

QUESTIONS TO ASSESS MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL





INTRODUCTION

Not everyone who excels at their job is ready to manage others. Management requires a different mindset—one built on empathy, accountability, communication, and the ability to bring out the best in people. Before promoting someone into a management role, it's critical to understand not only their skills but also their motivations, personality, and approach to leadership challenges.

This set of questions is designed to spark that deeper exploration. It goes beyond technical expertise and focuses on qualities that define strong managers: how they think about responsibility, how they handle conflict, how they motivate others, and how they respond under pressure. It also pushes candidates to reflect on their past experiences, their personal values, and the kind of leadership legacy they hope to leave behind.

The goal isn't to pass or fail someone—it's to surface insights. By asking the right questions up front, organizations can make more informed decisions about who is truly prepared for the demands of management and who may need further development before stepping into the role. Done well, this process creates stronger managers, healthier teams, and a culture of accountability and growth.

1 What is your personal definition of management?

2 Why do you want to manage other people?

3 Have you ever been in a management or supervisory position before this one? If yes, how did that go? If no, why not?

4 If I polled previous co-workers about your management potential (and/or impact), what would they say and why would they say it?

5 If I asked people who know you well personally whether a management position suits your personality, what would they say and why would they say it?

6 Do you consider yourself an empathetic person? Please explain your answer.

7 Do you consider yourself a positive person? Please explain your answer.

8 Does spending time in groups with other people sap your energy or give you energy? Please explain.

9 Who have been your management role models? What were the biggest lessons you took away from them?

10 Have you ever worked for a poor or bad manager? If yes, please explain what made them a poor manager, and the impact this had on you.

11 How would you describe your communication style? What would those who know you the best say?

- 12** What is (or would be) your approach to motivating other people? Is this only theoretical, or have you applied this thinking in other situations (professionally or personally)? If you have applied your ideas previously, how did it work? Please provide concrete examples.

- 13** What is your approach to conflict management? Walk me through three specific examples where you have dealt with conflict successfully.

- 14** How do you handle it when other co-workers or colleagues make a mistake? How do you respond when you make a mistake?

- 15** How do you handle the pressure of having too much to do and not enough time to do it?

- 16** What is your personal approach to time management and planning your work?

17 In what type of a work environment do you thrive? When have you struggled with a work or organizational culture?

18 Please explain what “accountability” means to you. How have you applied this to your career to date?

19 Please explain what “professionalism” means to you. How have you applied this to your career to date?

20 How would you approach the first two weeks in your role? How about the first 90 days?

21 How much professional reading do you do outside of work? Please share something you’ve learned recently.

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