Discovery Question Bank

50+ stakeholder interview questions organized by methodology

Strategic Assessment (General)

1. What are the top three strategic priorities for the organization over the next 12-18 months, and why were these chosen over other potential initiatives?

2. How do you currently measure success against these strategic goals, and where are you seeing the biggest gaps between target and actual performance?

3. If we could solve only one major systemic challenge facing the business right now that would have the highest impact on the bottom line, what would it be?

4. How does the current organizational structure support or hinder the achievement of your long-term strategic objectives?

5. What shifts in the competitive landscape or macroeconomic environment are you most concerned about, and how is the company preparing for them?

6. Where do you see the greatest misalignment between high-level corporate strategy and daily execution at the operational level?

7. What specific capabilities, assets, or resources does the organization currently lack that are essential for achieving future growth targets?

8. Looking back at previous strategic initiatives that failed to meet expectations, what were the common root causes or patterns of those failures?

Process Analysis (Lean/Six Sigma)

1. Can you walk me through the end-to-end process for [Core Business Process] and highlight where you believe the most significant waste, waiting, or redundancy currently exists?

2. Where in the current workflow do you see the highest rates of rework, loop-backs, or defects, and what do you believe are the primary drivers of this variation?

3. How is process performance currently tracked, and are these leading metrics visible and understandable to the frontline employees executing the work?

4. Which specific steps in the current process add the least value from the external customer's perspective, and what barriers exist to removing them?

5.

How are Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) currently documented, maintained, and—most important-ly—adhered to in daily practice across different teams?

6. Roughly what percentage of your team's time is spent on non-value-added activities (like searching for informa-tion, waiting for approvals, or firefighting), and how has this trend changed recently?

7. When a significant process breakdown occurs, what is the typical mechanism for root cause analysis to ensure the issue is permanently resolved rather than just patched?

8. How does information and work flow between departments during critical handoffs, and where do these handoffs frequently cause delays or data integrity issues?

Bottleneck Identification (Theory of Constraints)

1. If customer demand for your primary product/service suddenly doubled tomorrow, which specific department, machine, resource, or process step would break first?

2. Where does work typically pile up or form the largest queue in your operations, and what is the average aging of items sitting in that queue?

3. What is the single slowest step in your entire value delivery chain that effectively dictates the pace of output for everyone else?

4. How are work priorities currently determined at the constraint resource to ensure it is always working on the highest-value tasks without interruption?

5. What 'upstream' behaviors, policies, or efficiency measures are currently causing starvation or ineffective utilization of your critical bottleneck resource?

6. What protective capacities or buffers (time, inventory, capacity) are in place around your constraint, and how effective are they at absorbing normal variability?

7. Have you attempted to elevate or bypass the current primary constraint in the past, and if so, what were the outcomes or unintended consequences of those attempts?

8. How often is the primary bottleneck resource sitting idle due to lack of materials, missing information, or upstream delays?

Change Readiness (ADKAR/Kotter)

1. How compelling and clearly articulated is the 'why' behind currently proposed changes to the average employee, and has a true sense of urgency been established?

2. Who are the key influencers and informal leaders within the organization whose visible support is absolutely critical for any new initiative to gain traction?

3. What have been the biggest historical sources or patterns of resistance to change in this organization, and how have they typically manifested?

4. Do employees currently possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and tools to operate successfully in the desired future state, and if not, where are the critical gaps?

5. How actively and visibly is senior leadership sponsoring recent change initiatives beyond just approving the budget or sending the initial announcement email?

6. What specific mechanisms are in place to reinforce new behaviors and ensure employees don't revert to old ways of working once the initial project focus fades?

7. How does the current incentive structure (compensation, KPIs, recognition, promotion) align with or contradict the behavioral changes required for future success?

8. How would you describe the current level of 'change fatigue' in the organization, and what impact might that have on the adoption of new initiatives?

Digital Maturity (Industry 4.0)

1. To what extent is your current technology stack integrated into a cohesive ecosystem, versus consisting of siloed point solutions that require manual data bridging?

2. How is data currently utilized in key decision-making processes—is it primarily descriptive (reporting on what happened) or predictive/prescriptive (guiding future actions)?

3. What are the biggest technical debt challenges or cultural barriers preventing the organization from adopting more advanced digital technologies?

4. How would you assess the general 'digital IQ' of the workforce—their ability and willingness to leverage new digital tools in their daily work?

5. Where are manual data entry, physical paper trails, or complex spreadsheet workarounds still prevalent in critical business processes?

6. How resilient is your current digital infrastructure against operational disruptions, and how quickly can core systems recover from an outage?

7.

Is there a clear digital transformation roadmap that aligns technology investments directly with specific business strategy outcomes and ROI targets?

8. How effectively is the organization capturing and analyzing data from customer interactions to personalize experiences or improve service delivery in real-time?

Organizational Health (Culture/Leadership)

1. How are major decisions typically made in this organization—are they consensus-driven, top-down, or decentralized, and what are the implications of that style on speed and quality?

2. If you had a magic wand to change exactly one thing about the current organizational culture to improve overall performance, what would you change and why?

3. How openly is bad news, dissent, or constructive criticism received by leadership teams, and what is the general level of psychological safety among staff?

4. To what extent do cross-functional teams collaborate effectively toward shared goals versus operating in silos and protecting their own turf or resources?

5. How clearly defined are roles, responsibilities, and decision rights across the organization, and where do overlaps cause the most friction or confusion?

6. How is talent currently developed and managed, and do high-potential employees see a clear, attainable path for growth within the company?

7. What are the unwritten rules or 'shadow values' that actually drive behavior and rewards here, regardless of what the official mission statement says?

8. How effective is internal communication at keeping employees aligned, engaged, and accurately informed about major organizational developments?

Customer Value (Jobs to be Done)

1. What is the fundamental 'job' that customers are hiring your product or service to do for them in their lives or businesses, beyond just the functional specifications?

2. What are the most significant pains, frustrations, anxieties, or costs customers experience before, during, or after using your current offering?

3. What alternative solutions—including compensatory behaviors or 'doing nothing'—do customers currently use to accomplish this job, and why might they choose those over your offering?

4. What specific 'gains,' outcomes, or distinct experiences are customers seeking that your current offering is failing to deliver consistently?

5. How do you currently gather, validate, and distribute insights about evolving customer needs, and how quickly does that feedback influence product roadmap decisions?

6. If you observe how customers *actually* use your product in the real world versus how it was designed to be used, what are the biggest surprising differences or workarounds?

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