



Leadership Skills for Success Interview Questions

Competency	As a leader I... Interact with integrity . . . so people feel respected and engaged	
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey respect and professionalism in interactions. • Seek to understand and then to be understood. • Put others at ease, and respond calmly even in difficult situations. • Be honest and trustworthy; have a high standard of personal conduct. • Acknowledge your mistakes and errors, take timely corrective action and including an apology if appropriate. • Demonstrate empathy and compassion for others. • Give, ask for and act on feedback. • Manage conflict, taking uncomfortable or unpopular action when necessary. 	
Behavioral indicators: What would you expect to see in someone demonstrating this?		
<p><i>Positive Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opens discussions effectively— Describes expectations, goals, requests, or future states in a way that provides clarity and excites interest. • Clarifies the current situation— Seeks, gives, and summarizes information; ensures that the situation/issue at hand is understood. • Develops others’ and own ideas— Presents own ideas; seeks and develops suggestions of others; makes procedural suggestions. • Facilitates agreement—Uses appropriate influence strategies (such as demonstrating benefits or giving rewards) to gain genuine agreement; persists by using different approaches as needed to gain commitment. • Closes discussions with clear summaries—Summarizes outcomes of discussions and establishes next steps if needed. • Uses Key Principles—Establishes good interpersonal relationships by helping people feel valued, appreciated, and included in discussions (enhances 	<p><i>Negative Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrational and defensive. • Does not openly participate or share opinions. • Defers responsibility to others. • Jumps to conclusions. • Seeks to blame others and find fault in people, programs, departments, etc. without offering a solution. 	

<p>self-esteem, empathizes, involves, discloses, supports).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains focus—Stays focused on work tasks and productively uses time and energy when under stress. • Maintains relationships—Presents a positive disposition and maintains constructive interpersonal relationships when under stress. • Copes effectively—Develops appropriate strategies as needed to alter conditions that create stress and to sustain physical and mental health. 	
Questions	There are many ways to show respect to others. What ways work best for you? Give me a specific example.
	Give me an example of what you have done to earn others' trust.
	Would someone on your staff feel comfortable "blowing the whistle" on behavior that appeared unethical?"
	Have you ever been faced with an ethical or value conflict in your job? Give me an example of when this happened to you. What did you do?
	Have you ever delivered bad news or an unfavorable opinion to someone in a position of power? How did it go, and what were the consequences?
	What techniques have you used to gain acceptance of ideas or plans? Give me an example of a time when you used one of these techniques.
	Not everyone agrees with our decisions. Tell me about an unpopular decision you made and how you gained acceptance from others.
	Describe a face-to-face meeting in which you had to influence a very sensitive person. What techniques did you use? What happened?
	Tell me about one of the most difficult one-on-one meetings in which you had to gain someone's agreement with or commitment to an idea or plan. What did you do?
	When evaluating the work standards of your direct reports, what factors do you weigh the most? Describe how you have used those factors to evaluate a specific employee.
	How did your organization establish a "zero tolerance" policy with regard to fraudulent activities and how did your organization reward employees for reporting fraudulent activities?

	What personal principles, practices and behaviors have resulted in your clients viewing you as a source of valued advice?
	Describe the very best business consulting or advising relationship you have experienced, and what made it so successful?
	Discuss from your experience the benefits and costs of pursuing/achieving a 'trusted advisor' status with customers.
Probing questions to elicit further evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was it important to address this situation? • What was the outcome? • How did you feel about addressing the situation and the outcome? • How did you perceive your colleague's reaction? 	

Competency	Contribute positively to an inclusive environment ... so people feel like they belong	
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate across difference to create a collaborative, collegial, and caring community. ▪ Be cooperative, open and welcoming to all. ▪ Show respect, compassion and empathy for others, even in difficult situations. ▪ Engage and support others regardless of background or perspective. ▪ Speak up when others are being excluded or treated inappropriately. ▪ Actively support work-life integration. 	
Behavioral indicators:		
What would you expect to see in someone demonstrating this?		
	<i>Positive Indicators:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently seeks opportunities to put people at ease and feel accepted. • Takes initiative to create a welcoming environment. • Actively seeks and considers different perspectives. • Quick to build trust, relationships and collaborations. 	<i>Negative Indicators:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May demonstrate a lack of respect for others. • May experience difficulty in establishing effective working relationship with certain members of the community. • Is dismissive of others' input and views. • Seeks to make independent decisions.
Questions	Describe a time when you had to treat individuals in your work group differently.	
	What have you done to make diversity accepted in your workplace? Give some examples.	

	What are some of your best practices for creating and managing a diverse work group? When have you applied them?
	Tell me about a time that you had to deal with cultural differences. What did you do? Should you have done something differently and why?
	What have you done to foster an inclusive work environment? What were the benefits for the work environment? Give an example.
	Describe a discussion you initiated with an individual to learn about any diversity barriers they perceived in your organization. What was the result?
	Getting people from outside your work area to cooperate often requires them to commit time for your benefit. Tell me about a time when you asked someone outside of your work area to commit time for your benefit. What did you say to gain their cooperation?
	Working with people from diverse backgrounds can be challenging. Tell me about a time when you faced a significant challenge working with people from different backgrounds. What did you do? What was the result?
	Tell me about the most diverse group/team that you have been a part of. What problems did you encounter? What did you do? What happened?
	What have you done to make diversity accepted in your workplace? Give some examples.
	How would you explain your organization's culture in terms of collaboration?
	What trends in relation to collaboration have you noticed within this industry? What are the implications of these trends?
	What are some requirements for a successful collaboration to solve problems or meet goals?
Probing questions to elicit further evidence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the situation e.g. why did you have to treat them differently? • What was the outcome? • What did you learn as a result of the experience? • What would you have done differently and why?

Competency	Inspire and articulate a shared vision and mission ...so that people know how their work aligns with university and team goals
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Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand the University’s strategic goals and deliver aligned outcomes. ▪ Embrace, promote and implement change. ▪ Deliver results today with a sustainable future in mind. ▪ Demonstrate foresight and imagination to see possibilities, opportunities and trends. ▪ Model stewardship within the organization and University. ▪ Monitor and re-evaluate decisions, priorities, and plans in order to achieve a vision.
Behavioral indicators: What would you expect to see in someone demonstrating this?	
<p><i>Positive Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates the importance of the mission, vision and values—Helps others to understand the organization’s mission, vision and values and their importance. • Moves others to action—translates the mission, vision and values into day-to-day activities and behaviors; guides and motivates others to take actions that support the mission, vision and values. • Models the vision and values—Takes actions, makes decisions, and shapes the team or group priorities to reflect the organizations vision and values. • Rewards living the vision and values— Recognizes and rewards those who support the organization’s vision and values. 	<p><i>Negative Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to articulate the mission, vision and values so that staff see the line of sight to their role. • Does not model behavior that aligns with the vision and values of the organization.
Questions	Have you ever been in a situation in which you had to motivate others to take actions to support a major reorganization? How did you do that?
	What strategies have you used to communicate a major new directive from senior management to employees? Which strategies have worked, and which have not?
	What have you done to make your organization’s vision and values meaningful to others? Which strategies have worked and which have not?
	Tell me about a time when you helped others shape priorities to reflect the organization’s mission, vision and values.
	Tell me about a time when your actions or words played a critical role in realizing senior management’s vision for the organization? What actions did you take to support the vision?

	Describe a vision you have found compelling and why.
	Describe an occasion in which you changed a target, due date, or other element of a goal, and the impact of that change.
	How have you advocated the mission and vision of a department throughout the organization/system?
	Every manager has problems (turnover, low morale, low productivity) when his or her work unit is not committed to the organization's vision. Give me an example of a time when your work group experienced these problems. What did you do?
	Gaining commitment to a new vision can be very challenging. Tell me about a time when you could not motivate others to actively support a new vision. Why were your efforts unsuccessful?
Probing questions to elicit further evidence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was your role? • What was the outcome? • How did you feel about the outcome? • How was the communication received?

Competency	Communicate clearly and consistently ... people feel informed and heard	
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek to understand and then to be understood. ▪ Demonstrate active listening skills. ▪ Express thoughts clearly, both verbally and in writing. ▪ Share knowledge and information. ▪ Give, receive and act upon helpful and timely feedback. 	
Behavioral indicators:		
What would you expect to see in someone demonstrating this?		
	<p><i>Positive Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes and speaks frequently in varied settings and styles to convey messages in a persuasive, efficient and inspiring manner. • Exhibits talented balance in listening to, seeking and drawing out information in others' views; accurately synthesizes individual and group conclusions. • Builds trust and confidence through active listening and communicating effectively with others. 	<p><i>Negative Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes and speaks in ways that hamper effectively conveying messages and ideas. • Challenged with hearing other views and effective listening. • Distracted, exhibits disinterest, over reactive response, interrupts conversation, inability to restate others' views. • Inability to share information that could assist others.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares information freely. • Organizes the communication— Clarifies purpose and importance; stresses major points; follows a logical sequence. • Maintains audience attention—Keeps the audience engaged through use of techniques such as analogies, illustrations, an appealing style, body language, and voice inflection. • Adjusts to the audience—Frames message in line with audience experience, background, and expectations; uses terms, examples, and analogies that are meaningful to the audience. • Ensures understanding—Seeks input from audience; checks understanding; presents message in different ways to enhance understanding. • Adheres to accepted conventions— Uses syntax, pace, volume, diction, and mechanics appropriate to the media being used. • Comprehends communication from others—Attends to messages from others; correctly interprets messages and responds appropriately. 	
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Questions	Tell me about organizational communication projects you were involved in.
	What communication strategies did you develop in your previous position and how were they tailored to your particular organization?
	How did you ensure proper dissemination of information to the public and to shareholders?
	How would you go about choosing the appropriate communication tools for different types of media?
	Tell me about a time that you had to communicate a message to a large, diverse group of employees. How did you tailor the communication media to the target audience?"
	How did you decide what information could be freely shared throughout the organization vs what was confidential to specific functions or departments?

	What kinds of internal communication problems have you encountered in your previous job(s)?
	How would you describe a good listener vs. a bad listener?
	How would you react to a speaker you were in disagreement with on a specific subject.
	Communications and leadership go hand in hand. Give me an example of a time when your communication skills were powerful enough to enable you to influence the way others thought or acted, even in a very difficult situation?

Probing questions to elicit further evidence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me more about that. • What led you to . . . • What eventually happened? • How did others see it? • What did you learn? • Looking back, what would you do differently now, if anything?

Competency	Empower staff to act and take initiative . . . people feel supported and confident in taking ownership of their work and results
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage anticipatory thinking to identify challenges and opportunities early. ▪ Actively support others in taking initiative and responsible risks to innovate. ▪ Use mistakes as opportunities for learning. ▪ Balance the need to seek input and the need to take action. ▪ Provide clear directions and expectations that will enable others to make sound decisions. ▪ Deliver results on time and within budget.

Behavioral indicators:	
What would you expect to see in someone demonstrating this?	
<i>Positive Indicators:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes good interpersonal relationships—Helps others to feel valued, appreciated, and included in discussions (enhances, self-esteem, empathizes, involves, discloses and supports). • Encourages others to take risks — Serves as a coach to teach when to seek input and when to take action and uses mistakes as opportunities for learning. 	<i>Negative Indicators:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes credit for other peoples work/ideas. • Fear based leadership approach. • Does not share information openly with team to allow them to be proactive.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives and receives feedback —as a means for continuous improvement and alternative ways to view or define problems. • Rewards individuals who go beyond— to take action that goes beyond job requirements in order to achieve objectives. 	
Questions	Describe a recent coaching discussion that you conducted. What was the task? How, if at all, did you involve the other person in the discussion? (i.e. offer suggestions, listen to concerns, etc.)?
	Share with me a time when a subordinate had an idea for a creative solution to a business problem? What you did you do with the information?
	How have you rewarded or recognized innovation and risk taking of subordinates or peers?
	Share with me a time when you encouraged anticipatory thinking to identify challenges and opportunities from your team. What was your approach? What was the outcome? Share a time when you received feedback from a subordinate or peer. What did you do with it?
	Describe the biggest professional risk that you have taken. What information did you consider before taking action? What happened?
	How would you implement risk management within your business unit?
Probing questions to elicit further evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was your role? • What else was involved? • What was the outcome? • How did you feel about the outcome? • How was the feedback received? • What would you have done differently? 	

Competency	Display sound judgment in problem solving . . . people proactively seek solutions to deliver results
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bring stakeholders together to create alignment, shared understanding and action. ▪ Ask insightful and probing questions. ▪ Use data and metrics to provide informed and thoughtful analyses. ▪ Consider impact on others outside your immediate area. ▪ Synthesize complex information.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipate obstacles and generate alternatives.
Behavioral indicators: What would you expect to see in someone demonstrating this?	
<p><i>Positive Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathers information—Identifies and fills gaps in information required to understand strategic issues. Organizes information—Organizes information and data to identify/explain major trends, problems, and causes; compares and combines information to identify underlying issues. Evaluates/Selects strategies—Generates and considers options for actions to achieve a long-range goal or vision; develops decision criteria considering factors such as cost, benefits, risks, timing, and buy-in; selects the strategy most likely to succeed. Establishes implementation plan—Identifies the key tasks and resources needed to achieve objectives. Executes plan—Makes sure strategies are carried out; monitors results and makes adjustments as needed. 	<p><i>Negative Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to recognize root causes or that an issue even exists. Challenged with analyzing and pulling together data. Challenged with seeing other points of view or opinions Inability to be flexible and adaptable. Difficulty in evaluating implications and consequences of multiple approaches. Difficulty in committing to a decision and following through. Is not able to gain commitment of others or is unwilling to share in the work or project.
Questions	Tell me about a time when you had to implement a complex company directive. Explain how you approached the task. What happened?
	Tell me about a time when you had to weigh different options for implementing a general directive from senior management. What factors did you consider? How did you make your decisions?
	What strategies have you employed to make sure a major new directive from senior management was carried out? Which strategies worked, and which did not? Give me a specific example.
	Describe a time when you recommended a plan of action in response to business/market trends. What information did you use to make your recommendation? Was the plan executed? What was your role?
	Describe a time when you had to significantly modify work procedures so they aligned with new strategic directives. How did you accomplish this?

	Tell me about a time when you had to link a general directive from senior management to individual performance expectations. How did you do this, and what were the results?
	What types of organizational systems (controls, compensation, communication, accounting, etc.) have you put in place to support a specific organizational strategy? Explain the process. What were the results?
	Describe how you have planned tasks and acquired resources in order to implement a long-range corporate vision. What information did you consider? What steps did you take?
	Tell me about a time when you had to implement a complex company directive. Explain how you approached the task. What happened?
	Tell me about a time when you had to weigh different options for implementing a general directive from senior management. What factors did you consider? How did you make your decisions?
	Sometimes it's not easy to identify opportunities that benefit your and another department. What have you done to find new opportunities to cooperate with other departments? Give me a recent example.
	Interdepartmental cooperation involves giving and receiving. Tell me about a time you collaborated with others to determine courses of action to achieve mutual goals.

Probing questions to elicit further evidence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me more about that. • What led you to . . . • What eventually happened? • How did others see it? • What did you learn? • Looking back, what would you do differently now, if anything?

Competency	Am a great coach ... people understand their current role and career options
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make work challenging, meaningful and engaging for others. • Identify and focus on the most significant priorities, setting achievable goals, milestones and deadlines. • Provides others with productive and timely feedback. • Delegate and provide good exposure for team members. • Develop people and support their growth and mobility.
Behavioral indicators: What would you expect to see in someone demonstrating this?	

<p><i>Positive Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifies the current situation— Clarifies expected behaviors, knowledge, and level of proficiency by seeking and giving information and checking for understanding. • Explains and demonstrates— Provides instruction, positive models and opportunities for observation in order to help others develop skills; encourages questions to ensure understanding. • Provides feedback and reinforcement— Gives timely, appropriate feedback on performance; reinforces efforts and progress. • Uses key principles— Establishes good interpersonal relationships by helping people feel valued, appreciated, and included in discussions (enhances self-esteem, empathizes, involves, discloses, supports). 	<p><i>Negative Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a closed door policy and avoids responsibility and decisions. • Fails to motivate and provide support or direction to the team. • Applies inappropriate pressure on the team or individuals. • Unwilling to confront performance issues. • Fails to clarify performance expectations. • Leaves team in the dark by failing to communicate or share information. • Does not provide feedback or only focuses on the negative. • Sees development as a cost rather than an investment. • Is unwilling to delegate. • Does not create the space for others to learn - Not providing opportunities to enhance or broaden the job. • Not allowing employees to use their new training.
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Questions	Tell me what you have done to help a peer/team member understand what what knowledge/skill areas to strengthen.
	Tell me about a time when you coached a team member to be more successful. What were the circumstances and outcome?
	Tell me about a time you gave feedback to reinforce someone's effective performance.
	Have you ever been faced with an ethical or value conflict in your job? Give me an example of when this happened to you. What did you do?
	Describe how you coached two different people to accomplish a similar task. What similarities and differences were there in your approach?
	What are the most effective techniques you use to help another person develop his or her skills and abilities? Give me an example of a time when you used one of these techniques.
	What steps have you taken to make sure that resources are available for a person to develop his or her skills and abilities?
	Give me an example of a project/task/assignment you delegated to a peer to help the person develop a specific skill.

	Are there any techniques that are particularly helpful in identifying people's needs and capabilities? Tell me how you have used those techniques with someone.
	Tell me how you created an on-the-job opportunity for a person to develop a particular skill.
Probing questions to elicit further evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the situation e.g. why did you have to treat them differently? • What was the outcome? • What did you learn as a result of the experience? • What would you have done differently and why? 	