10 interview questions for your office manager hiring process

Below, we'll list for you the 10 questions we think make sense when hiring for an office manager, as well as the answers.

Bear in mind that many people won't say the same thing, so also use your common sense when it comes to the answers. These are only examples after all. You can also download our free template if you find it helpful.

1. **How do you prioritise tasks and manage your time effectively?**

   - Task prioritisation – I make a list of the tasks I have to accomplish on a notepad, and then go through them one by one – I don't like finishing the day without ticking all of it off, so I try to manage my time as efficiently as possible.

   - Prioritisation and urgency – Even though I have a weekly task list to help me stay on track and do my day-to-day, I know being an office manager means dealing with "crisis". I can drop anything at any moment to attend to it – let's say a broken printer if it's essential for the business or a WIFI issue would become top of my list.

   - Deadline setting – I set deadlines based on the amount of hours I work and allocate duration for each task. This keeps me accountable.

2. **Can you describe a situation you've been involved in that you found challenging and how you resolved it?**

   There's no right answer for that one. Every experience will be different. However, here's the kind of elements you'd want to see in this answer:

   - Problem-solving skills

   - Ability to handle challenges and work under pressure

   - Capacity to remain calm in stressful situations

3. **How do you foster a positive work culture within the office?**

   - Inclusivity – I always make sure we have events lined up that include everyone. Whether that's something like Valentine's Day converted into a day for love, Black History Month, Pride, Lupus Awareness Day, etc. I keep a calendar to make sure no one is forgotten. I also encourage I insist that people tell me what they'd like to see.

   - Energy – I try to bring energy to the workplace every day. That can be coming up with a little crosswords related to the team every week, or even putting together a small video on social media. It's all about making people feel like they belong to the company, and that they're being seen for the work they do.

   - Recognition – I want to celebrate people across the business, so I don't miss an occasion to give shoutouts when someone has gone the extra mile. I also encourage team members to give their own shoutouts in company meetings every week.

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4. **How do you handle confidential information and sensitive matters within the office?**

An example is difficult to give, but there are a few values that a candidate should show when dealing with this type of question:

- A commitment to integrity

- A desire to maintain confidentiality on data as well as sensitive matters

- An ability to juggle between being social and keeping sensitive information to self

5. **How do you treat emergencies or unexpected events in the office?**

- Contingency plan and procedures – Whatever the situation, whether it's a medical or fire emergency, I will have a procedure in place before it even happens. This is part of the onboarding process I will go through and help put together if it's not already existing: understanding the steps for each emergency will ensure we deal with it promptly and safely.

- Remain calm – Although emergencies and unexpected situations mean a lot of adrenaline and stress among staff, it's my duty to remain calm and make sure everyone does what they're supposed to by following procedures. In these situations, I know I have to take responsibility for the staff's safety.

- Reassuring – If members of staff feel distressed or have a medical emergency, I want them to feel comfortable discussing or sharing it with me. I always try to convey that I'm approachable, and I can listen to people. If it's outside of my remit, I'll put a procedure in place so they get the support they need or signpost them to the right place.

6. **How do you handle feedback or criticism from other members of the team?**

- Openness to criticism – If someone comes to me with feedback on my work, of course, it's difficult, but I will ask them for more details to understand how I can improve in the future and make sure I don't fall behind.

- Willing to change – If my performance was not up to scratch, I can take full responsibility for it, as well as if I've made a mistake. I'll come forward and admit it so I can work on what went wrong.

7. **Can you describe your experience with space planning and office layout optimisation?**

Here, you'll be looking for elements that are specific to your business expectations. In some industries, it's really important to have enough space to create, so you need to make sure you pay attention to this and look out for:

- Experience with optimising layouts for work efficiency

- Optimisation of small spaces

- Attention ergonomics and comfort for team members

- Background in office design and decoration for clients visit

8. **Can you discuss your experience with remote team management and virtual collaboration tools?**

   - Setting clear expectations – I always provide and put together guidance for team members working remotely, so they know what the expectations are in terms of their working hours, computer settings, meetings, etc.

   - Virtual communication tools – Having a great array of tools is essential, so when I first do my office audit, I make sure we're armed with the basics such as perhaps Slack, Notion, etc. so everyone can communicate clearly at any time, as if they were in the office.

   - Collaboration facilitation – Despite being remote, I give the team plenty of space and time to collaborate, whether that's through tools or by hiring spaces if they need to meet up. I'm always pushing to understand what they need from me, instead of waiting for them to come and ask.

9. **Can you provide examples of how you've managed expenses in an office before?**

   You'll need to listen to the examples given out by the candidate, and look out for a few elements in their response:

   - Having budget management skills and prior experience

   - Managing expenses through software or Excel

   - Avoiding waste when it comes to food, stationary, etc.

   - Maximising resources available in the office

10. **How do you measure the success of your office management strategies and initiatives?**

    - Keeping track of metrics – I always put my strategies against metrics from the get-go to visualise my goals. That can measured through an employee survey or even with a budget limit. It all depends on what's at stake, but I never start a project without a clear number in my head.

    - Listening to feedback – It's not just about listening, but also seeking feedback in every aspect of the work I do and what could be improved in the office. To be successful, once an initiative is done, it's also a good idea to collect feedback and ratings.