

Program Manager Job Interview Questions And Answers



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Program Manager Interview Questions And Answers Guide.

Question - 1:

Tell us what don't you want to work on?

Ans:

There are always bits of jobs we don't like, but project managers typically work on the projects that they are assigned. It's fine to have preferences, but you're looking for someone who can respond to business needs even if that isn't their top choice of project.

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Question - 2:

Please tell me what criteria are you using to find your next job?

Ans:

It will show you what's important to them at work: green credentials, career progression, work/life balance, working for a big brand etc. It will also tell you if they are actively job hunting or whether they saw your ad and couldn't resist (either is fine).

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Question - 3:

Explain me what are your career and project goals for the next six months?

Ans:

A Project Manager has to deal with uncertainty. It is important that they can identify and prioritize risks and take appropriate action in ambiguous situations. It is equally important to manage others' concerns in changing environments. To assess competency in this area, it is best to ask scenario-based questions.

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Question - 4:

Tell us what is your current salary and compensation package?

Ans:

Be honest when you are responding to this question. Note that, human resources departments of companies are very well aware of industry salary benchmarks. Therefore, they will be able to estimate your salary and compensation package.

If you say a salary that is too much above the benchmark, you can even lose the job opportunity. Because, there will be a limit of what the company can pay for this position.

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Question - 5:

Explain me do you have budget management experience?

Ans:

Budget management is a crucial aspect of project management. Therefore, this question is very important in a project manager interview, if the candidate will be managing a budget if he is selected for the position. Depending on the roles and responsibilities of the project manager in a company, budget management might not be required from project manager. Especially, in vendors, budget management is required while it might not be required from project managers working in service providers.

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Question - 6:

Tell me how do you deal with underperforming project team members?

Ans:

If you are an experienced professional, you might have worked with a demotivated or underperforming colleague. The critical point for the project manager is, he or she has to motivate all project resources to produce the most out of their capacity. Project manager must motivate underperforming resources in a project.

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**Question - 7:**

Tell me how do you communicate bad news?

Ans:

Project Managers are responsible for understanding the need of the customer and responding in a timely, efficient manner in ways that meet customer expectations. They are also responsible for establishing and maintaining effective relationships and gaining the trust and respect of customers. Here are a couple of questions I usually ask to gauge the candidate's customer orientation.

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Question - 8:

Please explain how do you work with sponsors? How do you manage up?

Ans:

Managing up means working well with people more senior than you. Project managers do this all the time, so it's good to find out how they make those relationships work.

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Question - 9:

Tell me are you trained in supply-chain management?

Ans:

Not all project managers are created equal. If you need someone with supply-chain management experience, ask candidates directly. Those that don't have this experience may be interested in acquiring it, but you can't afford to hire someone who doesn't have it and doesn't want it if you need it. Sometimes, it pays to be direct.

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Question - 10:

Tell us do you have outsource personnel or supplier management experience?

Ans:

Managing outsource personnel or supplier is a different project management skill. If you are applying to a company that works with outsource personnel or suppliers, this project manager interview question will be an elective one.

If you have a project management experience in a vendor, most probably, you will have outsource and supplier management experience as well.

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Question - 11:

Tell me what Is Your Risk Strategy?

Ans:

Talk about your risk analysis process and how you implement solutions before, and during the implementation of your program.

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Question - 12:

Tell me how easily do you delegate responsibility?

Ans:

Being focused on goals is absolutely essential for Project Managers. They need a clear focus to succeed. It is important to assess if the candidate has demonstrated the ability to align resources to achieve key objectives, to plan and identify ways to improve and achieve greater efficiency and to monitor and fine-tune execution with agility, hard work, perseverance, and good judgement.

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Question - 13:

Tell me how do you monitor projects whether it is going on track?

Ans:

This project manager interview question will assess your monitoring and controlling skills and your familiarity with project management tools. The primary responsibility of the project manager is completing a project scope on time and on budget in the agree quality levels. To do this, a project manager must use his or her skills and project management tools.

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Question - 14:

Explain me how you deliver and present results?

Ans:

Different project managers have different styles.

Do they like to present everything personally? Do they involve the project team? How is credit for a job well done shared and how is blame for a mishandled project assigned? Does their management approach match your workplace? Do they use the presentation of results as a way to motivate or punish project team members? How they handle project delivery can be a window into a lot of candidate attributes.

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Question - 15:

Explain me what are the three words that describes you best?



Ans:

This is actually a cliché interview question generally asked by human resources personnel. This shows hints about your personality and how your colleagues think about you in work environment.

When answering this project manager interview question, try to remember your positive attitudes and what your colleagues say about your work behavior.

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Question - 16:

Can you tell us when was the last time you didn't delegate and what happened?

Ans:

This will help you work out if they are happy to be honest and tell you about a time that something went wrong. This shows their capacity to learn from mistakes and how they deal with information overload. Delegating work packages is key to project work and you'll want to hire someone who understands that.

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Question - 17:

Can you tell us have you ever had disappointments?

Ans:

No job is without its disappointments. The disappointments can be anything, from an employee who left for personal reasons or the project that you did not bag because of the financials involved.

Make sure that you provide a quick and factual answer for this question.

These and other questions are randomly asked for the interview of the position of a project manager.

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Question - 18:

Tell me how do you motivate team members?

Ans:

One of the key success factors for a Project Manager is effective delegation. How effectively do they get work done through others? Delegation must happen through empowerment without interference or loss of control. The following questions will determine if the candidate is good at delegating.

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Question - 19:

Can you explain me what creative problem solving techniques do you use?

Ans:

It's worth probing the technical skills of candidates. Can they talk knowledgably about fishbone diagrams, De Bono's thinking hats, role play? Branch out to talk about the last project issue they resolved with creative thinking.

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Question - 20:

Tell me how do you resolve conflicts in your projects?

Ans:

Conflicts are inevitable in a project. A good project manager must be able to resolve conflicts without hampering the motivation and relationship in the project team. By its nature, conflicts seem to be resolved in favor of one side over another. However, with good communication and conflict resolution skills, you can resolve the conflicts in a win-win situation.

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Question - 21:

Explain me about a conflict your team faced and how you solved it?

Ans:

Conflict resolution is one of the most challenging and commonplace management tasks. This question gives the applicant an opportunity to provide you examples of their managerial skills in action. Does their style produce good results? Does it blend with your company's goals? Do they have the ability to learn from the experience?

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Question - 22:

What is your salary expectation as Program Manager?

Ans:

This is one of the last questions that you will be asked in your project manager interview session. There is not a concrete answer for this question. However, the common practice is, aim to increase your salary at least 20% in your next job.

Considering your current salary and compensation package, you should tell your expectations. You should not say a salary and compensation expectation that is too much above your current package.

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Question - 23:

Tell me how do you motivate project team?

Ans:



Project team motivation is crucial for the success of a project. If a project team is not motivated, it will be impossible to reach project objectives. Or, even if you reach your project objectives, project quality will suffer.

This project manager interview question is critical to get insights about the people management skills of the candidate.

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Question - 24:

Tell us how do you ensure that your project is always on track?

Ans:

A Project Manager needs to identify and prevent issues from impacting the project adversely. It is important that the candidate demonstrates they are able to take proactive steps, avoid procrastination, and not shy away from making tough decisions. I usually ask candidates to share examples and real-life scenarios from their projects and life where they made proactive decisions.

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Question - 25:

Explain me what are some of the projects that you handled in the previous job?

Ans:

As an experienced professional, you are bound to have a portfolio, and this is the right time to share such a portfolio with the interviewer. Make sure that the portfolio you share is authentic as your previous portfolio will decide whether the interviewer will be interested in you or not.

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Question - 26:

Explain me have you ever faced any disagreements in your previous job? How did you solve it out?

Ans:

A project manager has to take into consideration several disagreements. They can be between employees, between the superior and the employees, or even the client and the employees.

If you reply that you have never had any disagreements, the interviewer will wonder whether you were really a project manager for your skills or simply because you are a people pleaser.

Make sure that you come up with at least one incident where employees and superiors had differences in thought and you were instrumental in changing the scenario.

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Question - 27:

Explain me how do you ensure you and your team deliver or exceed customer expectations?

Ans:

A Project Manager relies on their team to execute activities in order to achieve the desired results. It is important that a Project Manager can assess talent, contribute actively towards developing team members, offer constructive feedback, and mentor and coach their team members. Responses to the following questions will reveal if the candidate is someone able to motivate the members of a team.

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Question - 28:

Can you tell me what do you spend the most time doing each day?

Ans:

This gives you an indication of how they do their job. Someone who spends all day at the PC may suit your environment, or you might be looking for a project manager who gets out and visits clients most days of the week. Remember that they might be prepared to do something other than what they do now, so if you hear something that doesn't fit with the post you are recruiting for, don't rule them out before exploring this further.

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Question - 29:

Tell me have you ever failed in a project? Do you have any experience of handling failures?

Ans:

Success and failures, these are inevitable facts of life and your professional career as well. Do not even think to answer "No, I never failed in a project". This will not be counting a positive mark in your evaluation believe me.

Actually, this project manager interview question assesses your risk management experience. Therefore, think of an event, meeting, activity or a moment in project where you had trouble. Then, answer this question accordingly.

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Question - 30:

You managed the project work as per requirements. However, customer is not happy with the result and does not accept the product. How would you convince the customer?

Ans:

This is a very common and tough to deal situation in project management. Although you delivered the project scope as you agreed with the customer in the beginning of the project, customer may not accept the product at the end of the project.

This project manager interview question assesses your convincing and justification skills.

In case you receive this kind of question, you have to demonstrate the agreed scope and how your end product fits with the agreed scope. Note that, final stop of a disagreement like this is courts. However, never mention this during your project manager interview. Because, you have to fix conflicts with communication and companies do not wish to go courts in these cases since it will take years to reach a conclusion.

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**Question - 31:**

Suppose if we provided you with a laptop for project planning and management, what software would you want on it?

Ans:

While this may seem like a simplistic project management interview question, it allows the interviewer to explore the software a potential hire is acquainted with, why they like it, and what problems they've encountered using it.

If you're lucky, the answers to this question may also lead to a valuable anecdote. Additionally, if you do end up hiring this prospect, you'll already know what they need on their computer.

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Question - 32:

Tell me what don't you want to work on and why?

Ans:

Everyone has something they dread doing.

Project managers are tasked with a wide variety of projects that may frequently change. Knowing in advance what tasks your candidate dislikes can be highly beneficial. You're looking for answers that show a candidate who is open to working on anything, even if there are portions of a particular project they may not be crazy about. They need to be flexible and ready to do what the company needs to meet its goals, even if their personal preferences aren't in agreement with it.

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Question - 33:

Tell us how long after delivery do you typically wait to revisit projects, and why?

Ans:

The answer to this project management interview question gives you insight into the candidate's business skills. Some project managers will revisit a project days or weeks after completion, others wait months or a year, and some never do. There is no right answer, but there is one wrong one. A project management candidate who never revisits a project is a poor choice.

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Question - 34:

Where do you see yourself in five years as Program Manager?

Ans:

A typical human resources interview question! This interview question assesses whether you have a career plan and if it fits with the position. For a project manager interview, you have to draw a career plan that fits to a project management path.

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Question - 35:

Explain me do you have international project team management experience?

Ans:

If the company you applied for is a multinational company, international project team management will be a critical evaluation factor. You might not have this experience. In this case, say no honestly.

This question might be followed by additional questions asking about how the experience was and whether you have any strange story about your international project team management experience.

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Question - 36:

Please tell us how have you improved project management processes at your current firm?

Ans:

Not everyone has the chance to work on business critical, exciting projects that make for a great CV, but everyone has the chance to offer some suggestions for improvements (even if they aren't taken up). Look for someone who has ideas and who isn't afraid to put them forward.

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Question - 37:

Explain me if you had to rate project management as a career, from 1-10 how would you rate it?

Ans:

This will show you how they value their career and whether they see themselves progressing in a PM role. Ask them why they chose that rating.

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Question - 38:

Tell me what are the three key challenges for our industry today and how can these be tackled effectively?

Ans:

This question enables the candidate to think about the top challenges of the industry in which your organization operates. The response from the candidate reveals his understanding of the industry, the market, current challenges, and possible solutions. This knowledge is critical to the success of any Project Manager as they will be tackling these challenges inside the organization if they get hired. So this question helps the hiring managers assess whether the candidate has the domain knowledge that makes them fit for the role.

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**Question - 39:**

Explain me where have you worked before?

Ans:

Rarely is an inexperienced person taken in as a project manager. Any project manager would have at least two or three years of experience either as an employee or as a project manager. Therefore, this is one of the basic questions asked. Make sure that you give a brief and concise answer to this question, without going too much into the details. Also, make sure that everything you say as an answer to this question is factual.

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Question - 40:

Explain me how do you build consensus on a conflicted team?

Ans:

One of a project manager's core responsibilities is managing groups of people. And where there are people, there are conflicts. A good project manager knows that some conflict is inevitable -- and even healthy -- on a project team. Avoiding or glossing over conflicts that arise can be detrimental to the project's objectives and can actually exacerbate underlying issues, causing them to bubble up and wreak havoc later down the line.

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Question - 41:

Tell me what is your approach to managing a project?

Ans:

Every work culture is different. By asking this question, you get an idea of how the candidate handles their daily workload, whether they are more hands-on or prefer sit back and observe their team in action. You'll get a good idea of how their personality blends with your organization, and may be able to lead from this question into examples of how or if they may have improved processes at their previous job.

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Question - 42:

Tell me why should we hire you as Program Manager?

Ans:

This question is not special for a project manager interview. Most of the human resources personnel ask this question to evaluate a candidate during job interviews. There can be hundreds of other applicants that you have to surpass to get a project manager job. Your background, skills, and resume should be impressive and matching the requirements of the job description. This is obvious. However, you have to be unique when providing answer to this question. Interviewer must say, "Wow, he knows what we exactly look for".

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Question - 43:

Tell me how do you deal with gold plating in your project?

Ans:

This project manager interview question assess your technical knowledge and scope management skills. Gold plating is a technical term in project management. Gold plating is delivering more than what is required in the scope. If the project team performs an extra activity and delivers extra work, which is not in the scope of the project, this is called gold plating.

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Question - 44:

Please explain me an example of how you communicated a failure to your team, manager and customer?

Ans:

This project manager interview question will assess your risk management and communication management experience together. Bear in your mind that, failures, emergencies or critical points about a project must be communicated face to face. If face-to-face communication is not possible, then, you should choose teleconference meeting or phone call.

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Question - 45:

Tell me what was the biggest or most challenging project you managed?

Ans:

You have to be prepared for this project manager interview question. Because, your answer to this question will show your limits about your experience. Note that, this question might come with additional questions asking about how many people there were in the team, who you were reporting to, and how many projects in total you were managing at the same time.

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Question - 46:

Please explain what was the most difficult ethical decision you've had to make on a project?

Ans:

It can demonstrate their awareness of PMI Code of Ethics and even if they aren't aware of that, their general approach to work. You can also use it to open up an interesting discussion and allow you to judge how they will fit into your business culture.

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**Question - 47:**

Tell me a few examples of a time when you made a tough decision and it backfired?

Ans:

It tells you how honest they are with themselves and compels them to talk about an instance when they failed. It shows how the candidate handles failure and learns from it.

I hope that this list of competencies and related questions will help hiring managers to recruit the right candidates. These 10 areas are not an exhaustive list but will structure an interview in a way that covers the most important project management skills a candidate will need to succeed.

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Question - 48:

Tell me how do you tackle these uncertainties?

Ans:

A Project Manager must tackle multiple tasks and issues. To be successful, the Project Manager has to choose their battles wisely. Since resources are always limited, they need to be prioritized. Time is a valuable resource for the project because once lost it cannot be recovered easily. As a result, time management is one of the key skills for a Project Manager. The Project Manager is responsible for creating efficient ways to execute tasks.

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Question - 49:

Tell me what were the communication challenges on your last project?

Ans:

This question helps you assess how effectively the candidate handles communication in challenging situations. The second question helps you understand how the candidate engages with others and assess whether they demonstrate good sense and judgement and are able to use language effectively.

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Question - 50:

Explain me what are your greatest achievements in your professional life?

Ans:

Apart from the portfolio, everyone has some project or aspect of their jobs that they hold close to their heart. This is the time to inform the interviewer about what your favorite project was and why. Of course, you have to make sure that you do not go on a ramble and genuinely discuss some of your favorite projects.

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