
Category Manager interview questions and answers

These **Category Manager** interview questions will help you identify important skills and qualifications in your candidates.

Category Manager Interview Questions

Category managers are commonly found in product-driven industries, usually related to retail. They may be responsible for pricing, promotion, assortment and vendor management for product categories. This diversity of duties requires knowledge of the market and industry as well as sales, procurement or marketing techniques.

Many candidates will have started from a sales or marketing role. Purchasing professionals may also be very qualified to do category management, especially with an industry-specific background. You can also look for bright recent graduates if you aren't hiring for a senior position.

During the interview, try to focus on how they follow current market conditions and their ability to "read" consumer trends. Tailor your questions depending on whether you operate through physical or online stores. The best candidates will demonstrate some knowledge of your product categories and how they compare to your competitors'. Look for excellent communications and negotiation skills. A great addition would be a case study or a presentation about the category they've applied for.

Operational and Situational questions

- Here's a spreadsheet with data. Can you spot trends?
- Explain how you would create a category development strategy
- What sources would you look at to discover consumer trends?
- What's different between in-store shopping and online shopping regarding your category planning?
- Imagine you have a high sales target for next week. How would you determine product assortment and pricing to maximize sales?
- Envisage that you've just launched a new category on the site but you spot a low conversion rate. What do you do?
- If you had to plan an exit strategy for an unpopular product, how would you do it?

Role-specific questions

- What's your experience in marketing/supply chain/merchandising?
- What do you know of PnL? How do you use it as category manager?

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- What internal teams should a category manager collaborate with and why?
 - What is the meaning of category ranging? How do you determine it?
 - What's different between us and our competitors?

Behavioral questions

- Tell me about a time you helped boost sales for a product category
- Recall a time you had to negotiate with a retailer. What was the result?
- Have you ever had to sacrifice customer needs to achieve a business objective?