

# Odd But Effective Interview Questions



Most candidates are prepared for the cliché questions.

*What are your strengths and weaknesses?*

*What do you enjoy most about your job?*

If you stick to predictable interview questions, it can be hard to find the right person for the job. Asking strange, and what might seem irrelevant questions, can show interviewers how candidates react to pressure, especially when there is no “right” answer.

Using effective interview questions can help you weed out the fakes and find candidates with not just the skill set but personality that you need to get the job done. As a specialized [Quality and Regulatory Recruiter](#), I have developed critical thinking questions that are appropriate for most businesses. Please use the comment box below to let me know other critical thinking questions that work well for your interviews.

## **Tell me about a risk that you took outside of work?**

This question is especially useful if you are looking for someone with an entrepreneurial mindset. For example, a manager or team leader.

Investor, Steven Cohen, made money on risks and people. He asked candidates

about risks they took during interviews. Doing so, helped Steven decipher if candidates could take a risk in a controlled way.

## **What didn't make it on your resume?**

Some of our best life accomplishments are not on our resumes. Candidates might answer in a variety of ways, include educational, personal, or volunteer accomplishments. This helps you understand what is important to your candidate outside of work.

## **How would your colleagues describe you?**

Great team members are self-aware. The skill improves communication and creates a higher sense of empathy. Asking how colleagues describe themselves is a great way to determine self-perception. Compare their thoughts to references.

## **Name as many uses for a brick in one minute.**

Almost every job requires you to think on your feet. If you use the cliché interview questions, it will be impossible to capture spontaneous, creative thinking. Naming the uses for a brick is similar to the “sell me a pen” technique.

## **Tell me a joke**

We all know at least one joke, right? Even if it's a knock, knock joke. This question is not to see how funny candidates are - unless you are hiring a comedian! Jokes help us determine if the candidate will fit into company culture. If the candidate tells a racist or sexist joke, politely smile and move onto the next candidate. Asking to tell a joke also shows how a candidate acts under pressure and problem solves.

## **What type of animal are you?**

If you are uncomfortable with having them tell a joke, or if they just can't come up

with one, another option would be to ask them what type of animal most closely resembles their personality and why. You can get some pretty good insights as to their personality and if they might fit in with your group if they describe a very passive animal, a very aggressive animal, or a more “middle of the road” animal.

Finding the right employee requires interviewers to not ask traditional questions. Most candidates will be rehearsed for the typical interview questions. Instead, be creative and ask questions that show their personality. If you need help through the hiring process, contact me, Jeff King at [jeff@rqfocus.com](mailto:jeff@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-350. I serve job seekers and employers in the [biotech, pharmaceutical, and medical device industries](#).

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## 4 Methods to Prevent Employees from Leaving Your Company



Hiring is not only a pain but can be expensive for your company. As a business leader, it's important to find ways to prevent your employees from leaving. If you do not, you will spend hours training. Most new employees do not become profitable for a year in the job.

Maintaining your employees requires more than a raise. You must be aware of the lifestyle, culture, and management style that people desire to be happy in their jobs.

The Workplace Institute Claims that 42 million people quit their job per year and

77 percent can be prevented.

As a [Life Sciences recruiter](#), I have seen people quit for a variety of reasons. This article explains common reasons employees leave their jobs.

## Micromanagement

As a business leader, we usually have time and emotions invested in the company. Delegating tasks can be difficult when we know how we want a task completed. Unfortunately, this leads to micromanaging. Many leaders who micromanage focus so much on the tiny details that they cannot see the big picture. Give your employees that opportunity to create their own path to solving the problem. Different does not always mean bad.

## Lack of Vision

To accomplish a goal, you must have a vision. Many business leaders lack strategic vision.

[Forbes](#) defines strategic vision as the ability to;

- Envision the longer term
- Adopt a broader view of the organization, seeing it in the context of its competition and the current economy
- Define a distinctive, unique mission for the organization
- Define the path by which the firm can grow in the long term
- Repeatedly move the organization forward in creating greater value

Unfortunately, if you do not have strategic vision, your employees could feel like they are only checking tasks off the box. Make sure that they know the end goal of their work.

*How is the work going to make a difference? How is the work going to change a person's life?*

To form a great company with happy employees, your employees must know that

they are working for more than a paycheck.

## No Feedback

Imagine this - You spend 3 hours writing an extensive report. It includes statistics and evaluations. You turn the report into your manager.

Silence. You never receive feedback. Two weeks later, your manager asks you to write another report. Wouldn't this be frustrating?

Most people want to do well. Feedback allows for correction and communication. Your employees are able to develop their skills to succeed. Your feedback could be as brief as asking your employee to add an additional summary paragraph to a report or a "great job" email.

## No Opportunity for Career Advancement

Nobody wants to be stuck in a "dead end job". Career advancement is one of the most important factors of employee satisfaction and retention. Provide the opportunity for employees to take additional responsibilities that lead to changing of their roles and raises.

[Continuing education courses](#) can increase your opportunity for career development. If you give people the opportunity to learn and evolve within your company, they have less motivation to find a company with a more dynamic position.

You will also save valuable time by promoting within your company. Your current employees know company procedures and support the strategic vision. When internal staff is not available for promotion and you need to look externally, that is when I can help. I am a Regulatory and Quality [Recruiter in the pharmaceutical, medical device, or biotech industries](#) in the San Francisco Bay Area. Contact me, Jeff King, at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-3501 to discuss your needs and determine some options to help you build the team you need to succeed.

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# Why Focusing On Being Likeable Can Sabotage Our Work



Work is a social environment. Our coworkers can be the people that we socialize with the most. In this situation, it is natural to want to feel liked. However, you can sabotage your work by trying too hard to be accepted.

You may put yourself at risk in some of the ways outlined in this article:

## We Develop Unrealistic Expectations

Not everyone is going to like us. That is impossible. If you think so, you are going to be disappointed and stressed at work. Rather than focusing on your coworker's approval, strengthen your relationship as a team.

### **Solution:**

There are more productive ways of building a friendship than small talk at the water cooler. Nurture meaningful relationships that helps reach company goals. Working together as a team can promote positivity that builds strong relationships. There might be a company goal that has been pushed to the side for the past year. Communicate with others in your team with numerous skill sets to complete the project. Besides, people tend to like people they work well with and can get things accomplished to make themselves and the team look good.

# You Become Over Critical

We are our own worst critics. If we are constantly comparing ourselves to others it is easy to think that we are not smart, fast, or strategic enough. Self-criticism often occurs if you are focusing on being liked.

## **Solution:**

Everyone has a unique skill set. What is yours?

Now, set boundaries according to your job description. You do not have to do favors for co-workers just to earn approval. This does not mean that you will not have to do hard work or can't be flexible. The difference is compromising your needs to do someone else's job, which earns you approval, but may derail your own work. Go above and beyond in your own position.

# We Dread Work

You may have landed your dream job. The salary is enough to support your family and vacation, and the commute is only a few minutes from your house. This is the job that you have been waiting for!

However, any job can be ruined if your energy is focused on being liked. We become uncomfortable around our coworkers and experience social anxiety.

## **Solution:**

Focus on collaboration instead of being liked. Collaboration empowers us to solve work issues together. If you focus on being liked, you will probably feel alone and dissatisfied. To accomplish collaboration, you must have an openness to learning. If you collaborate successfully, you may be able to solve more work issues and end up being more liked in the process.

If you need help building a company with a healthy company culture, contact me, Jeff King at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com). I am a life sciences recruiter in the Bay Area.

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# When to Start Your Job Search



Whether you have been working at a company for 5 years or 20, it is totally normal to desire a new job. You may not receive proper compensation or you want a new challenge. Whatever your reason is, your work life could improve with a job transition.

For many people, the job search prevents them from transitioning to a new company. They don't know when or how to approach the task. A good recruiter can make the process much easier and coach you through the different stages of interviewing and transitioning into a new role.

The following tips can help everyone who is entering a [job search](#). Timing is everything. The tips in this article can help you determine if it is the right time to start searching. Knowing when to leave is essential for your professional and personal success.

## When the Company You Are Interested in is Hiring

Do you have a dream employer? You may even search their website for career listings every few months. One day, you are searching their website and your position appears on their career listings! There is no better time to start your job search than when your dream employer is hiring.

## When Business is Slow

Almost every company has a slow season. If your employer is barely keeping up



with tasks, don't start your job search. Finish the season on a good note. You are more likely to receive a positive referral when you start interviewing.

## **When Your Competitors Are Paying More**

According to the 2016 [Global](#) Workforce Study, which surveyed more than 31,000 employees around the world, almost half of US employees believe they are being paid unfairly compared to workers who hold similar jobs either at their own or other companies.

Realizing that you receive low pay for your industry is a hard blow. You feel unappreciated and discouraged. Before you assume that you are not receiving enough compensation, there are signs as to whether you are receiving fair compensation for your job.

- Review similar job postings in your area.
- Your company's revenue increased but your wage stayed the same.
- You make less than your colleagues with similar education and experience.
- Your responsibility has increased but your title has not.

This is also something a good recruiter that specializes in your field of work and places people in companies in your area can help with. They know the market and know what salaries people with similar backgrounds are being paid.

## **When You Dread Going to Work**

Nobody should dread work. If you feel like you are just "getting through the day," it is time for a new job. As a recruiter, I have helped many people change jobs because they are unhappy with their current situation, and even some that the stress of their current job was causing medical problems. The following are some of the reasons employees dread their jobs:

- Your values do not align with company values
- You are not receiving proper compensation
- You are bored with the assignments

- You loathe your boss
- You see no opportunity for advancement

Transitioning jobs can be one of the best things that you do for your professional and personal well-being. Time your job search right and you can leave on a good note. If you are working in the [pharmaceutical, medical device, or biotech industries in the San Francisco Bay Area](#), I specialize in working with [life sciences professionals](#) and would be happy to help. Contact me, Jeff King, at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-3501.

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# The Importance of Professional Development Programs for Employees



When budgets are tight, continuing education is often the first item to be diminished from a company's resources. After all, it does not bring in direct revenue.

Continuing education might not affect your revenue immediately. However, you are investing in employee development that can increase your employee's happiness and build a more creative, sustainable company.

As of 2018, Millennials are the largest generation in the workforce at 1 out of 3. A recent study by [Gallup](#) shows that “Millennials are not pursuing job satisfaction — they are pursuing development... Giving out toys and entitlements is a leadership mistake, and worse, it’s condescending. Purpose and development drive this generation.”

If you want to retain Millennials then invest in their professional development. Trophies and bonuses don’t work for this generation.

## 5 Tools for Professional Development

### Conferences

Book your employees to attend an industry-related conference. These conferences often are held by industry-leaders. They can be inspirational for your employees.

### TedTalks

[TedTalks](#) are inspirational videos to “stir your curiosity”. The videos range in topic including science, creativity, business, and tech.

### Creative Live

[CreativeLive](#) provides “1,500+ fundamentals to advanced techniques”. The classes range from Adobe software, money and finance, business modeling, cooking, writing, and more. The classes are all online and can be completed at a flexible pace.

### Meetups

[Meetups](#) are designed for more than building friendships. Meetups have evolved into professional education seminars. If you have a small budget then Meetups could be a good option for you. The classes are typically free to attend.

### Webinars

Webinars are a live, web-based conference that can be viewed around the world. Users are able to interact among online forums in real time. There are thousands of webinars available online for professional development.

Invest in your employees and they are more likely to build a loyal relationship with your company. You will also improve their skills to help meet your company's goals. I am a [Life Sciences Recruiter for the Bay Area](#). If you are looking to hire in these areas, please contact me to discuss your needs and possible solutions. Contact me, Jeff King, at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-3501.

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## What Millennials Want in a Job



In today's job market, Millennials are the largest generation in the workforce. By 2025, Millennials are predicted to be 75% of our work force. Employers need to prepare for what makes Millennials happy, therefore improving company culture and retainment.

Millennials are different than any previous generation. Their focus is more on values and lifestyle, rather than receiving a fat paycheck. No more 60-hour work weeks.

As a recruiter, I try to educate employers on how to keep their high-quality employees. This article outlines my experience with keeping Millennials on the team.

## Millennials Want Strong Company Values

Millennials have a low tolerance for lack of authenticity. They want to work with a company with social causes and personal values. As an employer, you must

demonstrate your values with concrete actions.

For example, project feedback, Employee of the Month, and company parties. Your company is more than just a place to work. It is a supportive community.

## Millennials Want Social Impact

Along with company values is the desire to make a social impact. Colleagues with a shared goal can have a positive impact on the workplace.

Every job is going to have stresses. When a company is working toward a purpose, Millennials feel more positive about difficult work tasks. You do not have to be a non-profit to be philanthropic. You can donate 1% of your profit to charity or have volunteering opportunities.

Chris Martin, President and CEO of President Bank, [encourages all his team members](#) to give back. Each employee receives two paid days per year to volunteer.

## Millennials Want Flexibility in Work Hours

The 9-5 work day is slowly disappearing. Millennials want more flexibility with their work hours. A study by [Bentley University](#) reports that 77% of Millennials claim that flexible work hours would make them more productive.

## Millennials Want to Work Remotely

Working remotely is the dream for many Americans. It is becoming more realistic as more technology and software becomes available.

With the capability, Millennials desire to work outside of the office. According to the [PwC's NextGen study](#), 64% of Millennials would like to occasionally work from home. If your employees are able to work at home then allow them. See [When Is Telecommuting Right for Your Business](#) for my experience recruiting for companies with different types of flexibility. Remote work can lead to an increase in employee happiness and productivity.

# Millennials Want Opportunity for Growth

Nobody wants to work in a dead-end job - especially Millennials. Provide opportunity for growth for your employees. Allow them to take on new responsibility which could lead to another position. Make these opportunities clear during the hiring process to create a more desirable work place.

Change is hard. There is no doubt about it. However, Millennials are the future of our workplace. If your company has not adjusted ideals for the new generation, you could hurt employee retention.

Embrace change and start utilizing these tips into your growing business.

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## When Is Telecommuting Right for Your Business



Telecommuting is the dream. You get to work where you want and when you want. For many businesses, telecommuters can work great. They maintain happy and productive employees with a low turnover rate. Other businesses do not have the flexibility for telecommuters.

As a specialty recruiter for Regulatory and Quality professionals, I have seen when telecommuting works in extremely professional settings. Regulatory employees have more success telecommuting. The majority of their work is research and document generation and review which can be completed at home

with the proper tools. On the other hand, Quality employees need to be onsite more to support manufacturing and product development. Each employee has their part to ensure that products meet FDA standards but the different tasks assigned to their profession prevents telecommuting for many of the employees.

## **When Is Telecommuting Appropriate for Companies?**

### **Research Positions**

If your employee's research project requires only a computer and internet connection then they can probably work remotely. In the industries I represent, this applies to Regulatory employees but can, to a more limited extent, apply to some Quality professionals as well. You may choose to start your employees in the office to prove that they are responsible. With time, give them the telecommuting option to improve employee happiness.

### **Little Interaction with Coworkers**

If your employee's job requires a physical presence then a telecommuting job is not efficient for your company. For example, office manager, product testing, or supervisor. However, telecommuting works well for project-based, data analysis or computer programming work.

### **Already Working Considerable Amount from Home**

Does your employee bring their work home? Employees that bring their work home are usually stressed and overwhelmed, which could lead to their resignation. This can also be true if their commute into your office is a difficult one. If your employee can work remotely half of the time or even full time, let them. The best remote workers depict responsible work ethic. You may want to call your employee into the office for an occasional meeting, but if the work is getting done when they are remote, allow the option.

## **When Is Telecommuting Not Feasible for**

# Your Company

- Position requires high amount of supervision
- Position requires a lot of live interaction with co-workers
- Employee deals with sensitive or confidential information
- Employees must attend meetings

A large part of building a great company is making your employees happy. Now, more companies allow employees to work remotely. You can increase productivity and avoid high turnover. If your employee is asking to work remotely, evaluate their position and whether it would fit your company's needs. A great employee can be hard to find. Do your best to make them happy and you will draw more forward-thinking workers.

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## Do You Really Need Us?



**YOU DON'T NEED US** if the position(s) you have to fill are not considered critical, AND you can take whatever time is necessary for the right person to see your job posting, AND you have the time to review all submitted resumes to find the ones you want to interview. If this is the case traditional methods of recruiting may work for you.

**BUT, YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER US** if filling the position(s) quickly and with the right person is critical, and you need someone with the experience and



understanding to do the first level screening to weed out all but the top 3-5 candidates for you, AND you are not getting much response to your current recruiting efforts. Top caliber candidates are NOT scouring job postings. They're too busy getting their work done. They also take less time to get up to speed.

## **WHAT MAKES US ANY DIFFERENT OR BETTER THAN OTHER RECRUITERS?**

- I worked for 4 years as an Engineer designing new medical devices, and 5 years as a Marketing Product Manager developing and launching new products to the market.
- I've spent the past 20+ years filling critical positions in the Bay area with experienced, top performing Regulatory, Clinical, and Quality professionals.
- I'm also a career counselor to several local Regulatory, Clinical, and Quality professionals and understand what they're looking for in their careers, and know how to approach them to have them consider your opportunity.
- I am a certified Facilitator for Everyday Engagement methodology for building High Performance Teams.
- I take the time to get to know the "personality" of my client companies so I can better match the personalities of the candidates for a better and longer lasting fit.

## **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US**

- I will take the time to understand what problems you are trying to solve and what type of person would perform best in that role and send you the top 3-5 pre-screened candidates to consider.
- Weekly updates on the status of your search so you KNOW it's being worked on.
- I have a 74% accuracy rate on submitting candidates you want to interview.
- I have a 93% success rate on getting your offers accepted and having the

candidate ready to go on day one.

- Periodic follow ups with the candidate and the hiring manager during the first year to ensure a good fit.
- A 5 year replacement policy to ensure you're happy with the outcome.

## TESTIMONIALS

*"...I know that Jeff is not in the business to make 'a quick buck'. He is a reliable, trustworthy resource who has my best interest in mind. In my fifteen years of experience, the proof is always in the end result. Candidates represented by Jeff have gone on to become key contributors and successful team members. When staffing needs arise, Jeff King is the first person I contact."* - **J. Cook QA/RA Director**

*"..Jeff is thorough in understanding the requirements of each open position. He is considerate of my time, as well as conscientious in his follow up. He is a pleasure to work with."* - **M. Ashburn HR Manager**

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## How-To Create More Efficient Meetings



Meetings - we have to have them but they can be giant time consumers in our work day. For many companies, meetings are prolonged from chit chat and

ramble. Others are poorly organized. This can be frustrating for employees that have piles of work.

As a Specialty Quality and Regulatory Recruiter, I have seen the processes of many different types of companies. Some works. Others ends in disaster. Meetings can be crucial to organize your team and make sure you are on the same page.

I have outlined tips that can create more efficient meetings. Start implementing these tips to save valuable time at work.

## **Review Attendee List**

It's frustrating for employees who are sitting at meetings that they know that they don't have to attend. A meeting could add an extra hour onto their work day. Before you ask for a meeting, consider who really needs to attend.

The employees that should be at meetings will contribute to the project. Unnecessary attendees will only waste valuable time at the company's expense.

## **Distribute Written Agenda in Advance**

Be prepared before the meeting. Create a written agenda and email it to your attendees. That way, they will be prepared with the information that they need to bring. Your employees will not be pulling up information spontaneously on their lap top. You have already prepared them for what you need to discuss.

## **Manage the Meeting by the Clock**

It's easy to waste time chatting about weekend plans, family, or sporting event. However, meetings are not the time to have these discussions. Create a timeline to keep the meeting moving.

For example, 10 minutes for project status. 30 minutes for planning.

Determine the timeline that works best for the productivity of your team.

# Take Notes

We can't remember everything. As a business leader, it is essential to take notes. Record project status, updates, and plans. Type out your ideas and send the record to attendees after the meeting. This will prevent your team from forgetting details. You will not have to repeat information at the next meeting.

# Start On-Time

Along with following a time schedule is starting on-time. Tell your employees in advance the meeting will begin promptly at the arranged time. Start the meeting even if some of your attendees are absent.

Punctuality is professional and necessary in the workplace.

Tardiness is embarrassing for most professionals. Starting your meetings on time can help influence your team to arrive promptly.

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# When to Give a Raise



It's important to make your employees feel valuable. A large part of doing so is giving raises. The trick is knowing when and how much to provide. You need your employees to prove their worth but not feel over expended without proper compensation.

As a Specialty Quality and Regulatory Recruiter, I have seen successful companies follow the properties that I will outline in this article. Employees leave jobs for many reasons. Pay and lack of recognition are big ones.

## **Acknowledge Value**

To award raises, you must understand value within your company. This means, creating key performance indicators (KPI's) for each employee. That way, your employees will know what they are working toward. Make sure that your goals challenge them but are achievable.

## **Keep Your Employees Informed**

Communication is essential in any relationship - this includes business. Keep your employees informed throughout the year of whether they are meeting their KPI's. You could do this by quarterly reports. Most people want to do well. Taking the time to review job performance, write a report, and meet is an investment for your company. Growing the skills of your employees is cheaper than hiring.

But, of course, if you need to add to your team or upgrade the team you have, I can help you find the right employee to help you meet company goals.

## **Don't Guess! Crunch the Numbers**

If your employees reach their goals, it's essential that you provide them with the correct compensation. This is not only essential for them but the financial stability of your company. Employees receive more salary when they are providing more return to the company. Top performers should get a bigger raise, but be careful.

Giving too much of a raise can cause drama. Employees talk. If a colleague earns less of a raise than another a coworker could get upset. When you give your employee the raise, explain what goals they completed to justify the number.

It's also important to make sure what you are paying your employees is competitive. There are salary surveys that can help. And for Regulatory and Quality positions in the San Francisco Bay Area I can be a resource to let you know what the market is paying for these positions. Paying a competitive salary

will help you keep your employees. If you don't want to pay the market rate for good talent, your competitors will.