

Chief Executive Officer

Interview Playbook



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- . This should take no more than 5 minutes.
- . Who you are, what your role is
- . History of the company
- . What you are looking for in the next CEO



Start the interview process by understanding what drives and motivates each individual candidate and what is drawing them to your organization.

Example Questions

1. Why is now the right time for you to consider a career move into a CEO role?
2. What excites and/or interests you about our brand?
3. How do you think your experience has prepared you to lead from the C-suite?
4. How do you anticipate your experience will positively impact the growth of the company?



This is the area where you are going to dive deep into and unpack the sales/ business development experience of each candidate.

What to be prepared for

1. What have been your big wins when it comes to driving direct revenue?
2. Can you share one or more of your most meaningful client relationships? How did it start and where is that client today?
3. Can you describe some of your core values when it comes to building a sales organization?
4. Can you tell us about the most successful sales representative that you have ever managed and what made them so successful?
5. What systems, metrics, and processes do you lean on to successfully monitor and manage a sales force?
6. What do you think the biggest challenges are in harmonizing work between sales and delivery?
7. How do you think your current relationships will translate over to this business?



This is where we
dive into each
candidate's
leadership
experience and
style.

Example Questions

1. How would you describe your leadership and management style?
2. Which of your characteristics do you want employees to mirror?
3. Can you tell us about the largest human capital that you have managed and what the challenges were in uniting that group?
4. What is your experience working cross-functionally with different divisions within an organization?
5. Which departments within a business do you find the most challenging to influence?
6. Can you tell us about a large company-wide or division-wide training implementation that you have been the architect of? What it was and why it was successful?
7. If there was one person who has worked with you throughout your career that you could bring with you to help grow the business, who would it be and why?



This series of questions will help you unpack the experience and / or expectations each candidate has about being managed by or reporting to a board.

What to be prepared for

1. What has been your experience working with, reporting to, or presenting to a board?
2. What do you think makes for a successful relationship between a CEO and their board?
3. What is your approach when getting to know a board of directors?
4. How would your previous direct-reports describe you?



This line of questioning should help you to get a “feeling” for the person and allow them to speak less to what they have done, but rather how they’ve done it.

Example Questions

1. What are the cultural values that you hold most dear and true that you would never, under any circumstance, compromise as a CEO?
2. How do you see those values fitting in with our culture?
3. What are some of the ways that you believe a company can create a more diverse and inclusive culture?
4. As a business leader, what is the hardest decision you’ve had to make and why?
5. How do you shape the culture of the employer for whom and with whom you work?



This line of questions will help uncover what the candidate knows about your business or industry.

What to be prepared for

1. What would your long term strategic vision be for our company?
2. What is our company doing well? What could we be doing better?
3. What would you consider to be our biggest competition, and what is our competitive advantage?
4. How would you promote innovation?
5. If you were hired, what would be your priorities in the first 90 days?



This is the area of the interview to explore any hesitations that the candidate might have.

Example Questions

1. What trepidations do you have about this opportunity?
2. What do you think will be the most difficult part about moving into this role?
3. If there was one thing that you could get formalized training or education on prior to being in this role, what would it be?
4. Is there anything your current employer could do that would keep you from taking this job?
5. If an acceptable financial package were offered, is there anything non-financial that would stop you from accepting this job?



This is the candidate's opportunity to ask thoughtful questions at the end of the interview. Be sure to leave at least ten minutes for this section.

What to be prepared for

1. How and why has your interim CEO been successful?
2. What post-pandemic recovery are you experiencing and what, in your mind, needs to be done to retain that recovery?
3. Can you describe your current company culture?
4. Who is on the board and the executive leadership team that I would inherit?
5. How is the board measuring success for this year and what are the goals for next year?
6. What kind of overlap with the existing CEO will this hire have? Will there be any participation from them?



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