Sample Interview Questions

**Senior Management/Strategic - Sample Interview Questions**

These sample questions should provide you with some ideas as to questions that might be asked to draw out a candidates’s capabilities against a range of common competences associated with any relatively senior management position.

| **Competence Area** | **Requirements** | **Sample Questions** |
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| **1. Writing Skills** | *Writing reports, business plans, business*  *emails/letters, promotional literature, etc.* |  *What type of writing have you done in your previous positions? What makes you believe that you are good at it?*   *In your opinion, what are the main challenges when preparing written communications of all types?*   *What positive and negative feedback have you received about your writing skills? Give an example where one of your reports was criticised.*   *How do you plan the writing of a report?* |
| **2. Presentation Skills** | *Delivering talks and using PowerPoint and*  *other Visual Aids effectively when*  *presenting to groups* |  *What experience have you had in delivering presentations? What feedback have you received on your performance?*   *What do you think is your greatest strength as a presenter? Weakness?*   *How do you prepare for an important presentation?*  You may also be asked to prepare and give a short presentation on a related topic, ie ‘What do you believe will be your first 3 priorities to tackle in this new role and how would you go about tackling them?’ ‘What do you believe are the major challenges for … being more commercial… developing a new culture/way of working….. being a market leader in the area of specialism…. etc and what would be your long term/short term plans for overcoming these?’ |
| **3. Project Management Skills** | *Taking ownership for, and effectively*  *managing projects* |  *Tell me about your experience of project management to date– give me a specific example of a time when you have managed a project.*  o If you were to plan that project again, is there anything that you would do differently?   *Describe a situation where one of your projects suffered a setback due to an unexpected change in circumstances. How did you keep things on track?*   *What tools and resources do you use to help you manage projects?*   *How do you prepare and monitor an appropriate budget for any given project?* |
| **4. Problem Solving and Decision**  **Making Skills** | *Analysing problems, using structured*  *problem solving techniques and making*  *effective decisions* |  *Tell me a little about the most challenging problem that you have had to solve in a work situation? How did you devise and implement a solution?*   *Tell me about a decision that you made, which you knew would be unpopular with a group of people. How did you handle the decision-making process and how did you manage expectations?*   *How do you enlist support of your staff to establish a common approach to solving a problem?*   *What was one of the most difficult decisions that you ever had to make?* |
| **5. Management Skills** | *Managing large multi-level teams with*  *respect to setting goals and priorities and*  *achieving results* |  *What strengths do you think you have that makes others look up to you?*   *How do you think your employees would describe working for you?*   *What do you think employees are looking for from work-life today? How do you get the best out of your employees?*   *Give us an example of where you had to deal with conflict within your team. How did you manage the situation? What would you do differently next time?*   *What type of responsibilities do you delegate? Give examples of projects where you made best use of delegation.* |
| **6. Managing Innovation** | *Defining and managing processes for*  *managing innovation* |  *Tell us a little about a project or situation where you felt that the conventional approach would not be suitable. What challenges did you face and how did you address them? How did you define a new or better way of doing things?*   *What do you believe are the important elements of an effective process for managing innovation within a business?*   *How in the past have you involved your employees in coming up with new ideas and approaches?* |
| **7. Communication** | *Ability to communicate effectively with*  *multiple stakeholders* |  *What experience have you had communicating with diverse stakeholder groups?*   *Describe a situation where you were able to influence others on an important issue.*   *How do you prepare for an important meeting?*   *What do you feel are the most important steps to take to get the best from your meetings?*   *What do you think your past colleagues would say about you as regards your ability to communicate?* |
| **8. Information Management and**  **ICT Skills** | *Capability to analyse and assimilate*  *information and the effective use of ICT*  *resources* |  *What IT Software are you competent in using?*   *Given me an example of where you think IT could be more effectively applied in your current role than it is at present?* |
| **9. Managing Change** | *Championing and managing change*  *throughout the business* |  *Tell me about the biggest change in a work situation that you have had to manage. How did you cope with it?*   *What do you believe are the most critical steps to take when managing any change?*   *What are some of the pitfalls to avoid?* |
| **10. Relationship Management** | *Developing and maintaining partnerships*  *with internal and external stakeholders* |  *Who do you see as the main stakeholders for our business and what do you believe are their priorities needs and expectations?*   *How would you set about establishing/improving communication with these stakeholders? How would you measure the effectiveness of those efforts?*   *Describe a project where you needed to involve input from key stakeholders. How did you manage those relationships?*   *How would you establish rapport with others who do not report to you but from whom you must obtain input/support to help you achieve your goals?* |
| **11. Business Awareness** | *Understanding the internal and external*  *business environments* |  *How do you keep up-to-date with local, national, and international trends in our industry?*   *What do you think will be some of the critical trends that you would need to be aware of in relation to your new role?*   *What partnerships/alliances do you think will be vital in achieving your goals in the new role?* |
| **12. Leadership** | *Developing and sharing a vision for the*  *business and capability to lead others in the*  *desired direction* |  *What do you think are the fundamentals to successfully leading any business?*   *How would you describe your leadership style? Give specific examples of how you apply this style?*   *Describe a project or situation where you had to use different leadership styles to reach your goal.*   *Have there ever been situations where you were less successful as a leader than you would have wanted to be? What did you learn from those events?*   *What, in your opinion, are the critical factors that can help build effective organisations?*   *How would you best motivate a team to deliver the desired results?* |
| **13. Achievement Orientation** | *Striving to meet goals and objectives within*  *agreed deadlines, facilitates and seeks to*  *implement agreed decisions* |  *Tell us about a recent accomplishment that demonstrates a success in your present position*   *Give an example of a time you worked under heavy stress and the sacrifices you made to achieve a certain goal?*   *What would you intend to accomplish in the first year of your position?*   *What criteria do you use to determine your own personal effectiveness?*   *How do you handle a heavy workload?* |
| **14. Strategic Planning** | *Expertise in devising and implementing*  *business strategy* |  *What experience have you had to date in developing and implementing strategy? Tell us a little bit about how that worked in practice?*   *What do you think are the key strategic goals associated with this role?*   *How would you intend to measure strategic effectiveness if you were successful in attaining this post?* |
| **15. Negotiation Skills** | *Negotiating effectively with a range of*  *internal and external stakeholders* |  *Give an example where you used your negotiating skills to achieve an outcome that was in everyone’s best interest?*   *How do you deal with situations where you disagree with proposals by your superiors?*   *What traits/qualities do you possess that you feel make you a good negotiator?* |
| **16. Time Management** | *Managing time effectively to ensure*  *delivery on personal and business*  *targets and objectives* |  *What are the key goals and targets that you have in your current position? How do you ensure their achievement?*   *Tell me how you plan your week?*   *With reference to a day’s work, what steps do you take to organize and prioritize your tasks?* |
| **17. Human Resource**  **Management** | *Managing all legal and operational aspects*  *of human resources relevant to the role* |  *What experience have you had in the recruitment and selection of senior employees/managers?*   *Tell us a little bit about what you currently do to develop your key employees?*   *What steps do you take to understand your employees or colleagues' personalities?*  *Give an example where you found it hard to adjust to one particular employee/colleague?*   *How do you provide feedback to your employees and how do you currently recognise their achievements?* |
| **18. Financial Management** | *Directing or supporting budget*  *preparation, implementation, and*  *evaluation* |  *Describe what role you have had to date in budget preparation, implementation, and administration?*   *Give us a brief overview of how you would prepare a budget for any project?*   *How do you ensure costs are controlled in your current role?* |
| **19. Monitoring and Evaluation** | *Capacity in monitoring and benchmarking*  *of performance* |  *How do you ensure that the direction that you give to your employees is actually followed through upon?*   *What key performance measures do you use to monitor performance in your current role? How do you currently compare them internally and externally to determine their*  *effectiveness?* |

**Front line managers & non-strategic posts – Sample questions**

You may or may not get these specific questions, but they will help you practice.

* Tell me what you know about the job?
* What do you understand about the direction of travel for the Service/Organisation?
* What do you think the biggest problem will be for you, moving into this role? What will you do to help?
* What is the most challenging thing about your current role and why?
* What skills do you have that will help you in the new role? Give examples
* What experience do you have that will help you in the new role?
* Explain how you manage your work when it gets really busy or you have competing demands placed on you?
* Give me an example of how you help improve team work.
* Give me an example of where you have had to challenge someone.
* Give me an example of where you have responded positively to change.
* Why are you the right person for this job?
* Tell me about a problem you have resolved and what the outcome was?
* Tell me what you understand about ‘being commercial’ and how you would apply it in this role.
* Tell me about an idea for improvement you have had. What did you do about it?
* Give me an example of where you have used your own initiative
* Give me an example of a time you have had to influence someone.
* Give me an example of where you have communicated something difficult or technical to someone.
* How do you keep up to date with the latest best practice in …xxx… field?
* Describe a model/tool you have used to….. specialist to role

In addition, if it’s a supervisory/management job think about:

* Difficult situations you have had to deal with
* How you get your team to perform/meet targets
* How you deal with under performance or behavioural issues in the team
* How you motivate someone to behave differently
* How you have influenced your team in a positive way.
* How you have effectively managed or supported staff through change.
* How you respond to change, pressure etc
* How you deal with complaints/concerns.
* Who outside your team have influenced/worked with.
* What strategic/business focus do you have and how have you applied it
* What financial/budget management experience do you have
* What experience do you have of influencing in a political environment?
* What experience do you have of influencing in a strategic leadership environment?
* What experience do you have of shaping/leading strategic business change?
* What do you see as the biggest challenge for making change happen and what have you done to overcome this?

**You can never predict the questions so don’t try!**

You must look at the job description and think about where you can evidence against the requirements for the post and the person specification.

If you have experiences in mind, you will be able to find an answer to relevant questions.