

## **300 QUESTIONS FOR PROJECT MANAGERS**

Whether you are getting prepared to be interviewed for a project managers position, or if you are the person who will be conducting interviews for open project manager positions, this list of questions should help you prepare.

1. How do you handle non-productive team members?
2. How do you motivate team members who are burned out, or bored?
3. How do you handle team members who come to you with their personal problems?
4. What are your career goals? How do you see this job affecting your goals?
5. Explain how you operate interdepartmentally.
6. Tell me how you would react to a situation where there was more than one way to accomplish the same task, and there were very strong feelings by others on each position.
7. Consider that you are in a diverse environment, out of your comfort zone. How would you rate your situational leadership style?
8. Give me an example of your leadership involvement where teamwork played an important role.
9. Tell me about a situation where your loyalty was challenged. What did you do? Why?
10. In what types of situations is it best to abandon loyalty to your manager?
11. In today's business environment, when is loyalty to your manager particularly important?
12. Why are you interested in this position?
13. Describe what you think it would be like to do this job every day.
14. What do you believe qualifies you for this position?
15. What have you learned from your failures?
16. Of your previous jobs, which one did you enjoy the most? What did you like the most/least? Why? What was your major accomplishment? What was your biggest frustration?
17. Tell me about special projects or training you have had that would be relevant to this job.
18. What are some things that you would not like your job to include?
19. What are your current work plans? Why are you thinking about leaving your present job?
20. Describe an ideal job for you.
21. What would you do if you found out that a contractor was in a conflict of interest situation?
22. If I were to contact your former employee, what would he say about your decision-making abilities?
23. Give me an example of a win-win situation you have negotiated.
24. Tell me about your verbal and written communication ability. How well do you represent yourself to others? What makes you think so?
25. Give me an example of a stressful situation you have been in. How well did you handle it? If you had to do it over again, would you do it differently? How do you deal with stress, pressure, and unreasonable demands?
26. Tell me about a tough decision you had to make?
27. Describe what you did at your work place yesterday.
28. How would you solve the following technical problem? (Describe a typical scenario that could occur in the new position.)
29. What strengths did you bring to your last position?
30. Describe how those contributions impacted results?
31. What are the necessary steps to successful project management?
32. How do you plan for a project?
33. What is important to consider when planning a (your type of project)?
34. What are things that you have found to be low priority when planning for (your type of project)?
35. What distinguishes a project from routine operations?
36. What are the three constraints on a project?
37. What are the five control components of a project?
38. What qualifications are required to be an effective project manager?
39. What experience have you had in project management?
40. Name five signs that indicate your project may fail.

41. Tell us about a project in which you participated and your role in that project.
42. When you are assigned a project, what steps do you take to complete the project?
43. As you begin your assignment as a project manager, you quickly realise that the corporate sponsor for the project no longer supports the project. What will you do?
44. Your three month project is about to exceed the projected budget after the first month. What steps will you take to address the potential cost overrun?
45. Tell us about a successful project in which you participated and how you contributed to the success of that project.
46. You are given the assignment of project manager and the team members have already been identified. To increase the effectiveness of your project team, what steps will you take?
47. You have been assigned as the project manager for a team comprised of new employees just out of college and "entry-level" consulting staff. What steps can you take to insure that the project is completed against a very tight time deadline?
48. What is a "project milestone"?
49. What is "project float"?
50. Your project is beginning to exceed budget and to fall behind schedule due to almost daily user change orders and increasing conflicts in user requirements. How will you address the user issues?
51. You've encountered a delay on an early phase of your project. What actions can you take to counter the delay? Which actions will have the most effect on the result?
52. Describe what you did in a difficult project environment to get the job done on time and on budget.
53. What actions are required for successful executive sponsorship of a project?
54. How did you get your last project?
55. What were your specific responsibilities?
56. What did you like about the project and dislike about the project?
57. What did you learn from the project?
58. Tell me about a time when you ran into any difficult situations. How did you handle them?
59. Tell me about the types of interaction you had with other employees.
60. Tell me of an accomplishment you are particularly proud of and what it entailed.
61. Do you have people from your past consulting services who would provide a professional reference?
62. What other similar consulting or independent contractor services have you rendered?
63. Discuss how you would envision working as an independent contractor or consultant for us.
64. What conflicting responsibilities will you have?
65. What would be your specific goals for this new role as a consultant or independent contractor?
66. What experience do you have that you think will be helpful?
67. This assignment will require a lot of [describe]. Will that be a problem for you?
68. This assignment will require interacting with [describe the types of people]. What experience do you have working with such people?
69. What would you like to get from this new assignment?
70. What are two common but major obstacles for a project like this? What would you do in the face of these obstacles to keep your team on schedule?
71. What is project charter? What are the elements in a project charter?
72. Which document will you refer for future decisions?
73. How will you define scope?
74. What is the output of scope definition process?
75. What is quality management?
76. Do you inspect or plan for quality?
77. What is EVM? how will you use it in managing projects?
78. What is a project? and what is program?
79. What are project selection methods?
80. Which tool would you use to define, manage and control projects?
81. What is risk management and how will you plan risk response?
82. What are outputs of project closure?
83. What are the methods used for project estimation?

84. What methods have you used for estimation?
85. How would you start a project?
86. If you were to deliver a project to a customer, and timely delivery depended upon a sub-supplier, how would you manage the supplier? What contractual agreements would you put in place?
87. In this field (the field you are interviewing for), what are three critically important things you must do well as a project manager in order for the project to succeed?
88. What metrics would you expect to use to determine the on-going success of your project?
89. How are your soft skills? Can you "sell" the project to a team?
90. You have a team member who is not meeting his commitments, what do you do?
91. Companies have historically looked at technical skills, but more and more business managers are realizing that not have "people" skills tend to cripple projects.
92. How many projects you handled in the past? Deadlines met? On time/ within budget? Obstacles you had to overcome?
93. Do you understand milestones, interdependencies? Resource allocation?
94. Do you know what Project Software the new company uses and is there training for it?
95. Tell me about yourself. (To avoid rambling or becoming flustered, plan your answer.)
96. What are your strengths? (Make an exhaustive list and review it exhaustively before the interview.)
97. What are your weaknesses? (What you say here can and will be used against you!)
98. How would your current (or last) boss describe you?
99. What were your boss's responsibilities? (Interviewers sometimes ask this question to prevent you from having the chance to claim that you did your boss's job. Be ready for it!)
100. What's your opinion of them? (Never criticize your past or present boss in an interview. It just makes you look bad!)
101. How would your co-workers or subordinates describe you professionally? (Remember, now is not the time for modesty! Brag a little bit.)
102. Why do you want to work for us?
103. Why do you want to leave your present employer?
104. Why should we hire you over the other finalists?
105. What qualities or talents would you bring to the job?\*
106. Tell me about your accomplishments.
107. What is your most important contribution to your last (or current) employer?
108. How do you perform under deadline pressure? Give me an example.
109. How do you react to criticism? (You try to learn from it, of course!)
110. Describe a conflict or disagreement at work in which you were involved. How was it resolved?
111. What are two of the biggest problems you've encountered at your job and how did you overcome them?
112. Think of a major crisis you've faced at work and explain how you handled it.
113. Give me an example of a risk that you took at your job (past or present) and how it turned out.
114. What's your managerial style like?
115. Have you ever hired employees; and, if so, have they lived up to your expectations?
116. What type of performance problems have you encountered in people who report to you, and how did you motivate them to improve?
117. Describe a typical day at your present (or last) job.
118. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
119. What is project management?
120. Is spending in IT projects constant throughout the project?
121. Who is a stakeholder?
122. Can you explain project life cycle?
123. Twist :- How many phases are there in software project?
124. Are risk constant throughout the project?
125. Can you explain different software development life cycles?
126. What is triple constraint triangle in project management?
127. What is a project baselines?
128. What is effort variance?

129. How is normally a project management plan document organized?
130. How do you estimate a project?
131. What is a fish bone diagram?
132. Twist:- What is Ishikawa diagram?
133. What is pareto principle?
134. Twist:- What is 80/20 principle?
135. How do you handle change request?
136. What is internal change request?
137. What is difference between SITP and UTP in testing?
138. What is the software you have used for project management?
139. What are the metrics followed in project management?
140. Twist: - What metrics will you look at in order to see the project is moving successfully?
141. You have people in your team who do not meet their deadlines or do not perform what are the actions you will take?
142. Twist :- Two of your resources have conflicts between them how would you sort it out?
143. What is black box testing and White box testing?
144. What's the difference between Unit testing, Assembly testing and Regression testing?
145. What is V model in testing?
146. How do you start a project?
147. How did you do resource allocations?
148. How will you do code reviews?
149. What is CMMI?
150. What are the five levels in CMMI?
151. What is continuous and staged representation?
152. Can you explain the process areas?
153. What is SIX sigma?
154. What is DMAIC and DMADV?
155. What are the various roles in Six Sigma implementation?
156. What are function points?
157. Can you explain steps in function points?
158. What is the FP per day in your current company?
159. Twist :- What is your company's productivity factor?
160. Do you know Use Case points?
161. How do you estimate maintenance project and change requests?
162. What are all the skills you will be looking at if you have to hire a project manager?
163. Why are you looking out for a job?
164. What is your current role and responsibilities? What did you like most in your current job?
165. How does your day normal look like? What are some of challenges you face on a daily basis?
166. What makes you exciting about Project management?
167. Why should we hire you as a Project manager?
168. How do you handle pressure and stress?
169. Your team is following agile practices. You have to hire a resource for your team. What are all the skills consider when you hire a new resource.
170. You are starting a new project, which includes offshore/onsite development. How do you manage communications?
171. Your project team does not have hierarchy. You have couple of good techies in your project that has same skills and experience. There is a conflict between two of them. Both are good technically and very important to the project. How do you handle conflict between them?
172. Have you done performance appraisals before? If yes, how do you appraise people?
173. How do you estimate? What kind of estimation practices do you follow?
174. Your customer is asking for an estimate. You do not have time to do FP. But you do not want to give a ballpark estimate. What kind of estimation will you give?

175. Your company is expert in providing solutions for a particular domain. You are appointed as a project manager for a new project. You have to do Risk management. What will be your approach?
176. How do you improve your team's efficiency?
177. You are joining as project manager for a team, which already exists. How do you gain respect and loyalty of your team members?
178. You are going to be the project manager for a web-based application, which is targeted towards Insurance. Your gut feeling is that it would take 5 resources and 8 months to deliver this application.
  - a. What kind of resources you will hire for this project?
  - b. If you are asked to deliver the project in 6 months. Can you accelerate the development and deliver it in 6 months? What will be your approach?
179. What kind of release management practices do you follow?
180. Your application is in testing for the last 2 weeks and you are supposed to deliver the application at the EOD. Your testing team has found a major flaw in your application in the afternoon. You cannot miss the deadline and your developers cannot fix the bug in couple of hours. How do you handle this situation?
181. You have a resource that who is not happy with his job and complains all the time. You have noticed that because of that the team morale is getting spoiled. How do you handle that resource?
182. Your team is into the 6th Iteration of 8 Iteration project. It's been really hectic for the team for the last couple of months as this project is very important for your customer and to your company. You have started noticing that some of your key resources are getting burnt out. How do you motivate these resources?
183. Yours is a dedicated team for a customer and it's been a dull period for you and your team. You are not actively involved in any development activities. Your team is providing support to the application, which you have delivered earlier. Your team is getting bored as the application stabilized now. Due to budget issues, customer is not going to give you work for another 3 months. How do you motivate the resources?
184. There was a situation where more than one-way to accomplish the same task. Your onsite tech lead and offshore tech lead has different opinions about doing this and the feelings were very strong. Both are very important to you. How do you react to this?
185. What are the practices you follow for project close out? Assume you are into a product customization for a customer and the application has gone live. How do you close this project?
186. Your team is in between iteration. Your customer wants few more items to be delivered in that iteration which you are working now. How do you react to your customer?
187. You are at the customer's place and your application is in UAT/stabilization phase. Your customer comes up with a change request and says that it's a minor one and he wants to see it in the next release. What will be your response/approach to your customer?
188. What is velocity? How do you estimate your team's velocity?
189. What is earned value management? Why do you need it?
190. Describe the type of manager you prefer.
191. What are your team-player qualities? Give examples.
192. How do you prioritize your tasks when there isn't time to complete them all?
193. How do you stay focused when faced with a major deadline?
194. Are you able to cope with more than one job at a time?
195. In your opinion, why do software projects fail?
196. Your customer wants a bug to be delivered at EOD. You have got the BUG/CR information in the morning. It will not be possible to develop, completely regress this issue and deliver it at EOD. How do you approach this issue?
197. You are following Waterfall as your development methodology and you have estimated X days for design phase. Your customer is not ready to accept this. How do you convince your customer to have X number of days for design phase?
198. You have to sell agile practices (XP/Scrum) to your organization. Your management is very reluctant to change. You are sure that if you do not change to agile, it will be very tough to survive. What will be your approach?
199. How do you set and manage expectations (with customers, your managers and your team)?
200. For some reason you've encountered a delay on an early phase of your project. What actions can you take to counter the delay?
201. What is Function point analysis? Why do you need it?



202. What is the difference between EO and EQ? What is FTR?
203. You are estimating using Function point analysis for a distributed n-tier application. How do you factor the complexity for distributed n-tier application? Does FP Provides support for it?
204. You are getting Adjusted Function point count. How do you convert it into Effort?
205. How do you manage difficult people/problem employees?
206. How do you build your teams morale?
207. How do you estimate your SCRUM/XP Projects? How do you define velocity for the first couple of iterations? What is a load factor?
208. What is team building? What are the stages in team building? Do you consider it as an important thing? Why?
209. What are some of your lessons learnt with your previous iteration delivered? How do you use your lessons learnt in your iteration planning?
210. Can you describe this position to me in detail, why you believe you are qualified for this position, and why you are interested in it?
211. Can you describe this company to me as if I were an investor?
212. How do you get your team working on the same project goal?
213. What do you do when a project is initiated and given to you and you have a gut feeling the scope is too large for the budget and the timeline?
214. What formal project management training have you received, where did you attend, and what have you learned from it?
215. We are very siloed, can you explain how you operate interdepartmentally?
216. Consider that you are in a diverse environment, out of your comfort zone. How would you rate your situational leadership style? Give me example?
217. You may also be presented with a couple of case studies. For instance, 'What if a key employee falls sick at a critical time of project delivery?' and etc.
218. My favorite questions are the "Tell me about a time when..." questions. Make sure you have stories about projects you participated in or managed. Especially share stories of those that had a difficulty to overcome (eg: budget or time constraint blown) and how the difficulty was managed in order to bring the project to a successful conclusion, or how the project was closed down before damaging the stakeholders.
219. How stakeholder expectation is managed?
220. How internal and external project risk is managed (quantitatively if possible)
221. How organizational change is managed (involving the stakeholders that will experience change in their lives as a result of the project),
222. How 'scope management' is done, when the project has not been scoped properly - this is not scope creep I am talking about, merely the fact that the user, client and management learns what they really want as the project progresses nine times out of ten - incidentally, glib answers like 'We use RAD, spiral models, prototypes only indicate that the candidate knows of such things, and not that they know how to use them,
223. What needs to be reported to stakeholders, when and how the data is collected - I normally focus on financial management techniques here - does the PM know how to use the GL, does the PM understand signing powers, how is overtime managed and used, etc.
224. How does delegation work - you don't want a PM that does technical work(domain specific work) - the PM should manage the project (not always practical, but it sounds nice anyway),
225. How does the interface between line management and the Project work - Can the PM negotiate with Middle and Senior resource managers when interests conflict,
226. How is project progress measured - Anyone that tells me that the %complete calculation function in MS Project works is ignorant!! - I can prove to anyone who is interested that the algorithm is faulty, and
227. How project team communications, stress and conflict is managed.
228. Describe a time when you had to give bad news on a project to a customer. There are a lot more approaches to this than you would think, and answers can be insightful.
229. What did you learn from your first job (like flipping burgers at McD's)? The idea here is to see if they can glean useful information out of simple situations, can they reflect and learn from any situation. I think this form of continuous learning is key for PMs.

230. How good are you at MS Project (or whatever tool you use)? This is almost a trick question from my perspective. I believe that most of a PM's job is people, so if someone knows a piece of software forwards-and-backwards, they probably don't have the people skills required to do the job.
231. Describe how you motivate and manage a matrixed team--where the people on your team do not work for you. Since this is often the mode, they must be able to do it.
232. How would you go about organizing a project that had enterprise wide implications?
233. What is your approach to managing projects and how does it vary based on the size and complexity or the project?
234. Who should lead projects?
235. Who should be accountable for the project's outcome?
236. What was the budget for the largest project you have managed?
237. What is the project management structure in your project? Is a PL assigned to the project?
238. How do you know that a particular individual is the project leader (or) how do you know that you are the Project Leader?
239. What and where are the policy statements for software project planning?
240. Explain the various activities you do (as a PL) when the project is started up.
241. How do you know what you need to deliver or do in your project?
242. How do you create the Software Project Management Plan (SPMP)?
243. What training have you undergone in project planning?
244. How do you ensure that your project plan is available for others to see? Where will you find the plans of other projects executed (in the past or currently) in the center?
245. How did you choose the appropriate lifecycle for your project?
246. What are the documents that you will refer to create the plan?
247. How do you estimate the effort for your project? Where is the estimation procedure documented?
248. What procedures do you follow to arrive at the project schedule?
249. Where and how are the risks associated with your project identified and documented?
250. When you come in to the office, how do you know what you have to do during the day?
251. How do you report the status of your project?
252. How are team members kept informed about the current status of the project?
253. How do the audits cover planning activities?
254. How does the senior management review your project's progress?
255. How do you track the technical activities in your project? How is the status of the project communicated to the team?
256. How do you track the size or changes to size of the work products in your project?
257. When do you revise your project plan? When do you know you have to revise your project plan? Where is the plan revision frequency documented?
258. How do you ensure that you and all the other team members in your project have the required technical skills to execute the project?
259. How do you assign tasks to your team members?
260. What is the document that should be consulted to know about your project, the activities you do, your schedules and milestones?
261. How do you handle disruptive team members?
262. How do you handle non-productive team members?
263. How do you motivate team members who are burned out or bored?
264. How do you motivate people?
265. How do you handle team members who come to you with their personal problems?
266. How do you start a project?
267. If you are teaching the ropes to a new Project Manager, what would you say are the most important things he needs to look for?
268. What would be the key artifacts needed in a project?
269. How do you manage change?
270. How do you manage conflict in the project team?
271. How do you deal with a difficult team member?

272. What qualifications are required to be an effective project manager?
273. What is the difference between a project plan and a project schedule?
274. What do you include in a project schedule?
275. How do you track a project?
276. How do you track risks? Tell me about the risks that your last project had.
277. What is the difference between a risk and an issue?
278. How do you define quality in project management?
279. What would you say if a team member asks why project management is needed? Why do we have to do all this documentation ahead of the real work?
280. What have you learned in obtaining your PMP that you are using in real-life projects?
281. What do you do if a team member presents a work product that you know for a fact is flawed or incomplete, but the team member insists it is completed and sound?
282. What would you do if a manager whose resources you are using keeps saying that all the documentation required by the project is getting in the way of actual progress?
283. What was your role in your last project?
284. What was the most interesting role you played in a project?
285. What do you do when a team member does not complete his/her assignment and has gone to another project?
286. Have you used Microsoft Project? How do you like it?
287. How do you verify that the requirements identified for a project are actually included in the final delivery to the users?
288. How do you verify that the requirements are correct and that they reflect what the users want?
289. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses in the Project Management areas of knowledge?
290. What are the risks you had in your last project?
291. What are the main objects of a project manager?
292. How do you perform Function Point Analysis?
293. What are project management tools? Mention some of them?
294. What are the main attributes to be possessed by a project manager?
295. How must the project manager react under pressured projects?
296. In what percentage or ratio must a project manager possess technical and managerial skills?
297. How often is learning process important for a project manager and why?
298. Explain the managerial features that must be possessed by project manager?
299. Mention some of the steps to be taken by project manager to reduce stress in the project and among.
300. What are the induction processes a project manager must plan for team members?