



INDUSTRY SPECIFIC SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work in consulting/marketing/investment banking, etc.?
- If I were to ask your last manager to share your last performance evaluation with me, what areas would she/he tell me you excelled? What areas need improvement?
- What are your career goals five years from now?
- What has been your greatest success?
- What has been your greatest failure?
- What are your top strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- How would you describe your personality?
- What do you like most about your last job, what did you like least?
- Describe the perfect manager or supervisor.
- Why this company?
- What are your goals for the summer?
- How well do you deal with ambiguity?
- What can you tell me about our industry?
- What challenges do you think our industry will face in the next five years?
- What item on your resume are you most proud of?

Investment Banking & Financial Services

Investment Banking Questions:

Corporate Finance

- Why investment banking? Why this bank?
- What concerns you most about investment banking?
- What do you think investment bankers do each day?
- What are some differences between investment banking firms that you have noticed, which are important to you?
- Why corporate finance as opposed to sales and trading?
- If you wanted to do banking, why didn't you go to Columbia or Wharton?
- What quantitative courses did you take? Which did you enjoy and why?
- What was your GMAT score? Cumulative GPA?
- What's the lowest grade you ever received?
- What are your outside activities? Why would you be willing to give them up for such a demanding job?
- What role do you play in group situations?
- What would the other members of your business school team have to say about you?
- How smart are you? How do we know how smart you are?
- Sell us on your quantitative skills.
- What experiences in your background do you think have prepared you for a career in investment banking?
- Describe yourself in one word. Prove it to me on or off your resume.
- Describe the stock in the market most like you.

Technical Skills

- What did the DOW, S&P, or NASDAQ close at yesterday?
- Where did the stock of (interviewing company) close yesterday?
- What stocks do you follow and why? Describe a company you would invest in.
- If you were the ruler of the US, how would you fix the economy?
- What deal have you followed in the news and where is it today?
- How does the government raise or lower interest rates?
- Why are interest rates so important to Wall Street?
- How would you value a company that had no earnings?
- What is a discounted cash flow?
- How did your capstone group calculate your discount rate and why?
- What's the link between the balance sheet and the income statement?
- Walk me through the major lines of cash flow.

Behavioral Questions

- Describe a time when your analytical skills were put to the test. What was the challenge, how did you react, what was the outcome?
- Give me an example of a time when you could not complete a project or meet a deadline because you did not have enough information.
- You will often be expected to "get up to speed" very quickly. How do you analyze information and arrive at a decision? Give me an example.
- What project provided you with the greatest challenge? What appealed to you about it? How did it enhance your previous knowledge or understanding?
- Tell me about a mistake you or your group made and what you learned from it?
- Discuss a difficult ethical question that you recently faced.
- Tell me about a time you took responsibility for a project.

Sales and Trading Questions:

General Questions

- What do you think it takes to be successful at sales?
- Why do you think you would be good at sales and trading?
- Tell me what you think a trader does. What is a trader responsible for?
- What qualities do you bring to sales and trading?
- The trading floor has a very fast pace. How do you think you would cope with that pace?
- How would you feel about selling a stock that you were ethically opposed to or didn't believe in? Sell me that stock.
- Sell me this desk.
- How well do you handle surprises? Give me an example.
- How do you feel about wealth?
- Recommend a stock to me.
- What do you think of the way government treats inside traders?

Industry Questions

- How would you allocate \$60 M today?
- Which are you interested in? Equity or fixed income and why?
- Pretend that I am a portfolio manager for Fidelity. Explain to me why I should buy the latest IPO the firm has underwritten.
- How would you go about selling the idea of a derivatives hedge to a prospective client?

Behavioral Questions

- Give me an example of your persuasive skills in action.
- Tell me about a time when you needed to convince someone of your trust and sincerity. What did you do?
- Give me an example of a time when your assertiveness paid off. One that it didn't.
- Give me an example of a time when you were exceptionally motivated. Describe the experience. What does that say about you?
- Describe an example of a challenging interpersonal conflict and how you resolved it.
- How well do you handle surprises? Give me an example.
- Tell me about a high stress situation you've been in. How did you handle it?

Finance Questions:

General Questions

- What might a study group peer say are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you hope to gain by working in this company?
- Where do you see yourself five years from now?
- What do you know about our industry?
- We are having trouble managing our (division). What do you think the key performance metrics might be and how might you go about improving them?
- Our _____division is thinking of introducing a (such and such) new product. How would you go about determining if this is a good idea?
- How would you go about valuing our (division) for a potential sale, spin-off or liquidation?
- If you have reviewed our recent operating result, how would you describe our financial position? Areas of strength and weakness?
- Walk me through the major line items on a Cash Flow Statement

Behavioral Questions

- Tell me about some project you initiated? What prompted you to begin them?
- How do you gather information to solve problems? Give me an example.
- Describe your greatest accomplishment and your greatest failure.
- What is the toughest analytical problem you faced and how did you solve it?
- Tell me about a time you had to present complex information to a client. How did you ensure the client understood?
- Give me an example when unfair demands were put on you.

Financial Analysis Questions & Brainteasers (relevant to all Finance positions)

- If the US dollar weakens, should interest rates rise, fall or stay the same? (answer, rise)
- When would you write a call option on Disney stock? (answer, when you expect the price of Disney stock to fall (or stay the same))
- Describe a recent M&A transaction that you've read about.
- How many pay phones are there on the island of Manhattan?
- How many square feet of pizza are eaten in the United States each month?

Consulting

General Questions

- Why consulting? Why this firm?
- What are the three most important qualities of a successful consultant?
- How is our practice different from other firms?
- Highlight your top achievements/accomplishments.
- What has been your biggest setback?
- What three issues do you think are important to the consulting industry?
- How do your accomplishments show that you have the skills for consulting?
- Walk me through how you accomplished XYZ. Give me some details.
- Why did you choose Babson College?
- What were your major accomplishments at XYZ job?
- What other companies are you interviewing with? Have you received any job offers?
- Do you have a location preference? Do you have a department preference?
- Where do you think the consulting industry is heading?
- What do you think management consultants do every day?
- How would you describe your way of solving problems?

Behavioral Questions

- Describe a situation where you persuaded a supervisor or colleague to use your idea.
- Tell me about a group project or situation where you exercised a leadership role.
- Describe a failure and what you learned from it.
- Tell me about a difficult decision that you had to make? What would you do differently next time?
- Give me an example of a time you worked in a team. Did you face any obstacles?

- Please tell me about a project you worked on and what your individual role was in the process.
- Can you give me an example of a project that didn't go as well as you had hoped and tell me what you have learned from the experience?
- Describe an ethical dilemma you have faced and how did you deal with it?
- Give me an example of a situation in which you analyzed and solved the problem. How did you do it?
- Give an example of an obstacle you faced and how you overcame it.

Short Case Questions

- Your client asks you: "Should I enter the market to manufacture and sell snowboards?" How do you respond?
- If someone actually invented, manufactured and sold transporters (i.e. those Beam-me-up-Scottie" machines from Star Trek), how would that change the world?
- Your working for a pharmaceutical company that has proprietary drug which is about to lose its patent protection. That means that there will soon be generic substitutes for your product available at a fraction of the cost. How will you adjust the price of your product in response?

Internet Consulting Questions

- What excites you about the internet?
- Give me a specific example of a time when you took initiative.
- Tell about your collaboration and teamwork skills.
- Tell me about a time when you had to adapt quickly to a new situation. What helped you be successful?
- Tell me about a unique experience you've had.

Marketing

Consumer Products Marketing:

General Questions

- Why are you interested in Brand Management? Why our company?
- What differentiates you from your peers?
- Name 2-3 products you think are well managed and why?
- Name 2-3 products you think are not managed well and why?
- You have a new product you want to launch in a foreign industry, what do you do?
- You are a brand manager and sales are stable while the market is shrinking, what does that mean?
- You are a brand manager and your manager says your advertising will be cut next year, what do you do?
- What makes a good advertisement?
- Tell me how you position our company/product?
- Rank order important characteristics of brand management.
- Please give me three adjectives to describe yourself.
- What does it take to be successful in marketing?

Behavioral Questions

- Give me an example of how you demonstrated initiative. What were the results?
- Tell me about a time when you had to influence various departments/people to help accomplish your goals without having direct authority over them.
- Give me specific example of a time you solved a problem creatively. Give me another one...
- Tell me about a time you were required to lead a group. What challenges did you face, how did you overcome them?
- Tell me about a time you had to convince someone to do something that they did not want to do.
- Tell me about a time when you were unable to sell an idea.
- Describe a situation in which you were able to overcome a "personality conflict" in order to get results.
- Describe a situation in which you were NOT able to overcome a "personality conflict" and what does that say about you.
- Tell me about a time when you had to influence various departments/people to help accomplish your goals without having direct authority over them.
- Give me an example of when you made an impact.

High Tech Marketing:

General Questions

- Why are you interested in our company/product (Tech Company, dotcom etc.)?
- What are your goals for the summer?
- Tell me about an interesting marketed product you have encountered?
- Why is it marketed that way?
- How would you do it differently?
- How would you approach introducing a new product for this company?
- What would your slogan be?
- You are going to introduce yourself to the world using a full-page ad in the NY Times. You can only fit a single word on the page. What word do you choose?
- What is a very complicated technical concept that you understand clearly? Now explain it to me as if I was a 5-year-old child.
- What do you see are the strategic challenges that our company/industry faces?
- From a marketing perspective, how do we/should we position ourselves vs. our main competitors?
- What direction do you see our industry taking and how are we/should we be aligning ourselves with that direction?
- What will happen to the internet businesses in the long term?
- What is the difference between Sun networks and PC's?

Behavioral

See Consumer Products Marketing above

Mini-Marketing Cases

- Give me an example of effective advertising.
- Give me an example of an ad you liked and why.
- If you could be the brand manager on any brand, what would it be and why?
- If you were on brand x, what would be a new product idea and why?
- How would you market carrots?

High Technology

General

- Why High Tech? Why this company?
- Tell me about yourself
- What are your top strengths?
- What are your greatest weaknesses?
- How well do you deal with ambiguity?
- Why are you attracted to the high-tech industry?
- What excites you about the Internet?
- What challenges do you think our industry will face in the next 5 years?
- What is a very complicated technical concept that you understand clearly? Now explain it to me as if I were a 5-year-old child.
- What item on your resume are you most proud of?
- Our technical problems are very complex. Give us an idea about how you would begin to work on "X".

Behavioral

- Tell me about some project you initiated? What promoted you to begin it?
- What is the toughest analytical problem you faced and how did you solve it?
- Tell me about a specific time when you had to collaborate on a team to accomplish a goal.
- Tell me about a time that you were required to lead a group. What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?
- Give me a specific example of a time when you took initiative.
- Tell me about a specific time when you had to adapt quickly to a new situation. What helped you be successful?
- Give me a specific example of a time you made a decision with limited information. How did it turn out?
- Tell me about a unique experience you've had.
- Tell me about a time when you were under pressure to complete a project and how you handled the situation.
- Give me an example of a time when you used creativity to solve a problem. Now give me a second example.

- Tell me about a time you had to make a decision with incomplete information.
- Tell me about a project you managed from inception to completion. What challenges did you encounter and how did you handle them?
- Tell me about a time when you had to convince someone to do something that they did not want to do.
- Give me an example of your leadership ability? What kind of manager are you?

High-Tech Marketing

- Tell me about an interesting marketed product you have encountered. Why is it marketed that way? How would you do it differently?
- How would you approach introducing a new product for this company?
- From a marketing perspective, how do we/should we position ourselves from our main competitors?
- Tell me about a time when you had to influence various departments/people to help accomplish your goals without having direct authority over them.
- Name a product recently launched that you think will be successful and tell me why you think so.

High-Tech Finance

- If an engineer were to present you with an innovative product that you cannot compare to previous products because it is so innovative, how would you evaluate its potential? (flaunt technical and NPV)
- Let's say the company makes a product (for example a motherboard) on which it has negative margins. Would you discontinue using it? Why or why not? (maybe okay to keep if it contributes to sales of other products within the company)

Other

- Name a product recently launched by a start-up that you think will be successful and tell me why you think so.
- Pick a technical concept that you know well and describe it to me in simple language.
- What high-tech firms do you follow and why?
- What was the last website you looked at on the internet and for what purpose?

Content taken from: CareerNet: Prepare: Interview Preparation: Interview Questions:
<http://web.haas.berkeley.edu/intranet/student/careernet/intqu.html>