
CEO interview questions and answers

These CEO interview questions will help you identify candidates with top executive skills and find the best leader for your company.

How to prepare for a CEO interview

A CEO is the highest-ranking executive in an organization. Recruiting CEOs can be challenging as they play a huge role in the company's success. They make important company decisions, build business strategies, and shape the organizational culture. The ideal candidate for this position usually has many years of experience as a CEO or in another C-suite level role. It's best to look for candidates who are familiar with your industry, as they'll better understand your company's challenges and objectives.

When you identify your top candidates for the CEO position, schedule an onsite introductory interview to talk about their skills and your business needs. Prepare CEO interview questions that assess candidates' [management](#) and [problem-solving](#) skills. Use tangible criteria to understand if they're a good fit for your company, for example, find out how well they know your company and your competitors and ask what changes they plan to implement if hired. Consider including board members and other executives in the hiring process to select candidates who are a good fit for your executive team.

Interview questions for CEOs can also reveal which candidates have the characteristics that make a good leader, such as resilience, patience, and an influential flair. A CEO makes important financial decisions and regularly communicates with shareholders and potential investors. So, look for candidates with a data-driven approach, [attention to detail](#), and sharp negotiation skills.

Below, you'll find the best questions to ask a CEO in a job interview.

Operational and Situational questions

- What do you think our company's mission and vision are?
- What changes would you implement during your first year in the company? How would you build a 5-year plan?
- What would you do in your first 30 days as CEO of our organization?
- Who do you believe are our biggest competitors? How do we differ from them?
- What do you think are the biggest challenges our industry will face in the next 5 years?
- What are the most helpful technological platforms and tools you have used? Would you implement them in our organization?
- What is the most innovative product or service you've worked on at a previous company?
- Describe your rationale before you make a big financial decision. What criteria do you use

to decide which products or services to invest in?

- In 5 minutes, prepare a small pitch to present our company to a potential investor.
- Imagine that a product or service we launched recently failed our expectations. What are your next steps?

Behavioral questions

- What personality traits make a good leader?
- What is the best and the worst part of being a CEO?
- Name two strengths and two weaknesses you have and how they can impact your responsibilities as a CEO.
- What is the biggest challenge you have faced in your career? How did you overcome it and what did you learn from it?
- How do you prefer to communicate with your team to assign responsibilities to them?
- What's your biggest challenge when it comes to people management?
- How would others define your communication style? Do you prefer to be close to your employees or maintain a healthy distance, and why?
- Describe a time when two team leaders or executives had a conflict. How did you handle the situation?
- Describe a time you had to make a tough decision (e.g. budget cuts, organizational restructuring, market withdrawal, etc.). What did you do and what was the result?

Did you find this CEO interview questions template useful? Feel free to download the PDF for future use.