# 1. Tell me about a time you worked well within a team

This is a very common question for software engineers. You might want to look back through your resume and use one of your most impressive achievements as the basis of your answer to this. After all, it's very likely you worked in a team to achieve it.

Your answer should showcase your collaboration and communication skills, not just your technical skills. Show that you're a team player but don’t forget to include specific actions that you took.

As always with "Tell me about a time" type questions, it can help if you craft your "story" using a framework, as we've done in the example below.

Example answer:

(Situation)

"In my previous software engineering role, our team was tasked with developing a real-time data analytics platform for a major client.

(Problem)

The project had a tight timeline and required integrating multiple complex systems, including data ingestion, processing, and visualization components.

(Solution)

To be as efficient as possible, we adopted an Agile development approach. We held daily stand-up meetings to discuss progress, address challenges, and prioritize tasks. I took on the role of the Scrum Master, facilitating the meetings and making sure that everyone had a clear understanding of their responsibilities.

One particular challenge we faced was the need to integrate a third-party data visualization library with our custom backend solution. I took the initiative to organize a brainstorming session with the front-end and back-end developers, UX designers, and data scientists.

Together we explored different integration approaches and identified potential roadblocks.

(Impact)

We were successful in delivering the real-time data analytics platform within the given timeline. What’s more, the client was delighted with the platform’s user-friendly interface, real-time insights, and advanced visualizations.

(Lessons)

This experience taught me how important communication skills are in my role. As a software engineer, I had previously thought that the most important skill I had was my ability as a programmer. But this project taught me that by communicating well with other people and other teams, I could have a far greater impact in the company than I could just through writing code.”

# 2. Tell me about a time you dealt with conflict on a team. How did you solve it?

This is a real favorite among interviewers across all industries. Conflicts can cause real problems, especially if they’re not dealt with properly. However, conflicts can also be constructive if they’re centered on work. In many industries strong differences of opinion are an everyday occurrence.

The interviewer will want to see that you have the empathy to understand both sides of a conflict and the communication skills to solve it. The interviewer wants to see that even though you may not be applying for a management role, you're going to have a positive impact on how the team works together.

Example answer:

(Situation)

“Unfortunately I’ve found that conflicts can often arise from clashing personalities. When I was at a fintech startup, one of the new engineers, Rob, told me that he had a hard time working with another coworker, Benji.

(Problem)

He explained that Benji was consistently rude and demeaning to him, to the extent that Rob was ready to change teams or even leave the company.

(Solution)

I'd been at the company a while and had a good relationship with everyone on the team, including Benji. So with Rob’s permission, I brought this up with Benji in private the next day. Benji admitted that he likes to joke around and tease his coworkers, but that none of it was ill-intended and he didn’t feel that he had done anything wrong.

I encouraged Benji to speak to Rob directly and suggested that he should apologize for the misunderstanding. I gently suggested that he might want to keep his interactions with Rob more matter-of-fact in the future.

(Impact)

Benji said he'd do what I suggested and thanked me for the heads up. I checked in with Rob in the weeks following and he reported that his working relationship with Ben had greatly improved.

(Lessons)

The experience showed me that people can perceive the same situation very differently, and often the key to solving conflicts is simply talking it through and listening actively. I also learned that even though I wasn't in a management position, I could still have a really positive impact on team harmony and in this case, avoid what could have been a really negative situation.

”For more help on answering this question, read our specific guide: 5 ways to answer "Tell me about a time you had a conflict"

# 3. Tell me about a time you failed at work

Every engineer makes mistakes. The key to acing this question is to show that you’re the kind of SWE who owns their mistakes and sees failure as a learning opportunity.

Don’t shy away from talking about a real failure, or an important mistake you made. That will be far more powerful than choosing something inconsequential. Explain what went wrong, why it went wrong, and how the experience has helped you become better at your job.

Example answer:

(Situation)

“Last year I was working on a project where I had to implement a new online booking feature for a client. I had a tight deadline and was working under pressure to get it done. I was in such a hurry that I didn’t take as much time as I normally do to check my code for bugs.

(Problem)

Unfortunately, it did have a bug and it caused a lot of follow-on problems on the client’s website.

(Solution)

I tried to solve it but I quickly started to feel a bit out of my depth, so I decided to ask for help from my manager as well as a more experienced colleague. We worked together to identify the root cause of the issue, and we came up with a plan of action.

We had a very frank meeting with the client where we laid out the extent of the problem and the steps we were going to take to fix it.

(Impact)

We had to work some long hours to get everything fixed, but in the end, we were successful. We only narrowly missed the deadline and our relationship with the client actually improved in the long term as they appreciated how committed we were to fixing the problem and how transparent we’d been with them.(Lessons)I learned three things through this experience. One, don’t skip testing code properly or you’ll pay for it later on. Two, it’s important to always be transparent and honest, in this case both with my manager and then with the client. And three, I learned that when you have to own up to a mistake, it’s a lot easier if you can also explain what you’re going to do to solve the problem.

”To dive deeper into this question, read our guide: 5 ways to answer "Tell me about a time you failed".

# 4. Why do you want to work here?

Okay, technically this isn't a behavioral question (it's not asking about a past experience) but since you're almost guaranteed to be asked it, we've included it in this list.

Interviewers want to know that you're genuinely motivated to work at the company, and not just because of the paycheck. Fail to offer a convincing answer to this question, and it could be a big red flag early on in the interview process.

Interviewers also want to know whether you’ve done enough research and preparation ahead of time, and this question can be a good gauge of that.

Let's take a look at a strong example answer and then we'll link to further resources.

Example answer:

"I'm really excited about the idea of being a part of Apple, and there are three main reasons why:

Firstly, Apple is all about making technology seamless and user-friendly. I love building things that people find useful, and I'm totally on board with Apple's mission to go above and beyond in giving users top-notch experiences. Imagine being part of a team that's always pushing the boundaries of what's possible in tech – that's what grabs my interest.

Secondly, the way Apple values design and pays attention to the small details resonates with me. I've always believed in the power of great design in software. Joining a place where creativity is embraced, and where we can collaborate to create products that not only work great but also look awesome, is something that would excite me.

Lastly, the sheer impact that Apple has globally is immense. Millions of people use Apple products daily. As a software engineer, contributing to projects of this scale and making a difference in people's lives is the kind of challenge that excites me. Imagine writing code that's used by people everywhere, it's a big motivator for me.”

# 5. Walk me through your resume and relevant experience

Not exactly a behavioral question but also extremely common and worth including here. You'll want to give an answer that is concise, clear, and compelling - and you can only do that if you've prepared your answer carefully ahead of the interview.

Firstly, try and come up with a personal story that responds to both a) what the company wants and b) who you are.

Research the company, re-read the job description, and work out what kind of engineer the company is looking for. Then think about what your particular strengths and experiences are, and try to label yourself in a way that aligns all these things.

You should also aim for a clear sense of progression in your answer, showing how you've been taking on greater responsibilities. Also, highlight any achievements that show leadership qualities.

In the example answer below, the candidate has seen that the company values "bias for action" and "scrappiness" highly and so aims to transmit these traits.

Example answer:

"Sure, let me give you a snapshot of my journey. I started my career at X start-up, where I developed a keen eye for optimizing code efficiency. One notable achievement was streamlining our platform's codebase, reducing load times by 30%, which directly improved user satisfaction.

Budgets and resources were always tight so we always had to overcome obstacles and think of different ways of getting things done, which was actually a great learning process for me.

I then moved to ABC Tech, which is where I am now. It's a really fast-growing company which can be chaotic at times, but it's given me a lot of scope to seize the initiative and suggest projects myself rather than just executing. I've worked with people in lots of different teams and led some complex projects: one of my proudest moments was leading a cross-functional team to deliver a critical feature ahead of schedule, resulting in a 20% boost in user engagement.

Now I would love to work for a company like Y where I could work on more ambitious, large-scale projects that push boundaries. I'd also love the opportunity to learn from really top engineers.

# 6. Tell me about an interesting project you’ve worked on recently

As part of your preparation, you should look back at some successful projects and pinpoint the actions you took that demonstrate certain skills that the job description is looking for. If possible, give some metrics to quantify your impact.

Not everything about the project has to be a total success - talk about what you learned and how you'll be able to do better next time.

Example answer:

(Situation)

At my previous company, I had the opportunity to lead a crucial project with guidance from my manager.

(Problem)

The challenge was to create a seamless and efficient real-time editor that allowed multiple users to edit a document simultaneously, ensuring synchronization in real-time.

(Solution)

We opted for a microservices architecture, using technologies like Node.js and WebSockets to establish real-time communication. We also employed Operational Transformation algorithms to handle concurrent editing and conflict resolution. A thorough load testing was conducted to ensure the system could handle a large number of concurrent users seamlessly.

(Impact)

The project was a success, and the real-time collaborative editor was integrated into the platform, significantly enhancing the remote collaboration experience for our users. We observed a 35% increase in user engagement with the new editor, and user feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with users commenting on its efficiency and ease of use.

(Lessons)

On a technical level, this project reinforced the importance of a scalable and robust architecture. It taught me the significance of comprehensive testing, especially when dealing with real-time applications.

On a personal level, this project gave me a lot of confidence in my ability to lead. Before this, I'd had little experience of leading meetings and taking responsibility for coordinating projects, but since I've led quite a few more. I've got much better at anticipating other people's doubts and seeing where bottlenecks might occur, and I've lost the shyness that used to prevent me from taking an active role in team meetings.

"If you can pick a project that you led, like the one above, that's ideal as it makes it easier to demonstrate leadership skills. If you can't, don't worry, just be sure to demonstrate other soft skills such as collaboration, time management, adaptability, or problem-solving as well as technical skills.

# 7. Tell me about a time you faced a really hard problem / a challenge at work

Employers at competitive companies want to know how you’ll react under difficult circumstances. Your SWE resume may be full of impressive achievements with quantifiable impacts, but that doesn’t necessarily show that you can thrive when the going gets tough.

Don’t make the mistake of spending too long explaining the problem. Succinctly outline the situation and the problem/challenge, then spend the bulk of your answer talking about what you did, the impact your actions had, and what you learned.

Example answer:

(Situation)

"In a previous role, I faced a significant challenge while working on a large-scale e-commerce platform.

(Problem)

The system started experiencing intermittent performance degradation during high-traffic periods, severely impacting user experience and potentially resulting in revenue loss. The problem had two main aspects: optimizing the system to handle a massive influx of users during peak times and identifying specific bottlenecks causing the performance degradation.

(Solution)

In coordination with my manager, I led a comprehensive analysis, utilizing various profiling and monitoring tools to pinpoint performance bottlenecks. Once we identified the critical areas, we orchestrated a focused effort on code refactoring, optimized database queries, and implemented caching mechanisms to enhance response times.

Additionally, I worked with my superior to restructure the system's architecture to incorporate load balancing and auto-scaling strategies, ensuring it could handle higher traffic loads.

(Impact)

The efforts resulted in a substantial performance improvement. The platform demonstrated remarkable stability even during peak periods, showcasing a 50% reduction in response times and zero downtime. Users were notably pleased, and the platform successfully handled subsequent peak traffic events smoothly.(Lessons)For me, this experience underscored the importance of proactive performance monitoring and scaling strategies. It's worth investing a bit of time earlier on to protect yourself later from unexpected traffic surges and the like.

I also learned a lot from being in meetings with my manager and heads from other departments as she briefed them on our progress. She was very effective at giving high-level, simplified information that responded to their concerns, rather than getting lost in the technical details, and I definitely took that on board as something to work on myself."

Notice how the answer sets up the situation and problem very quickly, giving the candidate time to focus on the solution, impact, and what they learned. There is a nice balance here between a focus on their individual actions and demonstrating a collaborative approach.

# 8. Tell me about a time you showed leadership

Across any industry, leadership is one of the qualities that interviewers are likely to assess you on, even if you’re not applying for a leadership role. Why? Because a good leader not only does their job well, but helps others do their job better. Their positive impact on the company is therefore multiplied.

A junior software engineer, for example, won’t know how to lead a team of engineers. But there may be an occasion where they can lead a process, or lead a meeting, and doing this well has an impact on the wider team.

If you’re applying for a senior or management role, you may be asked a more specific version of the question, such as “Tell me about a time you led a team through a difficult period’. Prepare an example that shows you as someone with some key leadership traits: determined, empathetic, decisive, good motivator, etc.

Don’t worry if you’re more junior and you’ve never held a leadership position before. Your answer can come from a situation in which you weren’t in a leadership position but demonstrated leadership nevertheless.

Example answer:

(Situation)

Recently in my current role, an intern joined our team, called Mo. I had a very high workload at the time and so was grateful to see an extra pair of hands join the team.

(Problem)

However, Mo lacked experience in some of the key tools we used daily, such as GitHub and Django. He was also very shy. After the first week, he hadn’t completed many of the tasks he was given and people stopped asking for his help. Our manager was so busy that he didn’t pay much attention to the situation.

(Solution)

I decided to sit with Mo at lunch and ask him about his experience with coding. I gradually realized that while he’d never worked in a team like ours before, he was a talented programmer. I told him what I was working on and he seemed confident he could help.

I delegated some of my tasks to Mo over the next couple of days, making it clear that if he didn’t understand something, he should just ask. He completed the tasks very well. By now he came to sit with me every lunchtime and was starting to come out of his shell. I used the time he’d saved me to show him some things on GitHub and Django, and I made sure I told everyone about the great job he’d done for me.

(Impact)

The rest of the team started sending him tasks again and this time Mo completed the tasks much more successfully, occasionally asking me for help. Three months later, his internship ended and he joined the team full-time.

(Lessons)

The experience with Mo made me realize that when somebody joins a team, it’s really important that they have someone to go to when they don’t understand something or have a problem. It also taught me how crucial it is to take the time to ask and listen, instead of dismissing people after a bad first impression.

”This candidate demonstrates various leadership skills with this example: in particular a lot of initiative and empathy. The interviewer could easily imagine this candidate as a future manager who will do a great job helping his team members reach their potential.

See more example answers to this question in 5 ways to answer "Tell me about a time you showed leadership".

# 9. Tell me about a time you had to meet a tight deadline

This question helps employers assess your ability to handle time-sensitive projects and manage competing priorities.

Demonstrate your proficiency in project management, and problem-solving, and your commitment to achieving successful outcomes under pressure.

Use an example of a time when the odds were stacked against you - it will make for a more interesting and compelling answer.

Example answer:

(Situation)

"In the final quarter of last year, our team was tasked with delivering a critical module for a high-profile client, promising to revolutionize their user experience. This project had an unusually tight deadline due to an unexpected product launch by the client, leaving us with only three weeks to deliver what would normally be a two-month project.

(Problem)

The short timeframe was further complicated by unforeseen technical complexities that arose during the initial stages. We were faced with a massive amount of coding, rigorous testing, and integration tasks. The pressure was mounting as we couldn't compromise on the quality and functionality of the module.

(Solution)

To navigate through this challenge, we immediately held a team meeting to re-evaluate our project plan. We swiftly identified non-essential features and functionalities that could be temporarily deferred to subsequent versions. We also employed a parallelized development approach, allowing multiple team members to work simultaneously on different aspects of the module.

We implemented an Agile methodology, conducting daily stand-up meetings to address roadblocks promptly and ensure everyone was on track. I took on the role of a scrum master, ensuring efficient coordination and smooth progress.

(Impact)

Our collective effort and the adjustments we made were transformative. Despite the initial odds, we managed to deliver a fully functional module that exceeded the client's expectations. The success of this module significantly bolstered our relationship with the client and opened up opportunities for future collaborations.

(Lessons)

This experience reinforced the importance of adaptability and collaboration under extreme time constraints. It taught me the significance of quickly reassessing priorities and being flexible in our approach. It also highlighted the power of effective communication within a team."

# 10. Tell me about your biggest weakness

A classic interview question at all levels, and one that causes much anxiety for many candidates. It shouldn’t, it’s not a trick question. We all have weaknesses, and as long as your biggest weakness isn’t one that is vital for the job, you should try and answer honestly.

The interviewer is testing to see if you have the self-awareness to know what you’re less good at, and enough drive to actually do something about it.

So pick a weakness that is real and is relevant to your role, though not something critical. You can also use this answer to show that you’re good at taking on feedback - an important skill and one that your interviewer will be looking out for.

You might find it hard to think of a weakness that you're willing to open up about.

To help, here's a list of possible weaknesses that could give you the foundation of a strong answer and would avoid red flags.

Possible weaknesses to mention in a software engineer interview:

Not good at delegating: you struggle to delegate tasks effectively due to a desire to maintain control over the project, potentially leading to missed deadlines.

Limited experience with a specific technology: you acknowledge a need to enhance expertise in a particular programming language or framework.

Over-optimizing code: you tend to spend too much time refining and perfecting code before the core functionality is solidified, potentially affecting deadlines.

Difficulty saying no: you find you agree to take on additional tasks, sometimes resulting in an overloaded schedule and affecting your ability to manage your projects effectively.

Overemphasis on independence: you have had a preference for working independently rather than collaborating within a team.

Nervousness speaking: you find it difficult to present technical ideas or updates in a clear and engaging manner.

Prioritization challenges: you struggle to effectively prioritize tasks and manage time during busy development cycles.

Occasional lack of documentation: you haven't always consistently documented code and processes during fast-paced development.

These are all weaknesses that can hurt work performance, so you don't want to give the impression that it's something that comes with you as "part of the package". Instead, demonstrate that you're already taking steps to improve at it.

Let's take a look at an example to see how that might look.

Notice that this isn't technically a behavioral question in that you don't necessarily need to talk about a past experience.

Example answer: "One area I've identified for improvement is my tendency to over-optimize code during the initial development stages. At times, I find myself spending too much time fine-tuning the code for performance before the core functionality is solidified. There were a couple of occasions where this led me to miss deadlines.

To overcome this, I've adopted a more iterative development approach. I focus on getting the fundamental structure and features in place before delving deeply into optimization. This way, I ensure the code's functionality is robust before investing time in fine-grained performance enhancements. I've also sought feedback from senior colleagues to strike the right balance between optimization and timely project delivery.

Making this adjustment has helped me to deliver reliable solutions on time, while still maintaining a high standard of code quality. It's still something I need to work on and improve, but I'm definitely going in the right direction."

# 11. When you disagree with a coworker, how do you handle it?

There may be times when you and a co-worker disagree on how to complete a task. The hiring manager may ask this behavioral interview question since they want to learn about your abilities to collaborate with other team members. The interviewer seeks to obtain insight into how you manage difficult circumstances at work by asking this software engineer behavioral interview questions, therefore emphasizing how you have addressed a problem with a co-worker in the past.

Use the STAR approach to outline your response in your response. This acronym, which stands for "situation, task, action, and outcome," is a guide for responding to behavioral and technical interview questions with enough context regarding the example you're referring to and how you effectively addressed it.

Sample Answer - Last year, during a new project, one of my team members proposed we utilize a coding style that I thought was not in line with our processes. In this case, I met with my colleague one-on-one to discuss our project ideas and the coding approach we found most effective. Following our talk, we both understood each other's proposals and presented our ideas to the rest of the team, allowing everyone to express their thoughts. As a group, we were able to reach a conclusion.

# 12. Tell me about an instance when you had to juggle multiple tasks. How did you handle this situation?

As a software engineer, you may have several responsibilities to manage at once, and the interviewer may ask this question to assess how you would function in a high-stress situation. These behavioral questions tech allows you to discuss your efficient time management abilities as well as your capacity to remain flexible while adapting to new obligations. Consider utilizing the STAR approach to talk about a period when you had several duties in a professional context and how you handled it.

Sample Answer - My manager put me on a performance interface design team last summer, while I was organizing software installation for a customer. While I was first intimidated by having two large projects on the go at the same time, I committed a day to arrange and prioritizing which activities needed to be completed first so that I could make the deadlines for both assignments. As a result, I was able to complete both tasks on time.

# 13. Can you give me an example of how you establish your own goals?

Setting objectives is a crucial element of your job as a software engineer since it demonstrates your dedication to doing a good job. Hiring managers may ask you this question if they want to know how you develop career-oriented goals that are both ambitious and attainable. Consider answering these behavioral interview questions for software engineers by describing a moment when you established a plan and then achieved it.

Sample Answer - I knew I wanted to go from my entry-level position on a software innovation team to a post as a programmer analyst at my previous firm. Programmer analysts normally had three to five years of experience, and I knew that six months after accomplishing this objective, I'd be celebrating my third anniversary with the organization. As a result, promotion became a difficult but feasible goal. I worked hard hours and one-on-one with my supervisor, and on my three-year anniversary, I was promoted to programmer analyst.

# 14. Tell me about a moment when you were unfamiliar with the scenario or surroundings. How did you cope?

These behavioral questions for software engineers allow you to demonstrate your capacity to take on activities that are not part of your job description, such as conducting independent research and adapting to changing work situations. If you are unclear about how to respond to this question, consider detailing your first day at your prior employment.

Sample Answer - I had never worked as a full-time software developer before starting my last job, so I knew I had a lot to learn. However, I asked several questions and took detailed notes on everything I learned, which I reviewed after each workday. I eventually grew acquainted with the systems and process and outperformed my expectations within the first six months of work.

# 15. Tell me about a situation when you required information from someone unresponsive. How did you deal with it?

If the hiring manager asks you this behavioral/technical interview question during an interview, emphasize your communication skills and capacity to deal with issues with your teammates. The hiring manager may want to demonstrate your grasp of your colleague's point of view in the circumstance, so stress your ability to be thoughtful of others while gathering the facts you want.

Sample Answer - I was responsible for drafting a plan of action for my team at my previous job, and the deadline was quickly approaching. My boss explained that she was swamped with numerous projects at the time and wouldn't be able to answer my emails for two to three days. Rather than becoming irritated, I solicited feedback from my team members, and we developed a fully-formed strategy, which we then submitted to my management, who accepted it instantly.

# 16. Tell me about a moment when you messed up. How did you correct your mistake?

Everyone makes errors; it's a part of life. This behavioral/technical interview question helps an interviewer to understand more about how you respond to mistakes, which is all that counts when an error occurs. To correctly answer this behavioral/technical interview question, you should include an example of when you accepted responsibility for a mistake, followed by a discussion of the steps you took to correct your mistake.

Sample Answer - In my previous position in the accounting business, I discovered that I had planned a meeting with our worldwide leaders at the incorrect time. This has the potential to disrupt the schedules of several of our senior executives. We endeavored to tell all executives that the event had been booked at the incorrect time, and then we attempted to reschedule the call at a new time. When I recognized my error, I promptly escalated it to my manager, who expressed gratitude for my transparency. The other executives recognized the error and were grateful for the few days' warning before the call. Since making this blunder, I constantly double-check meeting hours and utilize time zone software to assist limit the odds of an error when booking an overseas meeting.

# 17. Give me an example of how you've worked as part of a team.

Most occupations need some kind of collaboration. An employer may ask you this behavioral/technical interview question during a job interview to better understand how you work with others, especially if the career you are seeking requires a lot of cooperation. To reply, describe a specific example of working in a team and detail how you engage with your co-workers.

Sample Answers - At my previous job, I was a key member of our SEO team. My supervisor was in charge of a project to assist us in increasing our domain authority, and I was tasked with optimizing a lot of our current articles. Every day, I participated in a stand-up meeting with my co-workers to keep them updated on my progress. During this brief meeting, we also gave each other our assistance and support if anybody was experiencing any difficulties. I continuously checked in with my team members to ensure we accomplished our targets, and I also opted to partner up with another team member who was assigned to a similar project so that we could discuss best practices.

# 18. What is the most helpful piece of feedback you've ever received about yourself?

Constructive criticism may be beneficial to your overall professional development, so consider answering this behavioral/technical interview question with a piece of constructive criticism you got and how it helped you better your work. You may demonstrate your ability to respond positively to constructive criticism and your willingness to learn and grow.

Sample Answer - My boss brought me into her office a year ago and gave me some critical comments. While I wasn't aware of it at the time, her criticism assisted me in challenging myself and improving my job without asking me to spend long hours. I am grateful that she pointed out a problem in my organizational ways so that I might rethink my strategy.

# 19. How do you handle a challenge? Tell me about a situation where you faced a challenge.

When asked such a question, the interviewer wants to see how you react to challenging situations. They wish to see your approach toward work challenges.

During my internship at ABC organization, I was given the task of implementing SEO in old blogs to bring traffic and as I was a newbie, I was a bit scared. However, I jumped right into the task and did a basic course in SEO to understand the nitty-gritty of it and discussed the same with my Team Lead before implementing it. Giving up is never an option for me!

# 20. Can you work effectively under pressure? If yes, how?

Interviewers usually seek candidates who can work under pressure at any time. These kinds of behavioral questions can asses your condition in a high-pressure job.

My team lead had to leave town suddenly one time, and we were in the midst of complex negotiations with a new sponsor. I was tasked with putting together a PowerPoint presentation based solely on the comments he had left and some briefing from his supervisor. My presentation went well. We got the sponsorship, and the senior management even suggested giving me a promotion from the internship role.

# 21. When was the last time you made a mistake and how did you handle it?

Everyone makes mistakes and they’re part and parcel of life. By admitting mistakes, you’ll be seen as a wise person who is not afraid of making mistakes and learning from them. the interviewer is interested in how you handle them when they occur to you.

I once miscalculated the cost of a specific type of membership at the club where I worked. I went to my supervisor who appreciated that I clarified my mistake and me being honest with him knowing that it might cost me my job. He commanded me to offer to waive the new member’s filing fee. Despite my error, the member joined the club, my manager was understanding, and while I felt bad that I had committed a mistake, I did learn to pay careful attention to details in the long term so that I can provide correct info.

# 22. How do you set goals? Give an example.

The interviewer wants to know if you set goals through this behavioral interview question. Goal setting is one way to achieve success and if you’re not a goal setter, it shows that you’ve no right roadmap to work out. They want to see how you plan your objectives and set milestones to achieve what you want.

When it comes to setting goals, I prefer to follow the SMART goal-setting method. Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound. Last time I wanted to learn basic Japanese in 2 months, so I bought an elementary class Japanese learning book and created a roadmap that helped me follow the routine. Within 3 weeks, I mastered the alphabet and later on, started with the phrases. I enrolled myself in a Japanese class soon after which helped me to achieve my goal within the timeframe I set for myself.

# 23. Take me to the time you set a goal and achieved it.

When it comes to this behavioral question, the path is more crucial than the destination. The interviewer is interested in your method, including how you came up with the objective and the steps you took to accomplish it.

I wanted to quickly and efficiently capture the interest of prospective customers, so I set a goal of obtaining a digital marketing certification. I looked into online and in-person programs and tried contacting previous clients who are experts in the field. I ended up finding a program that worked for me thanks to their suggestion, and I’ve used that knowledge to create campaigns for my firm.Behavioral-Interview

# 24. Tell me a decision that other team members or colleagues didn’t like. How did you implement it?

Management must often make difficult decisions, and not all employees are pleased when a new policy is introduced. If you’re interviewing for a decision-making position, the interviewer will want to know how you handle change.

Because I’ve been a Quality control leader for many years, I’m used to making hard choices now and then. I recently lowered my team size and extra hours. We must sometimes make decisions that are in the best interests of the company. Cutbacks happen, and as much as I strive to prevent them, they can sometimes make my choices unpalatable.

# 25. Are you someone who works in a team or like solo working? Give an example of how you worked on a team.

Many jobs necessitate teamwork. The prospective employer will want to know well how you collaborate with others and cooperate with other teammates during interviews for those positions.

In my previous consulting job, I was part of a small team of analysts. Each of us was given a specific set of data to analyze each day, and at the end of each day, we compared our findings and attempted to draw some conclusions for the sales team. I enjoyed the team meetings, and it definitely helped with my motivation to know that my coworkers relied on the outcomes of my work and that if I didn’t do my share, we wouldn’t be able to achieve the sales department’s output as a team. Furthermore, we were appreciative of one another and assisted one another with heavy workloads. Overall, it was a fantastic experience.

# 26. What do you do when your opinions collide with someone else?

The interviewer is looking for insight into how you manage workplace issues with this question. Consider how you resolved a dispute or came to an agreement when there was a workplace dispute.

I had a manager a few years ago who wanted me to find ways to delegate the majority of the tasks we were doing in my department. I thought that having the staff on-site had a significant impact on our efficiency and ability to connect to our clients. I made a compelling case for her, and she devised a workable solution.

# 27. Give an example of how you were able to motivate employees or co-workers.

Do you have a strong ability to motivate others? What methods do you employ to motivate your team? The hiring manager wants to see evidence of your ability to motivate others.

I was once in a scenario where our agency’s management was taken over by staff with expertise in a completely different industry, in an attempt to maximize profits over service. Many of my colleagues have been resilient to the drastic changes that were being implemented, but I recognized some of the perks right away and was able to convince my peers to give the new method a chance to be successful.

# 28. Describe a time when you had to overcome a difficult situation at work and how you managed it.

This interview question gauges your definition of a challenging situation and your problem-solving skills. Choose an instance not caused by you, detailing your actions to resolve it. Emphasise the positive outcome, lessons learned, and how your solutions improved overall performance.

Sample answer

“In my previous role as a project manager, we were nearing a project deadline when a key member of the team had a family emergency and couldn’t complete their tasks on time. This was a difficult situation as the tasks were specialised and crucial for project completion.

“I first reassessed our resources and realised another team member had partial knowledge in that area. I sat down with them and we mapped out a plan to divide the pending tasks.

“I also coordinated a brief training session where the absent team member could remotely guide the other team player on more complex issues. We also requested a minor extension on the deadline from the client, emphasising our commitment to quality.

“In the end, we completed the project with only a slight delay and maintained the quality standards. This situation taught me the importance of adaptability, cross-training, and clear communication during unexpected challenges.”

# 29. How do you respond to high-pressure situations?

This behavioural question is designed to understand how you stay focused in different, difficult and stressful situations. It is a chance to highlight how you solve problems and your ability to work well under pressure.

Sample answer

"In high-pressure situations, I prioritise and break down tasks into manageable steps. For instance, in my previous role, we faced an unexpected product issue right before a major launch.

“Instead of panicking, I organised an emergency team meeting. We listed out all the tasks, assigned them based on expertise, and set short-term milestones. I believe in open communication, so I kept all stakeholders informed about the progress and any changes.

“By focusing on the solution, maintaining a calm demeanour, and fostering team collaboration, we resolved the issue in time for the launch. These experiences have reinforced that staying organised and maintaining a positive attitude are essential in managing pressure effectively.”

# 30. What has been your greatest achievement to date?

Here, the interviewer is looking to see if you are a high performer and where you have excelled in your previous roles.

In this case, select a few recent accomplishments that are directly related to the job position, role and responsibilities wherever possible. Be precise, and quantify the action, the steps taken and the benefits you provided.

Sample answer

“One of my proudest achievements was during my tenure as a former sales manager and representative for XYZ Company. I was assigned an underperforming territory that had consistently lagged behind others in terms of sales.

“Recognising the potential, I initiated a comprehensive market analysis to identify gaps and opportunities. Based on this, I implemented a tailored strategy, which included targeted marketing campaigns and relationship-building initiatives with key clients.

“Within a year, not only did we turn around the performance of the territory, but we also achieved a 25% increase in sales, making it one of the top-performing regions for the company. This experience taught me the importance of proactive problem-solving, data-driven decision-making, and perseverance.”

Related: What is hybrid working? benefits, disadvantages, and tips

Man-and-Woman-Near-Table. Photo by fauxels from Pexels

# 31. Tell me about a successful project and your role in it.

Hiring managers ask this behavioural question to evaluate your interpersonal skills, leadership skills and how you work with a team. Showcase your role with your previous employer, the project, and how you assisted your co-workers. Provide examples of communication, collaboration, teamwork and problem-solving.

Sample answer

"One of the most successful projects I’ve been involved with was the launch of the ABC product at XYZ Company. I served as the project lead, responsible for coordinating between the design, marketing, and engineering teams.

“From the onset, I established clear communication channels and set regular check-ins to ensure we were aligned on our milestones. I also implemented a risk management strategy, which helped us identify potential challenges early and devise solutions promptly.

“During the project, we faced a significant challenge when our primary supplier experienced a delay. Drawing on my relationships with alternate suppliers, I was able to source the required materials without impacting our launch timeline. The product was launched on schedule and exceeded sales expectations by 20% in the first quarter.

“This project taught me the importance of proactive planning, flexibility in the face of unforeseen challenges, and the value of maintaining strong professional relationships.”

Related: What is the difference between a CV and a resume?

# 32. How do you handle disagreements with your colleagues or your manager?

This interview question probes your conflict resolution and communication skills at work. It’s essential to demonstrate diplomacy and tact, as teams thrive when members can address disagreements and reach a consensus.

Reflect on a situation where you and a colleague or manager resolved differing views through effective communication, leading to a collaborative solution.

Sample answer

"In my experience, disagreements are often a result of different perspectives. When I encounter disagreements with colleagues or managers, I prioritise open communication. First, I actively listen to their viewpoint to understand their concerns fully.

“By doing so, I often find areas of common ground. I then share my perspective, ensuring I present it as an alternative viewpoint rather than a contradiction. If needed, I seek feedback from other team members or suggest collaborative problem-solving sessions.

“This approach ensures that the final decision is well-informed and beneficial for the project or organisation. Importantly, I always maintain respect for everyone involved, understanding that diverse opinions often lead to the best solutions.”

# 33. Tell me about a situation where you had to handle a dissatisfied customer or client. How did you address their concerns and ensure their satisfaction?

When responding to this behavioural question, focus on demonstrating your ability to empathise, communicate effectively, and find constructive solutions to resolve customer issues. Your response should highlight your commitment to delivering excellent customer service and problem-solving skills.

Sample answer

“In a previous role, I encountered a dissatisfied customer who had received a faulty product. To address their concerns and ensure their satisfaction, I initiated a proactive approach.

“First, I empathised with the customer, acknowledging their frustration. Then, I assured them that I would personally oversee the resolution.

“I promptly investigated the issue, involving relevant departments to pinpoint the root cause. Once we identified the problem, I presented the customer with a clear plan for resolution, which included a replacement product and expedited delivery.

“Throughout the process, I maintained open communication with the customer, providing regular updates on the progress. This transparency helped rebuild trust. Ultimately, the customer received the replacement product promptly, and their satisfaction was restored.

“This experience taught me the importance of empathy, swift problem-solving, and effective communication in handling dissatisfied customers.”

Women Sitting on Chairs Holding Documents. Photo by RDNE Stock project via Pexels

# 34. Describe a time when you had to multitask and manage multiple projects or tasks simultaneously. How did you stay organised and meet all your deadlines?

For this question, you should emphasise your time management, organisational skills, and ability to prioritise effectively. Hiring managers want to assess your capability to handle a demanding workload efficiently.

Sample answer

“In a fast-paced role, I often had to juggle multiple projects simultaneously. To stay organised and meet all deadlines, I implemented a systematic approach. I started by creating a detailed task list, prioritising based on deadlines and importance.

“I then allocated specific time blocks for each task, ensuring I had uninterrupted periods for focused work. Additionally, I used project management software to track progress and set reminders.

“Regular check-ins with my team helped maintain alignment and address any roadblocks. By maintaining a disciplined schedule, staying adaptable, and leveraging technology, I successfully managed multiple projects, meeting all deadlines effectively.”

**35. Share an example of a time when you demonstrated leadership skills or influenced a positive change within your team or organisation.**

Answering the behavioural job interview question about demonstrating leadership skills and driving positive change within a team or organisation is crucial. It showcases your ability to lead, collaborate, and make a meaningful impact – a key aspect employers look for.

Sample answer

“In a previous job, I noticed a need for process improvement within our team. I took the initiative to propose changes that could enhance efficiency and collaboration. I organised meetings to present my ideas, involving team members in the discussion.

“I listened to their feedback, incorporated valuable insights, and created an action plan. As the project lead, I assigned roles, set clear goals, and ensured open communication. Through this collaborative effort, we implemented the changes, resulting in improved productivity and a more cohesive team environment.

“This experience highlighted my ability to lead, inspire change, and foster teamwork, ultimately contributing to positive outcomes.”

# 36. Describe a time when you had to take the lead on a project or initiative. How did you motivate your team, set goals, and achieve success?

Answering the job interview question about taking the lead on a project or initiative is important for showcasing your leadership abilities. It demonstrates your capacity to inspire a team, establish objectives, and attain success – qualities highly sought after by employers.

Sample answer

“When tasked with leading a critical project, I began by setting clear goals and defining roles within the team. I ensured that each team member understood their responsibilities and the project’s importance. To motivate the team, I emphasised the project’s impact and its alignment with our organisational objectives.

“Regular team meetings allowed us to track progress, discuss challenges, and celebrate achievements. I encouraged open communication and provided support when team members faced obstacles.

“By maintaining a collaborative and supportive environment, we successfully completed the project on time and exceeded our initial goals. This experience reinforced my leadership skills and ability to drive projects to success.”

# 37. Give me an example of a situation where you had to meet a tight deadline. How did you manage your time and prioritise tasks to meet the deadline successfully?

Employers seek individuals who can demonstrate time management and task prioritisation skills under pressure, as your answer would demonstrates your ability to thrive in fast-paced environments.

Sample answer

“I began by breaking the project into smaller, manageable tasks. I prioritised these tasks based on their impact on the overall goal and created a timeline.

“To stay focused, I minimised distractions and allocated specific time slots for each task. Regular progress checks ensured I remained on track.

“I also communicated with team members, delegating tasks when possible and aligning our efforts. Through effective time management, prioritisation, and collaboration, I met tight deadlines and delivered quality results.

“These experiences underscored the importance of adaptability and resourcefulness when facing challenging timelines.”

# Extra Question

How would you positively impact the team you’re going to be working with?

What is your view of team building exercises? Do you think they’re worth the effort and time? What are some things out of the ordinary that you’d like to see being included in a team-building exercise?

Have you worked with a particularly uncooperative colleague in the past? How important was this worker? Did the project suffer? How did you go about working with him/her?

How do you go about building relationships at your workplace? Are you an approachable person in general?

While in a leadership/managerial position, how did you go about resolving a tiff between two members in your team? -

Has your team fallen short while delivering an important project? If yes, how did you deal with it?

Have you been in a situation where a team member was lax and shoddy? Did it impact project deliverables? How did you approach the situation?

What according to you is the ideal way to maintain a good work-life balance?

Have you been stressed over a certain project delivery in the past? Did it affect your work-life balance? How did you deal with it?

What is your view of vacations and their impact in helping build a good work-life balance?

Do you indulge in any sport or fitness activity? Have you in the past? What is your view of their impact in ensuring a good work-life balance?

How do you go about managing boredom and monotony at work?

What are your thoughts about mental health? How important do you think it is in influencing work productivity and balance in life?

Have you worked with a difficult client in the past? How did you navigate challenges and go about delivering?

Tell us about a time when you convinced a client to chart a different course for a project.

Have you been in a situation where you were unsure about how to proceed with a client project? How did you go about planning the next steps?

Have you had to convince a reporting manager to make significant changes in a project because things weren't quite on track? How did that work out?

Tell us about a time when you couldn't meet the expectations of a project and how it impacted your relationship with your manager?

Have you had a difficult manager in the past? How did you go about building a relationship with him/her?

Tell us about a time your manager/superior was unreasonable and how you managed it?

What is the best way to maintain a great relationship with your superiors/managers at work?

Has there been a time when your contribution was overlooked and somebody else from your team took credit for it? How did you deal with it?

Tell us about a time when your team underwent a significant structural change. How did it impact you and your coworkers?

Have you had to work on a completely new project that required you to learn and acquire new skills? How did you go about it?

Tell us about how you prioritize specific tasks in a project?

What have you learnt from difficult projects in the past? Has it changed anything in you?

Have you taken the lead in a project in the past? Tell us about your learnings and how you passed them on to your team?

Why do you want to work at (the company)?

What about (the company’s) culture do you admire the most?

What challenges do you foresee for (the company) in the future?

What is your view of diversity and inclusion in a workplace?

Describe your most challenging project and the learnings you derived from it?

Tell us about a time when a particularly tough project that went south. What did you learn from it?

Have you had to complete a project amid strict deadlines? Were you successful?

Why do you want to work for X company?

Why do you want to leave your current/last company?

What are you looking for in your next role?

Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a co-worker.

Tell me about a time in which you had a conflict and needed to influence somebody else.

What project are you currently working on?

What is the most challenging aspect of your current project?

What was the most difficult bug that you fixed in the past 6 months?

How do you tackle challenges? Name a difficult challenge you faced while working on a project, how you overcame it, and what you learned.

What are you excited about?

What frustrates you?

Imagine it is your first day here at the company. What do you want to work on? What features would you improve on?

What are the most interesting projects you have worked on and how might they be relevant to this company's environment?

Tell me about a time you had a disagreement with your manager.

Talk about a project you are most passionate about, or one where you did your best work.

What does your best day of work look like?

What is something that you had to push for in your previous projects?

What is the most constructive feedback you have received in your career?

What is something you had to persevere at for multiple months?

Tell me about a time you met a tight deadline.

If this were your first annual review with our company, what would I be telling you right now?

Time management has become a necessary factor in productivity. Give an example of a time-management skill you've learned and applied at work.

Tell me about a problem you've had getting along with a work associate.

What aspects of your work are most often criticized?

How have you handled criticism of your work?

What strengths do you think are most important for your job position?

What words would your colleagues use to describe you?

What would you hope to achieve in the first six months after being hired?

Tell me why you will be a good fit for the position.

Tell me about yourself.

What is your biggest strength and area of growth?

Why are you interested in this opportunity?

What are your salary expectations?

Why are you looking to leave your current company?

Tell me about a time your work responsibilities got a little overwhelming. What did you do?

Give me an example of a time when you had a difference of opinion with a team member. How did you handle that?

Tell me about a challenge you faced recently in your role. How did you tackle it? What was the outcome?

Where do you want to be in five years?

Tell me about a time you needed information from someone who wasn't responsive. What did you do?

Have you handled a difficult situation? How?

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Describe a time when you had to analyze data and make a recommendation. What kind of thought process did you engage in? Was the suggestion accepted? If not, why not?

Describe a time when you had to solve a difficult problem. What exactly did you do? What was the end result? What would you have done differently?

How do you research a problem before making a decision? Why?

When was the last time you had to deal with an angry customer? What exactly did you do? How did things turn out?

If you have inherited a customer, tell me about that experience. What steps did you take to establish rapport with them? What did you do to gain their trust?

How have you managed a previous situation in which your client changed the brief or “moved the goalposts”?

Describe a time when you went above and beyond to ensure a customer received the best possible service from you and the organization. What was their response?

When was the last time you went out on a limb to defend a customer? What occurred?

Tell me about a recent successful speech or presentation you gave.

When was the last time you had to give a presentation to a group of people with little or no preparation? What challenges did you face? How did you deal with them?

Have you ever had to “sell” a concept to colleagues? How did you manage it?

Tell me about a time when you were able to effectively communicate with another person, even if that person did not like you (or vice versa).

Have you ever encountered any hurdles or difficulties in communicating your ideas to a manager?

Tell me about a time when you had to use your written communication skills to convey an important message.