise that we, as a company, support diversity and do all we can to ensure every member of staff feels welcome, valued and appreciated.

**Q10. How would you ensure diversity and equality in your management style?**

**Sample Answer:**

I ensure diversity and equality by following three simple rules. Rule number 1 is making sure I understand where everyone in the team is in respect of their needs, their strengths, their weaknesses and their aspirations. I carry out regular performance reviews to see how I can help everyone reach their full potential. I will then support them moving forward and make reasonable adjustments where necessary. I also ensure everyone within the team at a certain level is paid the same. I am a big believe in equality of pay. Rule number 2 is based on encouraging people to communicate openly and to also ask questions about their work if they feel they are struggling. If they are comfortable at work, they are more likely to ask questions which will in turn improve their output and increase job satisfaction. Finally, rule number 3 is to make sure I include everyone during team tasks and give everyone the opportunity to contribute. This means I have to not only focus on my own work, but I also have to look and observe to make sure everyone in the team is involved. By following these three simple management rules I am able to ensure equality and promote a harmonious working environment t where everyone feels valued and supported.

**Q11. Can you give an example when you have challenged inappropriate behaviour in a working environment?**

**Sample Answer:**

Yes, I can. I currently work as an IT consultant and I was carrying out contract work for a large corporate company in Manchester. I was having a tea break on my own in the company canteen when I overheard a man calling one of his co-workers a “stupid old tart”. I immediately reached over to the man and said in a calm and respectful manner that I found his comment to be offensive and requested that he didn’t use that type of language as it is unwelcome. I could sense he was angered by my comments and he proceeded to tell me to mind my own business. I remained calm and reiterated my request by asking him once again not to use that type of offensive language in the workplace. I stated that, if he continued to use that type of language, I would report him to the company Managing Director. He immediately changed his tone, apologised and then got up and left the canteen. I then spoke to the lady whom the comment was directed at and explained the reasons why I had intervened. She told me she was grateful for my interaction and said that he often spoke to her in that manner. To my amazement, she informed me that the man who made the comment was in fact her line manager. After I left the canteen, I sent an email directly to the Managing Director of the company informing her of what I had just witnessed in the canteen, whilst also explaining what I had done to prevent it from happening again. I would never hesitate to challenge any type of behavior that was either inappropriate, bullying in nature or discriminatory. This type of behavior is not acceptable and should be challenged.

**Q12. Tell me about a time when you promoted or supported change within an organisation?**

**Sample Answer:**

I currently work as a care assistant for the Local Authority. Just a few months ago, all of the care workers were called into a meeting by the Area Manager. We all sat down in the meeting and the Area Manager began to explain how a number of potentially disruptive changes to our working practices were coming into force very soon. The changes were required in order for our department to meet its care quality standards targets. Immediately I could sense that a number of people within the room were unhappy with the suggestion of change and they began to make their feelings known to the manager. I put my hand up to speak and made a suggestion to everyone in the room that we should give our manager the respect she deserves and allow her to at least finish explaining what the changes were and how they would impact on our working lives, before voicing our own opinions. Everyone then agreed to remain silent until the manager had finished her talk. The manager went on to explain that everyone would be affected within the department and, in particular, our shift patterns would alter, but that our total working hours

would stay the same. She went on further to explain that we would all have the opportunity to work extra hours, at double-pay, if we wanted to. At the end of her talk some of the care workers were still clearly upset and angered by the pending changes. After they had had the opportunity to express their feelings, I stated my own opinion to the group. I explained that we all now work in an ever-changing environment and we would all need to adapt to change as the change would only increase as the years went on. I also explained that change could actually be a positive thing if we all embraced it, and at the very least, we should all give it a try. Some people in the room seemed surprised at my positive attitude and I think they expected me to be more “on their side”, whilst they were challenging our Area Manager. One thing is for sure, I was not going to allow the negative talk some people were engaging in, affect my own working life. At the end of the meeting everyone agreed to at least try and embrace the changes to see how much they affected our working lives. We also all agreed to all meet up again in three months’ time with our Area Manager in order to discuss the changes and how we were getting on. I believe my positive attitude and contributions during the meeting allowed the team to at least try to embrace the new changes that were coming into force.

**Q13. Tell me a time when you worked closely with an individual or group of people from a different background to yourself?**

**Sample Answer:**

Whilst working for a construction company we received news that a new group of workers were coming from Poland to spend six months on a project that I was heavily involved in. As soon as I heard the news, I went to see my line manager to inform him that I would like to help the group settle in. After a short meeting with my manager, he agreed that I could take up this voluntary role. Before the workers arrived, I sat down and put together an action plan of what I wanted to achieve and how I would do it. The action plan included how I would help the new workers to settle in by showing them around the construction company, introducing them to key members of staff and also providing them with a point of contact if they ever needed any support during their six months stay. I felt it was important to create an action plan, as I wanted things to be organised, methodical and to also meet my objectives. As soon as the workers arrived, I contacted the group’s leader and informed him that I would be their main point of contact during their stay with our company. I started to get as much information about the group, speaking to them on first name terms in order to break down any barriers that might be present. As soon as I had established a rapport with the group, I then sat down with them to discuss the project. I communicated with them in a pace that they could understand and established each group member’s strengths and weaknesses. Once I had gathered all of the facts, we then commenced an initial two-week familiarisation period that enabled each

group member to learn their role within the project and also understand the team's objectives. Throughout this period, I supported the group and worked closely with them to achieve the project goals. Once the familiarisation period was complete, we then commenced work on the project. Everyone within the group was clear with regards to the end goal and also, more importantly, the timeframe in which it had to be completed. The end result was extremely positive. Not only did we work effectively as a team, but we also managed to complete the end goal four weeks ahead of schedule. My manager was so impressed with the work I undertook with the group that he appointed me as company liaison manager for all future overseas visitors who came to the organisation.

**Q14. Describe a time when you noticed a member of your team acting in a manner which was inconsistent with the organisation's values?**

**Sample Answer:**

Whilst working as a salesperson for my previous employer, I was serving a lady who was from a different background. I was helping her to choose a gift for her son's 7th birthday when a group of four youths entered the shop and began looking around at the goods we had for sale. They began to make racist jokes and comments to the lady. I was naturally offended by the comments and was concerned for the lady to whom these comments were directed. Any form of bullying and harassment is not welcome in any situation and I was determined to stop it immediately and protect the lady from any more harm. The lady was clearly upset by their actions and I too found them both offensive and insensitive. I decided to take immediate action and stood between the lady and the youths to try to protect her from any more verbal abuse or comments. I told them in a calm manner that their comments were not welcome and would not be tolerated. I then called over my manager for assistance and asked him to call the police before asking the four youths to leave the shop. I wanted to diffuse the situation as soon as possible, being constantly aware of the lady's feelings. I was confident that the shop's CCTV cameras would have picked up the four offending youths and that the police would be able to deal with the situation. After the youths had left the shop I sat the lady down and made her a cup of tea whilst we waited for the police to arrive. I did everything that I could to support and comfort the lady and told her that I would be prepared to act as a witness to the racial bullying and harassment that I had just witnessed. I believe the people acted as they did because of a lack of understanding, education and awareness. Unless people are educated and understand why these comments are not acceptable, then they are not open to change. They behave in this manner because they are unaware of how dangerous their comments and actions are. They believe it is socially acceptable to act this way, when it certainly isn't.



**Q15. Tell me a time when reacted positively to the needs of an individual or a group of people?**

**Sample Answer:**

Whilst working as a team leader at a children's day care nursery, a couple arrived one morning to enquire about space for their two young children. The couple were new to the area and their English was very poor. They had only recently moved to England and were originally from China. Communication was extremely difficult, but I was very keen to help them and was determined to meet their needs. The nursery was not ideally setup to cater for people from different countries, simply because all of our staff were English speaking. However, I decided to change things and immediately sought permission from the nursery owners to pay for a telephone interpreter so that we could establish the couple's needs and ascertain what level of service we could offer them. Whilst the couple were at the centre, I managed to source an interpreter by searching on the Internet. Using the company credit card, which my manager had agreed to, I paid for a 10-minute interpretation service there and then, and asked the interpreter to ask the couple a number of specific questions which focused on their needs for their children and the level of service we could offer them. Following the telephone interpretation consultation, I managed to ascertain that the couple wanted to drop their children off at set times each day of the week and leave them in our care for a maximum of 4 hours each time, something which we agreed to. We then agreed a mutually convenient start date for their children. Once the couple had left, I then contacted the nursery owner again and persuaded her to allow me to recruit a nursery nurse who could speak Chinese. After explaining the benefits to her, she agreed. I then set about recruiting a member of staff who would be suitable for this role. Whilst it was not easy to find a suitably qualified nursery nurse with the appropriate language skills, I did eventually manage to find someone in time for when the couple's children started with us and the outcome was a successful one.

**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 PassMyInterview 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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