

50 Interview Questions for manager candidates

PART 1: Questions for assessing leadership style

1. What are 1-2 questions you always ask your team members in one-on-one meetings, and why?
2. If I asked someone on your team about your leadership style, what would they say?
3. Tell me about a time when you delved into significant detail and got your hands dirty.
4. What accomplishments are you most proud of? What role did you play?
5. What ritual or practice have you found to be most effective for helping your team connect and collaborate?
6. Why did you leave IC work?
7. Management is a choice. Why did you pick this path and what keeps you in this role?
8. How do you balance being a manager and a coach?
9. What do your direct reports like about you? What does leadership like about you?
10. Why would you want to work for yourself, and why would you not want to?
11. When two team members disagree, how do you help solve the disagreement?
12. What's something new you've learned recently?

PART 2:

Questions about setting goals and strategy

13. What processes have you put in place to ensure that each person on your team has a clear idea of the team's goals and each individual's role and responsibilities?
14. Can you share the vision for your org at your last company?
15. What did you do to connect that vision with what your team actually did day to day?
16. What dashboard do you open up every morning?
17. What are the metrics and activities you are tracking every day?
18. Let's say you have to make a challenging announcement, like sharing news of a re-org or even a layoff. How would you prepare? What would you say to your team on the day of?
19. Describe a time when you felt your team wasn't shipping frequently enough. What did you do about it?
20. Tell me about a time when you set a critical goal for your team and they missed it. Why did they miss the goal and what did you do next?
21. Tell me about a time when you made a meaningful impact on revenue / market cap / cost savings.
22. Give me an example of an initiative that you innovated on your own and were able to gather momentum and excitement around it. What was the initiative, what did the execution look like and what were the results?
23. Tell me about a time when you had to make a strategically important decision with limited data.
24. If you were to start tomorrow, what would you prioritize in the first 30 and 90 days to maximize growth?
25. Share a time you made a decision that you came to regret several months later. What did you learn from that?

PART 3:

Questions about managing high and low performers

26. Who is the worst performing person on your team and how are you working to make them better?
27. Tell me about a time when someone on your team was not performing at the level you wanted. What did you do first? What ended up happening?
28. How do you evaluate performance on your team?
29. Can you tell me about the last time you helped a star on your team find their dream job?
30. Describe a time you thought a superstar should leave your team and go to another.
31. Give me 2 examples of former employees who have grown their leadership under your management to go on to bigger and better roles, where are they now?
32. Theoretically would they be willing to come to work for you again?
33. When new positions have opened up on your team, did you promote from within or hire externally? What is your philosophy on this?
34. Tell me about someone you manage who's been really successful at your company, and what made them so successful.
35. Can you tell me about one of your direct reports' accomplishments that you're most proud of?

PART 4:

Questions for testing their hiring manager chops

36. Who on your team would you be happy to work for?
37. Tell me about a time when you had to hire for a challenging role.
38. What are the qualities that you look for when you're hiring and do you exude them yourself?
39. If you had 1 or 2 open headcount immediately, who would you hire?
And how likely would they be to join?
40. Walk me through your end-to-end hiring process.
41. How do you help new team members ramp-to-impact quickly?
42. How do you keep track of the careers of the folks you've worked with previously?

PART 5:

Questions for evaluating how they work with other teams

43. Can you tell me about a time when you helped guide your team into better alignment with another team?
44. Which organizations have typically been your most important partners?
45. Which organizations have you encountered the most friction with?
46. Tell me about a time when you influenced another team in the company that had a diametrically opposed point of view.
47. Describe a time when you had to influence another organization to make changes to a part of the system that you did not have direct purview over. What was that process like? How did you identify the need? What was the outcome?
48. Tell me about a time you inherited a team and needed to set or change the overall strategy or charter.
49. When you've worked as part of a successful team, explain the secret sauce that helped those activities go well.
50. Describe a shitty system at your last company. What did you do about it?