

Functionally-Specific Questions

FINANCE

Strategic Planning and Corporate Finance

1. What is the long-bond at?
2. Explain discounted cash flow analyses or valuation methodology.
3. Define the concept of cash flow vs. net income.
4. What is our stock price trading at? Market value? Sales? Net income? Price-earnings ratio?
5. Why corporate finance as opposed to sales and trading?
6. What do you hope to gain by working for our company?
7. Where do you see yourself five years from now?
8. How do you see your career progressing in our company?
9. What do you know about our industry?
10. Our ____ division is thinking of introducing a widget new product. How would you go about determining if this is a good idea?
11. How does M&A activity in banking affect our industry?
12. We are having trouble managing our (division). What do you think the key performance metrics might be and how might you go about improving them?
13. How would you go about valuing our (division) for a potential sale, spin-off, or liquidation?

Investment Banking

14. Why an MBA? Why Owen (Vanderbilt)?
15. Why investment banking? Why this bank?
16. What are your outside activities? Why would you be willing to give them up for such a demanding job?
17. What role do you play in group situations?
18. What would you do if offered drugs as part of the deal? (or other ethically focused questions)
19. How smart are you? How do we know how smart you are?
20. Sell us on your quantitative skills.
21. If we made you an offer today, would you take it?
22. What did the Dow, S&P and NASDAQ close at yesterday?
23. What stocks do you follow and why?
24. What other firms have you talked to?
25. What does it take to be successful in investment banking? Highlight those skills from your experience.
26. What qualifies you to work in I-banking? In which department will you be most successful? Why?
27. What motivates you?
28. How do you perform under pressure? In what kind of environment do you work best?
29. Give an example of an accomplishment in your life? Failure?
30. Where is the ____ industry going? The market? This firm?
31. Ethics and I-banking: has the industry been represented fairly?
32. How do you regularly read on the industry?
33. What do you regularly read on the industry?
34. Name the top firms. For what are they known?

Sales and Trading

35. Sell me this pencil.
36. What other firms have you talked to?
37. What makes you think you can sell?
38. What is a bond?
39. What would you personally invest in?
40. What are forward rates, LIBOR rates?
41. What particular markets or instruments are you interested in? Why debt vs. equity?
42. Where is the market going? Where are rates going?
43. What does the yield curve look like? What does it mean?
44. Tell me what you think a trader does.

45. Why not corporate finance?
46. Describe an instance where you persuaded someone to do something they initially didn't want to do.
47. What about your personality will make you a good trader?
48. How will you motivate yourself to make the calls you hate to make?
49. What are your grades?
50. What do you think having an MBA does for you in this field?
51. Tell me a joke.

Public Finance

52. Why public finance? Why this firm?
53. What areas are of particular interest to you? (e.g. housing, health care, utilities, education)

Venture Capital

54. Why venture capital?
55. Why Owen (Vanderbilt) to study venture capital? Why not Stanford?
56. What particular strengths do you have for venture capital?
57. What do you think a venture capitalist does?
58. What motivates you? How do you motivate others?
59. Have you interacted with a variety of people from all levels from CEO to technician? With what results?
60. How strong is your grasp of technical issues/technology?
61. What operations exposure, management experiences have you had?
62. In addition to high-tech ventures, where do you think VC money should be going?
63. Do you think emphasis should be on raising money and putting it to work, or on the human capital?
64. What do you look for in a venture? Which is more important, the product or the people behind it?
65. Describe your analytical and interpersonal skills.
66. Do you have a high energy level?
67. Are you a good team player?
68. Have you had to deal with failure in a professional context?

MARKETING

General Marketing

69. Why Owen (Vanderbilt)? Why not Kellogg?
70. Why an MBA?
71. What is marketing? Define the difference between marketing and advertising.
72. What does it take to be successful in marketing?
73. What are the attributes of a successful marketing campaign?
74. How do you motivate others, particularly those over whom you have no direct authority? OR I'm sure you've been in a situation where you had to get participation from people who don't report to you. How do you motivate these people?
75. How have you developed your interpersonal skills?
76. Give me a specific example of a time you solved a problem creatively?
77. What is the most important thing that you've learned about managing people from your previous work experience?
78. What is your biggest challenge at school?
79. What is your biggest accomplishment?
80. What are you looking for in a consumer goods (or manufacturing, financial services, etc.) company?
81. Give an example of an innovative solution to a business problem.
82. Give an example of your approach to problem solving.
83. What would your last boss say about you? (How would s/he describe you?)
84. If I asked your classmates to describe the role you take in a team/group, what would they say?
85. What is the toughest challenge you faced in the interpersonal realm of your job?
86. Tell me about an advertising campaign that you think is particularly effective/ineffective.
87. What are some examples of good and bad advertising and why.
88. How would you describe your leadership style?

Brand Management

89. What do you think are the most important traits in a product marketing person?
90. Pick a product and position it.
91. Give an example of a good new product introduction.
92. Create a plan to market Brand X in Philadelphia—What's the theme of your advertising? Be very detailed.
93. Pretend today is your first day at work as a brand manager for Brand X. What are the ten most important questions would you ask to find out about the brand?
94. I see that most of your experience has (not) been in consumer products. Do you think you would be as successful as an industrial marketer? (or vice-versa)
95. Rank order characteristics important for brand management.
96. What did you dislike about your former employer?
97. Give me a 30-second commercial about yourself.
98. Give an example of a well-managed product.
99. Give me an example of a leadership role you have had. Give me another one, give me another one, give me another one....

HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT

100. Why have you focused on the healthcare industry?
101. Why an MBA? Why not a Masters in Health Administration?
102. Why Owen (Vanderbilt)?
103. What are the attributes of management success in the healthcare industry?
104. Where/How have you developed those attributes?
105. What motivates you? How do you motivate others?
106. How do you function in a group? Give examples of teamwork.
107. What is the most important thing you have learned about people from your previous work experience?
108. What do you look for in a job? In a boss?
109. Did you ever think of pursuing a career in medicine as a health service professional?
110. Choose one of these issues and give some recommendations on addressing it: managed care and any other current controversial public issue involving healthcare.
111. What are the most important issues emerging in healthcare management? Prioritize them.
112. What functional skills will you bring to a hospital environment?
113. What are your goals?

CONSULTING

NOTE: In addition to trait and behavioral questions, you will want to practice case interview question. Check with the Management Consulting Club for more information.

114. Why consulting? Why this firm?
115. Why and MBA? Why Owen (Vanderbilt)?
116. What does a consultant do? What are the three most important qualities of a successful consultant?
117. How do you think the consulting industry is structured? How is our practice different from other consulting firms?
118. How do you rank in relation to your peers?
119. Do you view consulting as a permanent career choice?
120. How would you describe the competitive niche of your most recent employer?
121. Give me an example of a business problem and tell me how you solved it.
122. How do you feel about the lifestyle issues associated with consulting?
123. Imagine we are reviewing your performance at our firm after working for us for six months. What do you think our evaluation would be?
124. Highlight your top achievements/accomplishments?
125. What has been your biggest setback?
126. With whom are you interviewing? How have you fared?
127. What is the most important thing you have learned in the past year?
128. Give me an example of a situation in which you had a problem, how you identified the problem, the methods you used to solve the problem and discuss the resolution.
129. If given an offer, how will you decide whether or not to accept it?
130. What are your strengths? Weaknesses?

131. Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years? What are your long-term career goals?
132. Choice questions from résumé: Why XYZ college? Why XYZ company?
133. How have you been doing at Owen (Vanderbilt)? What are your grades? What are your GMAT scores? Your undergraduate GPA?
134. Describe a situation, work or school, where you analyzed and solved a problem. How did you do it?
135. Are you competitive?
136. What do you have to offer this firm?

HUMAN RESOURCES

137. Why an MBA? Why not a Masters in Labor Relations or a Masters in Sciences in Human Resources?
138. Why Owen (Vanderbilt)? Why not Michigan or Cornell?
139. Walk me through your résumé.
140. What are the most significant challenges confronting the human resources function over the next five years?
141. What have been your most significant accomplishments? Why were they significant?
142. What obstacles have you faced? How did you overcome them?
143. How do you think human resource activities add value to our company?
144. Describe a change effort you have undertaken. What was your role? What specifically did you do?
145. The ability to develop effective teams is an increasingly important skill. Can you think of a time when the development of a team was critical to a project you were working on? What was your role? What did you do to contribute to the team's success?
146. What have been the most important professional experiences you've had during your career? What experiences have helped you solidify your skills and/or enabled you to advance to the next job?
147. If you were responsible for picking your successor, what would you look for in that person? What important skills (technical and non-technical) and characteristics would that person need to possess?
148. What will the human resources function look like in the future?
149. How will human resource professionals' responsibilities change over time? What skills and/or competencies will human resources professionals need in the future?
150. How would you measure or evaluate the value of human resources to a business?

MIS, ELECTRONIC COMMERCE, TELECOMMUNICATIONS

151. Why an MBA? Why not an advanced technical degree?
152. Why Owen (Vanderbilt)? Why not Carnegie-Mellon, MIT, or Berkeley?
153. Describe your skill set. What technologies do you understand?
154. In what ways have you utilized existing technology?
155. What programming languages do you know?
156. What platforms do you know?
157. What are you competent in?
158. Have you implemented a change project? What problems have you faced?
159. What is your past experience with _____ (various applications, past projects, network applications)?
160. Have you dealt with client/server networks before? Token rings? Intranet programs like Notes or Exchange?
161. How have you managed your team?
162. What do you think is the future of network computing? The Internet? Electronic commerce?