

125 CEO Interview Questions

Use these 125 CEO Interview Questions (Chief Executive Officer Interview Questions), grouped by subject, to prepare you for your next CEO-level interview.

These CEO Interview Questions are specific to the CEO role, but you may also be asked general interview questions and [Behavioral Interview questions](#), so we recommend preparing for those as well.

We suggest you practice using these CEO Interview Questions with a colleague, an [Executive Coach](#), an Interview Coach, or a [Job Search Coach](#). And that you practice on your own verbally. Just reading questions silently or thinking through the answers to questions may not fully prepare you for giving your answers aloud.

If possible, you may want to put together a panel to simulate the panel interviewing structure (which is a higher pressure format than a one-on-one interview). And, you may want to practice answering your CEO Interview Questions via teleconference and phone as these are also common modes of interviews.

It is also important that you prepare a list of questions to ask during your interview to demonstrate your knowledge, show your interest, and learn what you need to know in order to determine if the position meets your job criteria and will be a win-win business arrangement for everyone. And, here's a [book](#) to help you prepare.

Vision

1. What is your long-term Strategic Vision for our company?
2. How would you help our employees connect to that vision?
3. How would you inspire your leaders and staff to fulfill that vision?
4. Share your top 3 goals for our company.
5. What will get in the way of your leading the achievement of those goals?
6. How have you overcome barriers you've encountered in the past to attaining company goals?
7. What is our company doing well?
8. What could our company be doing better?
9. How would you go about improving upon the things our company could do better?

Strategy and Vision

10. What are the most important strategic priorities for our company over the next three years?
11. As CEO, how would you ensure success regarding these priorities?
12. Describe how you've responded to competitive threats in the past.
13. What were the goals you put in place to respond to these threats?
14. Were you successful in addressing these threats?
15. Describe how you've guided the creation of new business models, products, or strategic initiatives?
16. How did your vision for the company evolve based on the new business approach?

17. How did you gain buy-in from key constituents as the organization evolved?
18. In your view, what risks do we face as an organization?
19. How would you mitigate those risks?

Goals

20. How would you lead the organization in setting goals?
21. How would you ensure that all levels of goals are aligned and integrated, from organizational, to department, to sub-team, to the individual?
22. How would you lead the organization in prioritizing the goals?
23. How would you roll out each level of goals, as appropriate, taking into account the areas that require confidentiality and what information is needed at every level?

The Competition

24. How do you assess the competition?
25. How do you stay current on what the competition is planning or currently implementing?
26. How would you respond if the competition were having success with a new product that our company didn't have?
27. How would you create strategies to compete with our competitors?

The First 90 Days

28. If you were hired, what would be your priorities in your first 90 days?
29. How would you build trust, generate buy-in, and develop a plan during your first 90 days?
30. How would you learn our business?

Business Growth

31. How would you increase our market share?
32. How would you develop our core competencies?
33. Describe an instance where you have driven a business to accelerate growth, expand EBITDA and profitability?
34. Describe how you have grown or changed a business through either strategic partnership, joint venture, merger, or acquisition.
35. What was the long-term effect on your business of this growth?
36. If applicable, describe a time you created or launched a new product or service that resulted in a new revenue stream?

Leadership Style

37. What is your leadership philosophy?
38. How do you embody your leadership philosophy?
39. How would you describe your leadership style?
40. Describe the type of environments in which your leadership style is most effective.
41. How would you build your executive team into a high performing team?
42. What methods have you used to motivate your staff in the past.
43. How would you foster teamwork within the entire organization?
44. Tell us about a time when you led your team in a challenging situation and how you applied your leadership skills to achieve your desired outcomes.
45. How have you connected with people at every level of the organization?
46. Go back in time 10 years. What would you tell yourself about leadership that you didn't know then?

Leadership Development

47. Give an example of when you had a gap in skill and/or experience that made you less effective than desired?
48. What have you done to grow in this area?
49. What would your past Executive Leadership Team say is your biggest flaw?
50. What have you done to mitigate that flaw?
51. What would your staff say are your strengths as a leader?
52. What areas are you currently working for leadership growth?
53. What steps did you take to develop yourself as a CEO?
54. How do you seek constructive feedback?
55. How do you make sure people are being honest with you in giving you feedback?
56. How have you acted on the constructive feedback you received from the Board, your team, and your customers in the past?

Budget Management and Finance

57. Describe how you would manage budgets and the P&L.
58. How did you and your team prioritize your organizational investments in the past?
59. How do you handle departments that have budget variances?
60. Describe how you've used cost benefit analysis to decide on a course of action that was costly.
61. How do you use the various accounting and financial reports?
62. How did you reduce costs in your last position?
63. How have you navigated tough decisions regarding budget cuts, restructuring, or reallocating resources in the past?

Metrics

64. What kind of metrics would you require each department to establish?
65. How would you hold your leaders accountable for achieving their metrics?
66. How would you have your direct reports present their KPIs?

Process Improvement

67. Describe a method you have used to increase efficiency and enhance shareholder return. What was the outcome?
68. How will you identify the problems in the organization?
69. Tell us about a time in which your team successfully implemented a large-scale process change.
70. How did you guide them to implement this change?
71. How did you guide them to gain support for the change?
72. How did they measure the success of the change?
73. How did you hold them accountable for the success of the improvement?
74. How do you approach problem solving with your Executive team?
75. How would you suggest we reward process improvement efforts?
76. Tell me about some of the process improvement projects you've initiated that your organization has had success with.

Change Management

77. Give some examples of how you have gotten the stakeholders and front-line staff to support process and/or policy changes.
78. How did you involve your team in designing and implementing these changes?

Performance Management

79. How do you hold your leaders accountable to develop their leadership skills?
80. How would you measure the performance of your direct reports?
81. Describe a time when one of your direct reports did not meet your expectations and what you did about it.
82. What are your thoughts on formal Performance Appraisals?

Hiring

83. What would you do to attract top talent?
84. Describe your professional network and how you're able to leverage it to recruit top talent and hard to find experts?
85. Describe some top talent you've helped recruit.
86. How did you successfully recruit them?
87. How do you make sure you have the right people in the right jobs?
88. What traits, skills, and experience do you look for in a leader?
89. How do you determine if a leader has these characteristics?
90. When hiring, how do you make sure a leader is a good fit for the company culture?
91. Do you believe in using Assessments in the hiring process?
92. What are your thoughts on using AI in the hiring process?

Team Building

93. Describe a time when you took over a team from someone who had led it for a long time.
94. How did you build rapport, trust, and commitment quickly?
95. How do you create the right mix of personalities for your executive team?
96. What constitutes a good mix?

Failure

97. Tell us about some of your failures.
98. What did you learn from these failures?
99. How did you recover from your failures?
100. How would you lead the organization to view and respond to failure?

Managing Conflict

101. Describe how you have handled a challenging customer.
102. Describe how you have resolved a conflict between leaders on your executive team.

People Management

103. What is your approach to developing talent?
104. How would you handle succession planning?
105. How have you increased employee retention in the past?

Technology

106. How have you selected and implemented technology improvements (e.g., platform integrations, new enterprise management systems, AI).
107. How would you ensure that the organization is investing in and leveraging the correct technology while being careful to balance cost with ROI?

Encouraging Innovation

108. How would you foster greater innovation?
109. What innovations have you fostered at your current company?
110. How have you changed a company culture to facilitate innovation?

Culture Fit

111. What serves as a guiding principal in your life?
112. How does that guiding principal integrate with our company vision, mission, and values?
113. Share a personal story about an experience that defines who you are today.

Miscellaneous

114. What skills, traits, and experience make you a good fit for this position?
115. What challenges do CEOs face in our industry?
116. Why do you want to work for our company?
117. Why do you want to leave your current position?
118. Describe your proudest achievement?
119. How would your direct reports in your previous position describe you?
120. How would the front-line staff describe you?
121. What aspects of this role would be the biggest challenge for you?
122. What is the most difficult thing about being a CEO?
123. What skills and traits have made you successful?
124. In what ways do you align with our company culture?
125. Describe how you've handled investor relations in the past.

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