

B.A.S.I.C.S. Interview Question Bank

Discovering Character-Based Leadership Potential

The Power Question That Reveals Everything

"Tell me about a time when you helped someone make a decision that was good for them but not necessarily good for you in the short term."

Interview Best Practices

- 1 **Listen for specifics:** Vague answers often indicate lack of real experience
- 2 **Watch body language:** Genuine stories create natural enthusiasm
- 3 **Probe deeper:** Ask "What were you thinking at that moment?"
- 4 **Note the focus:** Do they talk more about themselves or others?

B - BELIEF in People's Potential

"Describe a time when you saw potential in someone that others missed."

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Specific observations about untapped abilities
- ✓ Actions taken to help develop that potential
- ✗ Focus only on how it benefited them
- ✗ Inability to provide concrete examples

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"Tell me about someone you helped develop. What did you see in them?"

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Focus on the other person's growth journey
- ✓ Pride in their success, not taking credit
- ✗ Making it about their teaching ability
- ✗ No follow-up on the person's progress

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"When have you advocated for someone who couldn't advocate for themselves?"

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Risk or effort taken on behalf of others
- ✓ Understanding of power dynamics
- ✗ Expecting recognition or payback
- ✗ Paternalistic or condescending tone

INTERVIEW NOTES:

A - AUTHENTICITY That Builds Trust

"Tell me about a time you made a mistake. How did you handle it?"

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Takes full ownership without deflecting
- ✓ Shares what they learned and changed
- ✗ Blames circumstances or others
- ✗ Chooses a "safe" mistake with no real impact

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"Describe a situation where being honest was difficult but necessary."

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Considered impact on others, not just themselves
- ✓ Delivered truth with compassion
- ✗ Brutal honesty without empathy
- ✗ Avoided the real conversation

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"When have you had to be vulnerable to build trust?"

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Appropriate vulnerability for the situation
- ✓ Focus on helping others through sharing
- ✗ Oversharing or inappropriate disclosure
- ✗ Making it about getting sympathy

INTERVIEW NOTES:

S - SERVICE Over Self-Interest

"Give an example of putting a customer's needs ahead of a sale."

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Clear personal cost (commission, time, effort)
- ✓ Focus on customer's long-term benefit
- ✗ Expecting the customer to come back
- ✗ Making themselves the hero of the story

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"When have you helped a competitor because it was right for the customer?"

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Genuine concern for customer outcome
- ✓ No expectation of reciprocity
- ✗ Reluctance or resentment in the story
- ✗ Focus on how it eventually benefited them

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"Describe a time you gave up personal gain to help your team."

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Specific sacrifice made willingly
- ✓ Joy in team's success
- ✗ Keeping score or expecting payback
- ✗ Martyrdom or self-pity

INTERVIEW NOTES:

I - INITIATIVE That Creates Opportunity

"Tell me about a problem you solved that wasn't your responsibility."

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Saw a need and acted without being asked
- ✓ Focused on organizational benefit
- ✗ Overstepped boundaries inappropriately
- ✗ Created problems while "helping"

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"Describe a time you created an opportunity that didn't exist before."

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Vision for what could be possible
- ✓ Persistence through obstacles
- ✗ Gave up at first resistance
- ✗ Only focused on personal opportunity

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"When have you gone beyond expectations without being asked?"

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Internal motivation to excel
- ✓ Made others' jobs easier
- ✗ Did it for recognition
- ✗ Created more work for others

INTERVIEW NOTES:

C - CURIOSITY That Drives Connection

"Tell me about a time your assumptions were wrong. What did you learn?"

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Admits being wrong without defensiveness
- ✓ Shows how it changed their approach
- ✗ Blames misleading information
- ✗ Hasn't really changed behavior

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"Describe how you've changed your mind about something important."

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Intellectual humility and growth
- ✓ Seeks out different perspectives
- ✗ Stubbornly holds all same views
- ✗ Changes opinion just to please others

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"When has asking questions led to an unexpected solution?"

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Genuine interest in understanding
- ✓ Questions that uncovered root causes
- ✗ Asked questions to prove a point
- ✗ Stopped at surface-level inquiry

INTERVIEW NOTES:

S - SYSTEMS Thinking That Scales Success

"Describe a process you created that others still use."

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Built for sustainability and scalability
- ✓ Others improved upon their foundation
- ✗ Made themselves indispensable
- ✗ System only worked with them there

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"Tell me about making something work better for everyone, not just yourself."

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Considered diverse needs and work styles
- ✓ Sought input from affected parties
- ✗ Assumed their way was best
- ✗ Ignored feedback after implementation

INTERVIEW NOTES:

"How have you built success that continues without your involvement?"

LISTEN FOR:

- ✓ Pride in others carrying work forward
- ✓ Documentation and knowledge transfer
- ✗ Needs to stay involved
- ✗ Resentment when others get credit

INTERVIEW NOTES:

Interview Red Flags to Watch For

- Can't provide specific examples - speaks in generalities
- Every story positions them as the hero
- Blames others consistently for failures
- Shows no growth or learning from experiences
- Treats "lower status" people dismissively
- Focused entirely on personal gain and advancement
- No examples of helping others without benefit