

Top 50 Leadership Interview Questions & Answers

1. What are the most important values you demonstrate as a leader?

The most important value that I have is my integrity. I demonstrate honesty and trust in all my actions to establish credibility as a leader. By having this conviction behind my words and actions, those who I lead are gain bought into the direction I take them.

2.How have you gained commitment from your team?

I gain commitment from my teams by influencing and persuading them to set specific objectives and also buy into the process. Once they have established cooperation and cohesion, they are on board to attain the goal.

3.How can a leader fail? Give an example of that.

A leader can fail when they can't get their team on board with the goals of the organization. Factors outside of a leader's control may also lead to failures such as available resources, time constraints, and the economy.

In the example you give, make sure that you talk about how dealt with a difficult challenge and how you analyzed the setback. Make sure you explain how to seek honest feedback to ensure that you learned from the failure.

4. What is the difference between a Team leader and a Team manager?

A manger is able to handle tasks and responsibilities and ensure that others get their work done. A leader will inspire and motivate their team to achieve their goals.

5. What is your greatest strength?



Being able to lead and inspire a team to perform their best and strive to achieve goals. I can do this through relationship building, being passionate about the goals, and influencing those around me.

6. What would be your greatest weakness?

When I delegate duties to others that I know I can do better. However, if I don't delegate, then I could end up with more work than I can handle myself. I've taken courses in time management and learned how to effectively handle tasks to overcome this weakness.

7. How do you get others to accept your ideas?

I talk about the benefits of the idea and how to apply it. I would stay open to other thoughts and change my ideas in a way that we can all agree. When you gain buy-in from others, you are much more successful in attaining the goals than when you make it mandatory to follow procedure.

8. How would you go about praising a team member in public?

I would use a time when we would be gathered in a group, such as a meeting to bring up the praise to the team member. I would recognize their success in front of the group so others could also learn best practices.

9. Are you more effective in a group or one on one basis?

I feel that I am more effective in a group because everyone has some unique quality that they bring to a group. We can develop our interpersonal skills by helping those in the group who need it as well as learning from those who are successful.

10. How often do you feel it's necessary to meet with your team?

I feel that I should meet with my team at least once a week on a set time and day of the week. Communication among team members is critical, and this will give the team an opportunity to get together on a regular basis and talk about their challenges and best practices. Also, when our team reaches a milestone, a new project begins, an award or promotion is given, or when there is a challenging situation, I would want to bring the team together. Everyone will get the same message that way, and we can celebrate successes or come together in challenging times.

11. Describe a time you took a leadership position when you did not have the title of a leader.

In this question, take an example from a situation where you were in a group and took responsibility to delegate to achieve goals. Show how you gained from the other members to follow your lead and the result of your leadership.

For instance, in college, we were put into groups of four to complete a marketing project. We had to prepare a 15-page paper and 10-minute presentation on a new product. We want to introduce that outside the U.S. I took the initiative among the group to lead a discussion on how we should split up the work when we meet throughout the semester and deadlines for each person's part of the work. Because I was the one to take the lead the discussion and had a plan in mind, I gained the buy in of the other members quickly. I took everyone's e-mail address and created a group email to help us all keep track of our progress and so we could help each other outside of class and our meetings. By the end of the semester, my group achieved a 95% on our project.

12. How would you go about getting cohesion among a team who disagree?

I would find common ground between the members who disagree. I would talk about the importance of the overall goal and the implications if we didn't come together to achieve it. We would then work together to come to an agreement that is a win/win for both sides.

13. What sort of leader would your team say that you are?

They would describe me as someone who will clear the way when there are obstacles and always has their back.

14. How do you motivate your team?

I find out what motivates them individually so I can speak to how a goal or change is going to benefit them. I ensure that I have the right amount of positive and constructive feedback to help them perform effectively. My actions always match my words so when I speak to my team with conviction; they are on-board with performing their best.

15. How do you set an example to those for your team members?

I will perform my best at everything and ensure that my actions match my words. My team sees that my expectations that are set for them are the same expectations I put on myself.

16. Have you ever been in a mentor to another aspiring leader? How did you go about establishing that relationship?

Yes, I treated it much like the relationship that I have with my team. I built a strong working relationship with the person, listened to their goals, gave advice, and my personal experience. I shared my best practices and constantly monitored their progress to celebrate their success and move them in the right direction.

17. What is the most difficult part of being a leader?

In some ways, although you are part of a group, you are alone. It's a leader's responsibility to see the end goal and vision of an organization to lead others towards it. When others do not see it the same way, you have to be the lone voice to bring them back on track.

18. How do you lead through change?

As a leader, you have to be the first one to embrace change because if you don't like those around you will quickly see that. After that, I ensure that I can communicate the change with the conviction that it's the right path to adopt. I prepare by ensuring that I can answer any questions that may be asked, or have the resources to find the answers. I listen to others concerns about the change and help them through the transition.

19. How do you measure success for you as a leader?

By the goals that the team achieves. When someone on the team is successful, then it reflects on my leadership.

20. What motivates you to be a leader?

I am motivated by my team's growth and achievement of their professional and personal goals.

21. What is a leader's best asset?

Their ability to motivate and inspire a team of professionals who can work together to achieve the goals of the organization.

22. What do you do when you are unsure about how to achieve the goals of the team?

You have to be open to feedback and be willing to ask for help when you are not clear on how to achieve a goal. I would ask my leader first for their feedback on how they believe I should go about achieving the goals. I would also use all the resources available to me to find the best course of action.

23. Are you more comfortable with verbal or written communication?

I am comfortable with both types of communication. However, I feel that verbal communication is more effective. That's because when you speak to someone directly, you will be able to see their body language toward the discussion. You are also able to address questions/concerns faster than in written communication.

24. How would you deliver bad news to your team?

I would bring them together and state the news. I would explain as much as possible as to why it occurred and what steps we will need to take in the future. I would also open it up to the team to speak about their concerns, answer questions, and share their viewpoints to know how we can avoid a similar situation.

25. Is competition among a team healthy? Why or why not?

I believe competition among a team is good as long as it is in good spirit. A team has to have a high level of cohesion among its members to prevent misunderstandings. As a leader, it's my responsibility to ensure that when there is a competition that it is being monitored to ensure its positivity.

26. What are the most difficult decisions to make?

It's difficult to take the decision to let an employee go. However, if they are not performing the way that they should be, it is the right decision. It is never easy to make a decision that will impact a person's life.

27. What kind of criticism you most get?

I have not received criticism on the same area over and over. I'm always open to personal and professional growth and welcome any opportunity to improve. When I receive criticism, I work on improving that aspect and furthering my growth.

28. How would you proceed to reorganize your team?

I would look at the overall goals of the organization and match my team's strengths up with the reorganization.

29. Have you ever been a member of a successful team? What was your role in the success of the team?

Use an example of when you were part of a team and demonstrate the leadership skills that you used to pertain to your role.

30. How do you build support for ideas/goals with people who do not report to you and you have no authority over?

In situations where I must build support for my ideas with cross-functional teams, I ensure that I communicate my opinion clearly and effectively. I listen to their feedback and their ideas, and I will make amends if they are necessary to build support or improve on the idea. I foster an environment where an input is sought and validate my idea by explaining why its the best route.

31. How do you go about resolving conflict?

I take a mediated approach to conflict. I believe it's important to listen to both sides and understand where each is coming from. There is usually some common ground between conflict, and I start there and build.

32. Name a time when an employee disagreed with your directive and how you handled it?

I heard them out to understand why they disagree. I may have to go back and re-explain the directive and reasons for it. I would listen to their feedback and if it is the right thing to do, take it to change the directive. However, if that is not the case, I would stick to the facts as to why their commitment is necessary.

33. Who are the most important members of your team?

Everyone is equally important. Each person contributes something different to the team, and that makes us as a whole stronger.

34. How do you delegate responsibilities to your team?

I match up responsibilities with each member's strengths. If I have a team member who is working on improving an aspect, I will give them the opportunity to take on the task and ensure they have the tools necessary to be successful. I would monitor their progress as well.

35. Name a time when you had to change a decision due to new facts.

Pick a situation where you showed that you were open to change and show how you were effectively at changing your decision based on the new facts.

For example, I had created a new spreadsheet for managers to use at the end of the night to keep track of sales for the day. This spreadsheet was due in an e-mail every morning and helped us see how we were doing on a daily basis. A few months later, our point of sales system allowed us to input this information into a program that would allow managers to input sales for the day. With this new technology, I decided to do away with the spreadsheet and had the managers use the program to capture the information and send it to me.

36. How do you achieve objectives in a fast-paced environment?

I ensure that the team knows the objectives and the timeliness that have been set. I place milestones so each member can check their progress.

37. Explain a time when you had to make a decision without all the relevant facts.

Pick a decision that you would not have all the facts for at the time of the decision. Make sure that you speak about all the different options you had and how you picked the best one out of what you had available. Talk about the results/takeaways.

For instance, I had to decide whether our organization was going to be involved in a new marketing campaign that used social media to advertise our products. At this point, our company did not have relevant information on how successful our previous social media marketing campaigns were. If we were to proceed, I was going to have dedicated at least one member of my team to its success. It would be time-consuming and if not successful, would take up a lot of productivity time. I decided to take part in the campaign because it was relatively inexpensive and the potential to gather information about best practices when launching them in the future. We ended up with a very

successful marketing campaign with measurable results.

38. How do you formulate and present arguments to others?

I look at all sides of an argument first so I know what may come up when I present my position. I base my arguments strictly on facts that are objective.

39. How did you handle a time when you had to make an unpopular decision?

Talk about a decision that you made that was necessary, but not popular with your team. Explain how you communicated the decision, listened to their concern, and stood your ground on the decision.

One possible answer -

Last year I decided to change our commission structure to our sales reps. I felt it was a necessary change because there were too many sales reps who were doing the bare minimum to collect a paycheck. Needless to say, many of the sales reps were upset with the decision. I reiterated the reasons for the change and ensured they had the tools they needed to be successful in the new commission structure. The organization saw an increase in their revenue and sales reps were making 5% more with the new commission structure.

40. What do you do to remain engaged in a conversation?

I actively listen by paraphrasing what others say to me. That ensures that I am on the same page as the other person and keeps me attentive to the conversation.

41. How do you organize projects and tasks?

I organize them by what is the most important and time-sensitive to complete.

42. Explain a time when you were not able to meet a deadline?

Use an example where you were not able to meet a deadline due to outside factors.

For instance, there was a big project that my team was working on, and I had split up the work among some members and myself. During that time, one member of the team had to leave due to their spouse getting a position in another city. He left at a critical time, and I had to re-assign his duties to someone else. I made the new person work to speed with the progression of the project and due to this, was not able to complete it on time. We were still able to complete the project a few days after the deadline even with the change in the team member.

43. How have you rallied your team in the past in difficult projects/tasks?

I communicate my confidence in their ability to complete the project. I ensure that I remove as many obstacles as possible and they have all the tools/answers they need to complete the task. I ensure there are clear expectations and open communication.

44. How do you encourage the development of your employees?

I develop my employees by being a mentor, giving effective performance feedback on a regular basis, and coaching. I take a personal interest in the development of my employees, and when they see that I am committed to their growth, they are more motivated.

45. What is the most significant change that you brought to an organization?

Provide an example that shows how you demonstrated your vision to make a positive change in the organization. Also, talk about the results of the change.

For instance, at my previous organization, the management team came up the ranks and never had formal management training. They did not know how to lead their former peers and were uncomfortable having productivity discussions with their teams. I felt there was a need to train these managers on the skills they would need to be successful. So I made my case to the leadership team on why it is important and provided examples I was seeing. Due to this, all managers go through a rigorous management training program that prepares them for their new role.

46. Have you been developed an innovative solution to a non-traditional problem?

In your example, show how you promote change and innovation. Solutions to unique problems occur when there is a constant information flow in all directions to ensure responsiveness to change.

For instance, I was responsible for a sales team in my previous position. A separate production staff handled the orders that my sales team would prepare. This production team had difficulty making the deadlines that my sales team promised their clients. In addition, the product was sometimes not customized to the level the client was looking for. So I decided to change the process that our sales reps put in sales order by having the sales rep communicate with the production team who was responsible for each client's product. This helped my sales rep create achievable timeliness and a product that was the way the client expects.

47. What is the role that leadership plays to a manager?

A leader's role is to communicate with clarity to the strategic vision to the management team. This vision must be able to be in the form of a clear direction and plans. There should be clear priorities, objectives timeliness, accountability, and performance measures.

48. What leadership style do you use?

This answer should be based on the type of organization you are joining. You should show that you will be able to change your style in different circumstances.

49. How would you go about developing your team?

I encourage training courses, soft skills workshops, on the job mentoring, and coaching.

50. Have you ever taken on a job that you were unqualified for?

In your example, show how you are not afraid of taking risks to achieve goals at work. Demonstrate your focus on the job at hand and how it inspired others.

For instance, I took on management responsibilities in my previous position to take the place of my manager who had left. I did not have any management experience, but I knew that the team was not going to be able to be effective without a leader in place. I may have made a few mistakes, but ultimately was successful in taking on that additional responsibility. The upper-level management was impressed by my growth and efforts, so they ended up promoting me into that position.

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