

5 Interview Questions That Actually Predict Performance



Introduction

Most interview questions are forgettable. Worse—they don't predict success.

We've curated five powerful questions (plus two bonus ones) that our recruiters at Pulivarthi Group use to **uncover real indicators** of job performance, adaptability, and long-term fit. With expert commentary, real examples, and a scorecard framework, this guide will help you upgrade your interviews from gut-check to insight-driven.





Question 1:

Tell me about a time when you surprised your team.

What happened?

Why It Works:

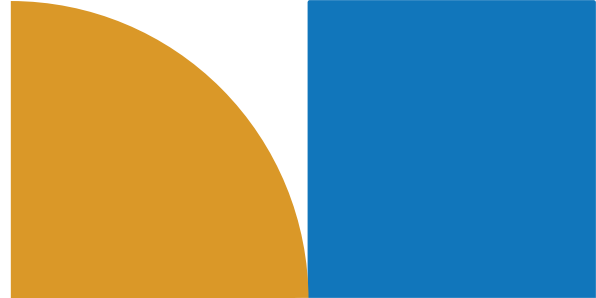
This reveals initiative, emotional intelligence, and how well the candidate understands their team's dynamics. Surprises often stem from innovation, mistakes, or bold moves—all of which are revealing.

What to Look For:

- Self-awareness
- A desire to create impact
- Risk-taking vs. risk-aversion tendencies

Example Response:

"In my last role, I restructured our onboarding guide overnight after hearing a new hire's confusion. My manager hadn't even asked—but the next morning, I presented a revised version that the whole team adopted."





Question 2:

What's a work habit that others find unusual—but works really well for you?

Why It Works:

This surfaces problem-solving styles, self-awareness, and adaptability. It also breaks the typical, rehearsed interview script.

What to Look For:

- Authentic quirks (not perfection theater)
- Creativity in workflow or communication
- Openness to discussing friction and adaptation

Red Flag:

"I don't think I have any unusual habits."
(This may signal low introspection or fear of vulnerability.)





Question 3:

What's a moment from your past job that still makes you proud—and why?

Why It Works:

Pride moments illuminate core values and motivation. They show what a candidate cares about and how they define success.

Bonus Tip:

Ask follow-up questions like "Who noticed?" or "What feedback did you receive?" to see how external validation plays a role in their motivation.





Question 4:

Describe a time when you didn't get buy-in on something. How did you handle it?

Why It Works:

Every role involves persuasion. This question assesses the candidate's influence style, resilience, and collaborative spirit.

Behavioral Insight:

Look for responses that reflect adaptability and learning, not blame.





Question 5:

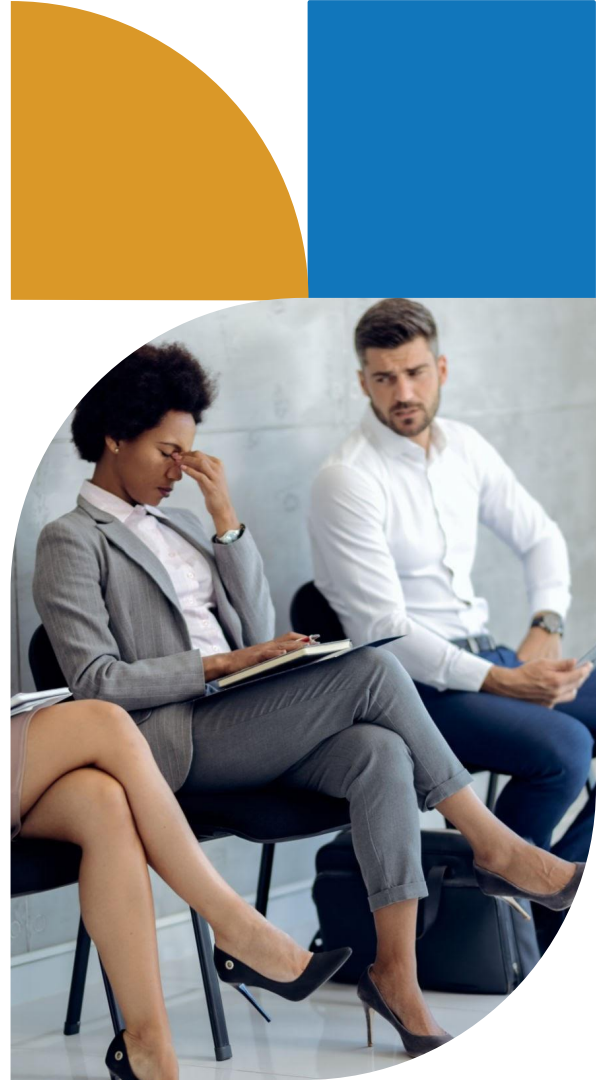
If we asked your former teammates what annoyed them about you, what would they say?

Why It Works:

It disarms candidates and opens the door for humility, growth, and authentic reflection.

What to Look For:

- High emotional intelligence
- Ability to reflect and course-correct
- Willingness to laugh at themselves





Question 6:

(Bonus Question)

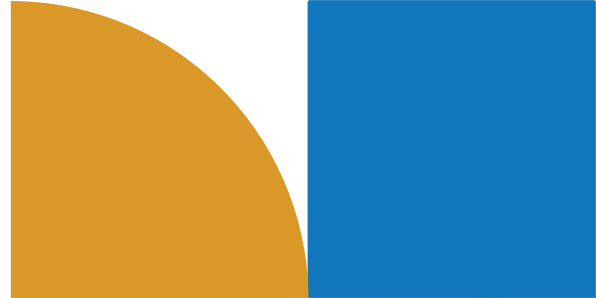
What type of feedback do you find most challenging, and how do you typically respond to it?

Why It Works:

This digs into their emotional triggers, self-regulation, and openness to growth.

What to Watch:

- Are they defensive, dismissive, or overly accommodating?
- Do they mention how they've adapted to tough feedback?





Question 7:

(Bonus Question)

In your ideal work week, what would Monday morning feel like?

Why It Works:

This helps uncover how they think about motivation, work/life rhythms, and ideal environments.

Analysis:

Answers here expose internal drivers and misalignments with your team's actual pace, intensity, and tone.



Interview Scorecard: Sample Format

<input type="checkbox"/>	1-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trait	Score	Notes
• Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Team Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Communication Clarity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Self-Awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Culture Contribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Long-Term Potential	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Use this to structure candidate feedback across all interviewers and improve hiring consistency.



Common Interview Pitfalls

(and How to Avoid Them)



Over-talking yourself

Let the candidate do 80% of the talking.

Asking only hypothetical questions

Let the candidate do 80% of the talking.

Relying on vibe

Use your scorecard.

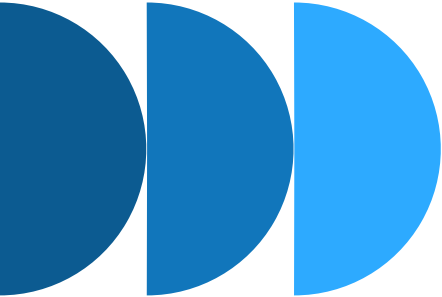
Ignoring motivation alignment

Ask about *why* they work the way they do.





How Pulivarthi Group Can Help



We offer efficient hiring solution for companies that want to:

- Reduce mis-hires
- Increase first-year retention
- Build role-specific scorecards
- Train hiring managers on behavioral interviewing

Our interview frameworks are custom-built to mirror your culture and growth phase.



A red pushpin with a silver metal base, pinned to the top left of the title.

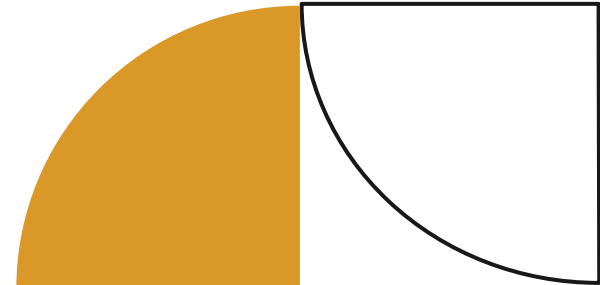
Final Words

Great interviews don't rely on charisma or luck. They rely on structure, clarity, and questions that uncover real patterns.

This swipe file is a starting point.

Ready to go deeper?

Let's build a better hiring system together.





Thank you!

