
Personality interview questions

During your hiring process, ask **personality interview questions** to test candidates' soft skills, including teamwork, flexibility and creativity. These sample Personality interview questions will help you identify potential hires who'll fit in your company culture.

Why ask personality interview questions

Soft skills are not obvious on paper. Knowledge and experience are important in the hiring process, but screening for the right personality traits helps you ensure potential hires perform well under stressful circumstances and collaborate with their coworkers.

Personality interview questions reveal:

- Openness to criticism
- Flexibility
- Team spirit
- Aspirations
- Work ethics

Ask personality questions during your interviews to compare candidates with similar hard skills and select the ones who better fit your culture. You can also use these questions to identify creative potential hires.

Keep in mind that there are some [personality tests designed to categorize people](#), but using these kinds of tests in your recruitment process could actually mislead your hiring decisions. They usually include generic questions that result in equally generic answers (e.g. "On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you perform under stress?") Candidates don't get the chance to justify their choices, thus recruiters can't evaluate their honesty or ask further clarifications. Ask candidates for real-life examples to understand if and how they use these qualities on the job

Examples of personality interview questions

- If your manager asked you to complete a task you thought impossible at first, how would you go about it?
- Tell me about a time you had to fill in for someone. Were you successful? How did the experience make you feel?
- Tell me about a time you missed (or almost missed) a deadline. How did you react when you realized you were falling behind? What did that experience teach you?
- Do you prefer working in a team or on your own? Why?

- If you could change one thing about your personality at the snap of your fingers what would it be and why?
- Tell me about a time your manager wasn't satisfied with the results of your work. How did you discuss the issues and what did you do differently the next time?
- What are you passionate about?
- What types of activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of work?

How to assess candidates' answers in personality interview questions

- Candidates with memorable answers will stand out. Especially if you're hiring for roles that include interaction with clients, (e.g. [sales positions](#)) it's best to focus on potential hires who pique your interest during your discussions.
- There's a difference between personality and personal interview questions. Questions about candidates' age, origin, religion, arrest record, their plans to (or not to) have children are off limits. Keep your questions job-related and, if necessary, ask someone from the HR and/or Legal departments to check them to ensure you're not asking [illegal or inappropriate interview questions](#).
- Random questions like "What's your favorite movie?" are only good as icebreakers. Ask questions that reveal how candidates' personalities may impact their work. Focus on how they apply their knowledge and how they collaborate with coworkers.
- Test candidates for their creativity skills and for their abilities to come up with answers to non-traditional questions. But, keep in mind that interviews can be stressful for many people, so give candidates enough time to respond.
- Personality interview questions are not about finding your next beer buddy. Don't reject candidates who at first sight don't [fit with your company culture](#). Keep an open mind to talented people who can bring something new to the table.

Red flags

- **Inappropriate answers.** As you're obliged to respect the law, candidates should keep their answers professional, as well. Too many jokes, for example, are an indicator they don't take the interview (and possibly your job) very seriously.
- **Lack of passion.** People with low energy levels mightn't be engaged in their work. If you don't see sparks of enthusiasm when candidates talk about their job, try to understand what motivates them.
- **Extremely low or high self-esteem.** Certain personality interview questions require candidates to describe their biggest professional successes. If they struggle finding one, either they lack experience or they have low self-esteem, which are both red flags, particularly for senior-level roles. If they exaggerate their achievements, they are either dishonest or may not be team players.

- **Too much focus on work.** Hard-workers aren't always the best performers. Workaholics who have no other interests besides their jobs and prefer to consistently work long hours (instead of discussing deadline-setting with their managers) are prone to [toxic behaviors at the workplace](#).
- **“Canned” answers.** Candidates want to impress you during interviews, so it's likely they'll come prepared for these types of questions. If they provide generic answers and can't specifically explain how they use a desired quality on the job (or in their personal lives), they might lack this certain quality.