

# The Power of **PROFITABLE** **CONVERSATIONS**



## **SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

*by AmyK*

## A FEW QUESTIONS TO SPARK THINKING

Learn *HOW* they think before you hire 'em!

1. *Would you please give me an example of a situation in which you have demonstrated initiative?* (Top performers are self motivated.)
2. *Would you please give me an example of when you executed a project or a strategy virtually flawlessly?* (Top talent is not perfect, but they also don't make excuses)
3. *Tell me about your most successful accomplishment leading a cross functional team on a major project or initiative.* (No general ever won a battle alone. Top talent understands how important it is to build, lead and motivate effective, cohesive teams. Team leadership is something at which they excel.)
4. *One of our most critical objectives is \_\_\_\_\_. Would you please describe your most comparable accomplishment?* (Top performance is not a one-time event. Comparable may mean similar in scope, size, complexity, resources, budget and/or timeframe.)
5. *Please walk me through how you would go about achieving \_\_\_\_\_ in our environment?* (This question serves as a springboard to dialogue about how they can accomplish your specific goals and objectives and should not be used on a first round interview. Note: the underlying goal of this question is to create a dialogue that will allow you to better answer: Will this person be able to adapt to your specific situation, environment or timeline? Does s/he understand what's different in terms of size, scope, culture, industry, etc.? Does s/he ask intelligent questions and problem-solve to better answer this question? \*Sometimes the questions they ask are better indicators of their critical thinking skills than their actual answer.



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6. *When was a time in your prior career where a decision you made led to unexpected or even negative consequences and how did you resolve it?* (You're listening to see if they cast blame, believe they're perfect, or didn't learn very much from their missteps. We all make mistakes... are they humble enough to acknowledge them, learn, and move forward more a bit wiser.)
7. *Are you more of a creator/inventor or more of an implementer?* (Great insight question, and you know what you're looking for from a leadership/strategic/execution standpoint.)
8. *What is some of the most constructive criticism you received early on in your career, and how has that feedback helped you grow?* (Are they coachable?)
9. *What would your best friend say they like most about you?* (Conveys values, how they prioritize their own likable traits, and which traits they may either seek or complement in others.)
10. *What is on page 213 of your 300 page autobiography?* (I.e. they're 2/3 of the way through their life.)
11. *What do most people admit they got wrong in their first impression of you, once they get to know you?* (How self-aware are they? Do they know how they come across?)



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- 12. You receive 3 phone messages when you get back from a meeting. One is from your spouse, the second is from your boss and the third is from your colleague who says she needs your help immediately. In what order do you respond and why?** (No right or wrong here - listen for how they reason through their response. What drives them? Do they share context, a sense of humor, connection to people or events.)
- 13. Share with me the names of three people whose careers you have fundamentally improved. How did you help them?** (Great leaders build other great leaders along the way. How generous and/or supportive are they toward others?)
- 14. Please tell me the five minute story of you.** (What highlights, themes, patterns, threads do they share? Do they acknowledge certain positive or negative inflection points and how they responded or course corrected? Do they take responsibility for their choices? How and what do they share the narrative of their life up to this point?)

### Sources:

AmyK Hutchens; Barry Deutsch; Harvard Business Review, Inc.; Korn Ferry Recruiters; Leadership Links Participants



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