
Communication interview questions

Use these sample communication skills interview questions to evaluate how candidates present their ideas, interact with clients and collaborate with a team.

Why test candidates' communication skills in interviews

Clear communication is key to a healthy and productive workplace. Its benefits are manifold. Consider how:

- One concise email helps avoid back-and-forth messages
- A [well-written policy](#) ensures all employees understand company values and procedures
- Informative and engaging [presentations](#) help team members understand problems and solutions

Employees, regardless their position or seniority level, interact with their coworkers, managers, clients or external partners on a daily basis. This is why “good communication skills” is a common requirement within job ads.

With good communication skills:

- [Senior-level employees](#) make tough decisions, handling difficult discussions with grace
- [Salespeople](#) strike a friendly and empathetic tone when contacting unhappy clients (via phone or in-person)
- [Social Media Managers](#) exude their company brand when writing for their followers online

Interviews allow you to evaluate how candidates communicate. You can also use interviews to get an idea of how candidates collaborate on teams and whether they clearly convey and listen to messages.

Here are some sample interview questions to help you identify good communicators:

Examples of communication interview questions

- Do you prefer to communicate via email, phone or in-person? Why?
- What team communication tools have you used? What was your experience with them?
- How would you overcome communication challenges on a remote team?
- If you're presenting your ideas during a meeting and your audience seems disengaged, what would you do to get their attention?
- How would you reply to a negative online review about our company?

- Have you ever worked with someone you struggled to communicate with? If so, what was the obstacle and how did you handle it?
- What would you do if your manager gave you unclear instructions for a new project?
- If you wanted to inform your team or stakeholders about quarterly results, would you email them a detailed report or present the data live? Why? Regardless of the method you choose, how would you ensure your message is clear?
- How would you reply to a potential customer who claims that our competitors offer better prices?
- Have you ever talked to an angry customer? If so, how did you manage the situation?
- Describe a time you had to share bad news with your team or have a difficult conversation with a coworker.
- If hired, how would you introduce yourself to your new colleagues? How would you get to know your team members?

Tips to assess candidates' communication skills

- A [candidate's resume](#) can speak volumes about their written communication skills, particularly when the role requires writing or expressing oneself in a foreign language. Pay attention to candidates' phrasing. Simple, clear sentences and lack of grammar and spelling errors indicate good communication and proofreading skills.
- People can't fake their communication skills. During interviews, watch closely how candidates express themselves, whether they can maintain a pleasant discussion and if they're good listeners.
- Avoid vague questions, like "How good are your communication skills" or "Do you like to communicate with people?" Instead, ask candidates to give you specific examples that highlight their communication abilities in a professional setting. For example, prompt them to name a time they successfully handled a conflict at work or contributed to a team project.
- If the role requires interaction with clients, consider adding a role-playing activity to your interview process. You'll be able to simulate job duties and test candidates' abilities (e.g. how to present a product or persuade a potential customer.)
- To evaluate written communication skills, use [assignments](#) that are similar to the position's responsibilities. For example, ask candidates to craft emails to address two or three hypothetical scenarios. Or, ask them to prepare specific pieces of text (e.g. a short article.)

Red flags

- **Rude or arrogant behavior.** Impolite comments, constant interruptions and a bossy attitude are all red flags. People with these bad habits may not collaborate effectively with their team members.
- **Poor presentation skills.** If you notice that candidates struggle to talk about topics they're likely to have prepared (e.g. describe their past positions), it's possible they'll also find it hard to deliver presentations or discuss more complex issues.

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- **Uncomfortable [body language](#).** Being stressed is normal during interviews. But, candidates who don't maintain eye contact or are on edge throughout the interview will struggle to interact with clients, managers and coworkers.
 - **Too short or too long answers.** "Yes/No" replies don't leave much room for discussion. Likewise, never-ending responses could confuse or fatigue the interlocutor. Candidates with good communication skills will strike a balance between respecting your time and getting their points across.
 - **Lack of persuasion abilities.** Good communicators don't only provide facts, they're also able to influence others (e.g. with engaging language, visual aids or coherent arguments.) Instead of someone who only states the obvious, look for creative, persuasive people, particularly for roles that require selling.