

# Six Questions to Help Hire Great Managers (And Avoid Jerks!)

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Use these six questions to help understand if a person will be a manager people love working for.

Few things send great people running from an organization faster than a bad manager. Take Tracy, a leader I recently interviewed who had been working at a company for 15 years when a new manager was hired. "I thought I would never leave, but after six months of misery with my manager, I quit." Research shows that leaders have a disproportional impact on employees' experiences at work, but finding good ones and filtering out bad ones can be challenging. It is easy to test someone's technical skills but hard to measure and assess if they will be a good manager. Here are six questions to help hiring managers do just that.

Thanks to decades of research by global analytics firm Gallup, we know that to achieve the highest levels of engagement and retention, employees must feel like they are growing, doing meaningful work, and are appreciated and valued for their contributions. Although candidates can fabricate their answers, these behavioral interview questions are designed to get a window into how a person really treats the people they manage.

## **Do they care about their employees' development?**

Use these questions to see how your candidate has treated their employees in the past.

Employees need to feel like they are growing every day. The below question can determine if the candidate understands that and how they have nurtured an environment where people can grow.

### ***Question:***

***Tell me about some career goals of a past employee/coworker, and share a few examples of how you supported them in achieving those goals.***

This question might catch the candidate off guard because it is not directly about them and their work. Listen for how well they understood the person's goals and the types of support they offered them. Follow up by asking if they would be willing to put you in touch with their past employee/coworker to hear about their experience. (If they look nervous, it may be a red flag that they are not being honest.)

## **Do they know how to show their appreciation for others?**

Great leaders take time to thank their people.

Great leaders understand that appreciation is more than saying "good job" and handing out gift cards and rewards. Use the question below to see if the candidate understands that.

### ***Question:***

***Tell me about different ways you have shown a past employee/coworker that you appreciated and valued them.***

Do they talk about meeting with people regularly, giving feedback, and sharing their team's work with senior leaders?

Do they help their people learn and grow?

Does the candidate support their people getting better at their jobs? Do they help their people learn new skills? The detail in which a candidate responds will help the hiring manager understand the kind of atmosphere they nurture on their teams.

### ***Question:***

***Give me an example of a time when an employee/coworker did not know how to do a task and how you helped them learn. What did you do? Why?***

Do they know how to give feedback and address challenging dynamics?

How leaders respond when an employee makes a mistake is vital for establishing emotional safety at work. The below question will expose how the candidate responds when an employee drops the ball.

**Question:**

***Tell me of a time when one of your employees/coworkers messed up and how you handled it. Why did you choose to handle it this way? How did they respond?***

Do they know how to own their mistakes?

Few things erode trust faster than leaders not understanding how their actions or behaviors impact their people. Did the person apologize, own their mistake, or tell you they don't make mistakes?

**Question**

***Tell me of a time when you got frustrated with an employee only to later find out you were wrong. What was the situation and how did you deal with it?***

Does your candidate understand what they need to feel valued at work?

People who are self-aware of what they need from their leaders to be at their best are more likely to understand the importance of doing the same for their people. Use this question to get a pulse on how aware they are.

**Question**

***Tell me of a boss or supervisor that made you feel valued at work. What did they do to make you feel valued? How would you help your new boss learn to support you?***

Add these questions to your interview repertoire and take care of your people by hiring managers who are not only technically strong but emotionally strong as well.