# **Customer Obsession**

Leaders start with the customer and work backwards. They work vigorously to earn and keep customer trust. Although leaders pay attention to competitors, they obsess over customers.

# Give me an example of a time you used customer feedback to drive improvement or innovation.  What was the situation and what action did you take?

# Give me an example of your most difficult customer interaction and how you worked through it.  What was the outcome?

# Tell me about a time a customer wanted one thing, but you felt they needed something else.  How did you approach the situation, what were your actions and what was the end result?

# Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty for a customer.  Why did you take the action you did?  What was the outcome?

# Most of us at one time or another have felt frustrated or impatient when dealing with customers.  Can you tell us about a time when you felt this way and how you dealt with it?  When do you think it’s appropriate to push back or say no to an unreasonable customer request?

# Can you give me an example of when you’ve been able to see around the corner to meet a customer need or delight a customer with a solution or product they didn’t yet know they needed/wanted?

# To try to meet the high expectations of our customers, we sometimes promise more than we can deliver.  Tell me about a time when you overcommitted yourself or your company.  How did you resolve the issue?

# Tell me about a time when you had to balance the needs of the customer vs. the needs of the business.  How did you manage this situation?

# Variation: Tell me about a time when you had to balance the needs of local customers with the global need for standardization.  What did you do and what was the result?

# In your opinion, what is the most effective way to evaluate the quality of your product or service to your internal /external customer?  Give an example of a time when you used these measures to make a decision.  (Manager)

# What changes have you implemented in your current department to meet the needs of your customers?  What has been the result?  (Manager)

# **Ownership**

Leaders are owners. They think long term and don’t sacrifice long-term value for short-term results. They act on behalf of the entire company, beyond just their own team. They never say “that’s not my job".

# Tell me about a time when you took on something significant outside your area of responsibility. Why was it important? What was the outcome?

# Give me an example of a time when you didn't think you were going to meet the commitments you promised. How did you identify the risk and communicate it to stakeholders? What was the outcome?

# Tell me about a time you made a hard decision to sacrifice short term gain for a longer-term goal.

# Give an example of when you saw a peer struggling and decided to step in and help. What was the situation and what actions did you take? What was the outcome?

# What steps do you take to ensure projects you complete get transitioned effectively to new owners? Give an example where you elected to re-engage on a project that you had already transitioned to someone else. What was the situation and why did you feel it was important to re-engage?

# How do you ensure your team stays connected to the company vision and the bigger picture? Give an example of when you felt a team or individual goal was in conflict with the company vision. What did you do? (Manager)

# Tell me about an initiative you undertook because you saw that it could benefit the whole company or your customers but wasn’t within any group’s individual responsibility, so nothing was being done. (Manager)

# **Dive Deep**

# Tell me about a time you were trying to understand a problem on your team and you had to go down several layers to figure it out.  Who did you talk with and what information proved most valuable?  How did you use that information to help solve the problem?

# Tell me about a problem you had to solve that required in-depth thought and analysis?  How did you know you were focusing on the right things?

# Tell me about a time when you linked two or more problems together and identified an underlying issue?  Were you able to find a solution?

# Walk me through a big problem or issue in your organization that you helped to solve.  How did you become aware of it?  What information did you gather, what information was missing and how did you fill the gaps?  Did you do a post mortem analysis and if you did what did you learn?

# Can you tell me about a specific metric you have used to identify a need for a change in your department?  Did you create the metric or was it already available?  How did this and other information influence the change?

# Give me a situation in which it took you asking why five times to get to the root cause.

# As a manager, how do you stay connected to the details while focusing on the strategic, bigger picture issues?  Tell me about a time when you were too far removed from a project one of your employees was working on and you ended up missing a goal (Manager)

# When your direct reports are presenting a plan or issue to you, how do you know if the underlying assumptions are the correct ones?  What actions do you take to validate assumptions or data?   (Manager)

# **Earn Trust**

# Describe a time when you significantly contributed to improving morale and productivity on your team. What were the underlying problems and their causes? How did you prevent them from negatively impacting the team in the future?

# What three things are you working on to improve your overall effectiveness?

# Give an example of a tough or critical piece of feedback you received. What was it and what did you do about it?

# Give me an example of an idea you had that was strongly opposed. Why was there so much resistance? How did you handle the negative feedback?

# Give me an example of a significant professional failure. What led you to making the wrong decision? What did you learn from this situation?

# Give an example of a time where you were not able to meet a commitment to a team member. What was the commitment and what prevented you from meeting it? What was the outcome and what did you learn from it?

# Building trust can be difficult to achieve at times. Tell me about how you have effectively built trusting working relationships with others on your team.

# Describe a time when you needed the cooperation of a peer who was resistant. What did you do? What was the outcome?

# Tell me about a piece of direct feedback you recently gave to a colleague. How did s/he respond? How do you like to receive feedback from others?

# Tell me about a time you had to communicate a big change in direction for which you anticipated people would have a lot of concerns. How did you handle questions and/or resistance? Were you able to get people comfortable with the change?

# Tell me about a time your team’s goals were out of alignment with another team on which you relied to attain a key resource. How did you work with the other team? Were you able to achieve your goals? (Manager)

# Variation: Tell me about a time your local team’s goals were out of alignment with the goals of global stakeholder teams on which you relied. How did you work with the global teams? Were you able to achieve your goals?

# Tell me about a time you uncovered a significant problem in your team. What was it and how did you communicate it to your manager and to your peers or other stakeholders? (Manager)

# **Deliver results**

# Tell me about a time you (and your team if Manager) were driving toward a goal and were more than half way to the objective when you realized it may not be the best or right goal or may have unintended consequences. What was the situation and what did you do? [testing for achieving the right result versus driving goal for sake of goal achievement. May want follow up questions regarding to determine if the person was willing to take hit on goal attainment to achieve the right result and test long term versus short term thinking.]

# Tell me about a goal that you set that took a long time to achieve or that you are still working towards. How do you keep focused on the goal given the other priorities you have?

# Tell me about a time where you not only met a goal but considerably exceeded expectations. How were you able to do it? What challenges did you have to overcome?

# Give me an example of a time when you were able to deliver an important project under a tight deadline. What sacrifices did you have to make to meet the deadline? How did they impact the final deliverables?

# Tell me about a time you had significant, unanticipated obstacles to overcome in achieving a key goal. Were you eventually successful?

# How do you ensure you are focusing on the right deliverables when you have several competing priorities? Tell me about a time when you did not effectively manage your projects, and something fell through the cracks. (Manager)

# What’s your secret to success in setting stretch goals for your team that are challenging, yet achievable? Tell me about a time you didn’t hit the right balance. How did you adjust? (Manager)

# Give an example of a mission or goal you didn’t think was achievable. What was it and how did you help your team try to achieve it. Were you successful in the end? (Manager) - Nashville -getting 21 candidates for on-site, minimum population, IT Hub

# **Have Backbone Disagree & Commit**

# Tell me about a time that you strongly disagreed with your manager on something you deemed to be very important to the business. What was it about and how did you handle it?

# Give me an example of when you took an unpopular stance in a meeting with peers and your leader and you were the outlier. What was it, why did you feel strongly about it, and what did you do?

# When do you decide to go along with the group decision even if you disagree? Give me an example of a time you chose to acquiesce to the group even when you disagreed. Would you make the same decision now?

# Describe a time where you felt really strongly about something but ultimately lost the argument. How hard did you press the issue? What was your approach after you lost the argument?

# Give an example when you submitted a good idea to your manager, and he/she did not take action on it? How did you handle it? What was the end outcome?

# Tell me about a time the business gained something because you persisted for a length of time. Why were you so determined? How did it turn out?

# Provide an example of a time when you have had to make a difficult decision under pressure and then defend and justify it. Was it the right decision?

# Give an example of when you had to support a business initiative with which you didn’t necessarily agree. How did you handle it? (Manager)

# Tell me about a time when you pushed back against a decision that negatively impacted your team. What was the issue and how did it turn out? (Manager)