

Diversity-Focused Interview Question Examples

The below questions are excerpted from an online [article](#) by [Kelli Newman Mason](#).

For both employers and job seekers, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are more important than ever. As the former head of people at two quickly growing startups and the cofounder of a nationally recognized workplace inclusion strategy firm, I've seen firsthand how questions of DEI are being centered in the hiring process for all roles. Employers want the competitive advantage provided by a team that reflects the diversity of their customers and brings a wide variety of viewpoints to the table. They also need candidates who will help rather than hinder their efforts to foster a welcoming and supportive environment—no matter what the job.

Consumers are also starting to hold companies accountable for insensitive statements and biased blunders. Companies want employees who will represent them well and demonstrate cultural competency. With those goals and concerns in mind, interviewers are starting to ask *all* candidates about their thoughts on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

1. Please Share With Us What Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Mean to You and Why They're Important.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion have much broader meanings than most people assume. Employers want to know that you not only grasp the true meaning of each term, but that you also find merit in each of these concepts and share a commitment to fostering them in the workplace.

2. In Your Opinion, What Is the Most Challenging Aspect of Working in a Diverse Environment?

When a hiring manager asks this question, they're looking for an answer that lets them know you're aware of the challenges that can arise in diverse environments, but that you're capable of appropriately addressing those challenges. While you can bring up a relevant experience if you have one, be aware that your interviewer is not opening the floor for a vent session.

3. What Is Your Approach to Understanding the Perspectives of Colleagues From Different Backgrounds?

Thriving in a diverse work environment is easier said than done. [Research](#) suggests that working on diverse teams produces stronger outcomes because the diversity of perspectives can actually make the process harder. It requires teamwork and a good deal of effort to create the type of connection and understanding across differences that will result in positive business outcomes. The goal of this type of question is to determine how active you will be in building a bridge of understanding between your colleagues and yourself.

4. How Would You Handle a Situation Where a Colleague Was Being Culturally Insensitive, Sexist, Racist, or Homophobic?

Employers want to know how active you'll be in creating an inclusive environment. It is not enough that you won't make insensitive remarks yourself. Most companies are looking for employees who will actively stand up against biased remarks and actions.

5. How Would You Advocate for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion With Colleagues Who Don't Understand its Importance?

Unfortunately, there are still some people who do not understand the importance of workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion. Your interviewer may ask you this question because such people are present in the organization you're seeking to join and they want to know how you would respond.

6. Tell Me About a Time When You Advocated for Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace.

Interviews almost always include a question or two designed to gauge how you're likely to behave in practice based on what you've done in the past, and this one is specifically intended to assess your ability to translate your values and beliefs into action.

7. Can You Give Me an Example of How You Make Your Direct Reports Feel a Sense of Inclusion, Belonging, and Equity on a Daily Basis?

Inclusion is such an important value for all employees to embrace and champion, but perhaps especially for those in management and leadership roles who can set the tone for others. Employers want to know that you won't be just a passive bystander, but will proactively help make the work environment a friendlier place where everyone feels encouraged to contribute and feels positive about their opportunities for growth, regardless of their background.

8. What Steps Will You Take to Eliminate Bias From Your Hiring Process?

Regardless of our own backgrounds, we all have subconscious biases. If we're not careful, they can negatively affect how we interact with others. For those in positions to hire others, these subconscious biases can come out in subtle ways, such as feeling that a candidate "isn't a good fit," though you can't quite put your finger on why or why not. Employers want to know that you're aware that you may have biases and that you've thought through what steps you'll take to [proactively avoid](#) them when looking for new team members.