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Amazon behavioral interview questions and answers pdf

This PDF provides a simple and focused set of behavioral interview questions specific to Amazon. It's designed to give you a quick reference and preparation tool. We encourage you to read through the PDF and familiarize yourself with these questions. However, to truly enhance your interview skills and gain confidence, return to our site and practice with our simulator. Our AI-powered tool helps you simulate real interview scenarios, offering insights and feedback tailored to your responses. Here are the top 10 most asked Amazon behavioral interview questions, along with suggested answers to help you show you are the right candidate for the job. 1. Tell me about your most challenging customer. How did you resolve their issues and make them satisfied? Amazon is committed to customer service. Dealing with demanding customers is a part of the job, and you need to be prepared. This question is an opportunity to show that you can deal with customers who are being difficult. If you have not had the experience of dealing with difficult customers, you can use this as an opportunity to draw on other areas in your life where you may have had to deal with difficult people. Answer: In my current role, I had to deal with a customer who thought he was being lied to. The customer was expecting a payment to be made to him and felt he had been lied to about the timeframe for receiving that payment. While I could see that we had given him the correct information, I knew I had to find a way to keep the customer happy and not overtly tell him he was wrong. I first listened to his concern, repeating back what I was hearing, and asking questions to clarify anything that was unclear. I wanted to reassure him that I would find a solution. While the customer had not been lied to about the timeframe for receiving the payment, I was able to find a way to make the payment to him sooner without costing the company anything. 2. Describe a time when you had to make a decision without having all the data or information you needed. This question helps show the interviewer how you analyze a situation and approach problem-solving. It shows whether you can make quick decisions. Your answer should focus on your interpersonal skills. Don't be inclined to focus on the negative points. Instead, take the opportunity to highlight the positives. It can be easy to turn this question into an opportunity to blame others for forcing you to make a decision without making sure you have all the information, but make sure to avoid doing that. Answer: In my last role, when I was still new to the job, I met with a new prospective supplier. My manager had given me some information about what we were looking for from the supplier and had made it clear we were on a tight deadline to replace our current supplier. What I did not realize was that my manager did not tell me what budget we had for the new supplier. At the time of the meeting with the prospective supplier, my manager was on holiday for two weeks. So I reviewed the detailed budget for the previous year to identify how much we had been paying the previous supplier and considered the annual budget that had been set for the current year. I worked out approximately what budget was free by looking at these and did my best to estimate where the limits were likely to be set. Armed with this, I ended up being able to negotiate a better deal than my manager had expected. 3. Which Amazon leadership principle resonates with you most? Amazon has 14 leadership principles. You should be familiar with each of them before your interview. Think about any situations you have been involved in that would demonstrate how you resonate with that principle. For example, if you choose customer obsession, explain why. If you opt to learn and be curious, talk about how you are always looking for new things to learn, perhaps by taking classes. Answer: The principle that resonates most with me is customer obsession. My previous roles have all been customer-facing sales roles, and I appreciate that customers are at the heart of what we do to succeed. I know that an unhappy customer will be very vocal about the poor service they have had. I also know that a satisfied customer may share their recommendation if asked, but a customer who has had excellent service is more likely to talk unprompted about their experience. 4. Tell me about a time when you were working on a project, and you realized that you needed to make changes to what you were doing. How did you feel about the work you had already completed? This question is designed to show your adaptability and how you cope with changing priorities. It is also an opportunity to show how you deal under pressure. Answer: In my last role, we had acquired a competitor business. It was part of my role to ensure that all its products were input into our sales system. To do so, I had been given a list of all its current products, descriptions, and pricing by my manager. I prioritized my workload to allow this to take precedence, as I knew it was important to have a smooth integration. I had spent almost two days inputting the data into our system when I noticed that there was an error in the data that I had been provided. The data I had been provided was out of date, and a large proportion of the items that I had been inputting into the system were items that the competitor business had stopped selling. I immediately stopped inputting data and contacted my manager to discuss the next steps. Together we obtained the correct data, and I then spent additional time removing the incorrect data from the system. While it was frustrating to have spent so much time inputting the wrong data, I didn't let myself become distracted from the task and focused on solving the problem. 5. Can you give me an example of a time when you exceeded expectations? The answer you give to this question does not have to be specific to the role for which you are interviewing. It is designed to allow the interviewer to gain an understanding of whether you are the type of person to go above and beyond, or whether you are the type of person who follows instructions and does what they are told without considering whether you can do better. To ensure you impress the interviewer, describe a situation where you were given a very clear goal. Then, explain the opportunity that you spotted to go above and beyond what was expected and what the outcome was. Make it clear why exceeding what was required of you was the right thing to do. Answer: In my last role, we implemented a new part of our process where we would ask each customer to review our service after a transaction. My instructions were to email every customer immediately after the transaction with a link to the internet page with our review. Personally, when I receive these kinds of unexpected emails, I ignore them, so I decided to ask customers at the end of our calls if they would mind if I emailed them a link to our review site to allow us to gain feedback about our service. Most customers agreed to this, and by asking the customer about the review on the phone, my return rate was over double that of my co-workers, who simply sent the email with no prior warning as they were instructed. My thought process was that giving the customer a choice in receiving the email or not engaged them in the process. I also thought that by completing the review, they were upholding their word to me, and the review was humanized. I did seek the permission of my manager in advance, as I was aware that if a customer refused to allow me to send the email I would be breaching my manager's specific instructions to send the email to every customer. My manager was happy to allow me to modify the process, and I was pleased with the favorable outcome. 6. Can you describe a time when you took the lead on a project? This question allows the interviewer to assess your leadership potential. It gives you the chance to discuss people-management, project management, or both. The interviewer will want to know how you managed the project and/or people and/or resources under your control to obtain the best possible outcome or return on the project. If you haven't had the experience of leading a project, you can use examples from other areas of your life where you have taken a role in leading part of a project. Answer: In my previous role, my team had hit a difficult period, with sales falling month on month. We were all tasked by our manager to come up with solutions to help improve our sales. I thought about our current training and approach and realized that many within the team had either not had specific sales training or had not had any refresher training for quite some time. I felt that having a training session on different sales methods might revitalize the team and help us to improve our sales. I discussed this with my manager, and we organized training and put in place a new sales strategy. My manager allowed me to set targets and ensure the training was given to the entire team. The outcome was that sales increased in the first quarter, which had the additional benefit of giving the team more self-confidence. 7. Think about a time you received negative feedback. How did you deal with that? No one likes to receive negative feedback. Receiving negative feedback can make us defensive. In an interview, the interviewer is trying to find out your weaknesses, both in the area in which you received negative feedback and also in how you responded to that feedback. Think carefully about the story you tell – you don't want to hurt your chances of securing the job – but use the story to show that you can listen to negative feedback and use it to ensure better results in the future. Answer: In a previous role, my manager was critical about my time management skills. I had come from a team where my work was filtered through my manager to a role where I received work from 6 different team members. My manager felt that I was struggling to manage my time effectively. I was surprised by this, as no one within the team had raised any concerns with me. On the contrary, the feedback from within my team was all positive. So I took some time to consider the feedback my manager had given me, rather than responding immediately. I realized that my manager wasn't aware of the amount of work I was producing because they had no visibility into the work I was receiving from other team members. I spoke with my manager, and we agreed that I would start recording all my tasks electronically so that she could see what I was working on. Previously, I used a manual to-do list on my desk. By taking the time to analyze the feedback from my manager and then later discussing it with her, I was able to show her that I had good time-management skills and find a way to allow her to see all my work assignments. 8. You witness a co-worker stealing. The value of the item is $2. What is your response? In Amazon's industry, shrinkage is a major concern. It is crucial to show your interviewer that you have high ethical standards and don't tolerate stealing or any other unethical behavior, regardless of the value of the item. You can use this question to demonstrate that you understand that if every employee stole items worth $2, it would soon add up. Answer: Theft, regardless of the value, is illegal and unethical. Further, it is against company policy. The issue would need to be addressed, and I would report it in line with Amazon's policy. From a purely logical perspective, if everyone took items of small value, the overall cost would soon be significant to the company and would impact its profitability. 9. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with ambiguity. How did you overcome the ambiguity to reach a positive outcome? The interviewer is asking this question to test whether you can act decisively in times of uncertainty. Ambiguity can arise in a number of different situations in the workplace; for example, there may be competing priorities, constantly changing deadlines or a lack of clarity around the chain of command. Ambiguity can lead to mistakes and misunderstandings. Workplaces such as Amazon need people to step up and help their teams and co-workers deal with ambiguity. Ambiguity also presents opportunities to show your creativity and be innovative. Use this question to demonstrate that you understand the positive aspects of ambiguity, rather than talking about its negative aspects. Answer: In my previous role, we were launching a new product and had insufficient information. The data we were given wasn't clear about which type of customer to target to ensure the best sales. I pointed this out to my manager. I suggested we look at our previous launch for a similar type of product, analyze the data used for that launch and the outcome of that launch, and then use that information to identify our target customer. It wasn't a perfect substitute for good information, but the alternative of postponing the launch would have resulted in foregone income and increased cost for the additional preparation for the launch. 10. Describe a time when you had a set amount of time to complete a task. This question gives the interviewer an opportunity to assess how you handle priorities and how you work under pressure. In a customer service environment such as at Amazon, there can be significant pressures on your time and changing deadlines. Show the interviewer that you can cope in such situations and can find a way to prioritize tasks appropriately. Answer: In my last job, we offered different levels of delivery service. This meant that I had to prioritize picking orders on a daily basis to ensure that those orders with guaranteed delivery dates were shipped in time. I also had to ensure that orders that weren't picked and shipped were still dispatched within on a timely basis to avoid customer complaints. Next 40 Most Asked Amazon Behavioral Interview Questions Have you ever been wrong? Tell me about that time. How do you motivate others? Can you give me an example of a time you have motivated someone? Tell me about a time you have disagreed with your manager and how you handled it. What obstacles have you encountered in your career? How did you overcome them? Have you ever had to make a quick customer service decision without any help or guidance from a co-worker or manager? How did you arrive at a decision? You are asked by a supervisor to do something that is against policy and is unsafe. How would you handle that? Tell me about a time when you took a risk and failed. What did you learn from that experience? What do you do when faced with an unfamiliar task? Have you ever coached anyone? Tell me about that. Within a team, have you ever faced conflict? Tell me how you handled that conflict. Tell me about a time you helped a co-worker in their work. Tell me about a project you are proud of. How did you ensure high standards were met in delivering that project? Why do you want to work for Amazon? How do you ensure you have positive relationships with your co-workers? Tell me about a time when you have had to work to earn someone's trust. Describe a time when you were given a project to work on, but your responsibilities were unclear. What did you do? Tell me about a time you showed initiative. You see a co-worker struggling with a task. What do you do? Have you ever had to make an unpopular decision? Tell me how you handled it. Have you ever had to ask for help at work? Tell me about it. Describe for me a time when your actions directly impacted customer satisfaction. What is your proudest professional achievement? Have you ever faced a complex problem and managed to come up with a simple solution? Tell me about that. Thinking about your current role, tell me about something that you have learned recently. What characteristics do you have that will help you succeed at Amazon? When you have the interests of large numbers of customers to think about, how do you prioritize their needs? Tell me of a time when you feel you influenced change in some way by only asking questions. Tell me a bit more about yourself. When was the last time you had to apologize to someone? Tell me about that. Describe for me a time when you had to choose short-term sacrifices to achieve long-term gains. Tell me about a time you had to make a tough decision without consulting anybody. How do you deal with having to provide feedback to someone? How do you motivate co-workers to work together as a team? Imagine a situation where separate managers have given you the same work to do, but that the priorities on each are different. What do you do? Tell me about a time you faced a challenge with a number of different solutions. How did you decide on the correct solution? How do you use data to develop strategies? Workplace safety is important. How do you help ensure everyone views it as a priority? Have you ever helped a co-worker who didn't want help? Tell me about that. A manager asks you to do something with which you disagree. How do you handle that? Tell me about a time you failed to meet a deadline. How did you cope with that? 10 Best Questions to Ask in an Amazon Behavioral Interview The interview isn't just about the interviewer asking you questions. You will get the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the interview. You can use the questions you ask to reinforce your interest in the job and to gauge whether this is the right job for you. Here are the 10 best questions to ask. What does a typical day in this position look like? What do you think are the most challenging aspects of this role? Why do you enjoy working at Amazon? How do you think Amazon demonstrates its values? For someone in this role, what is the definition of success? How would you describe the culture here? What qualities do you think successful Amazon employees have? What do you think is the biggest challenge facing Amazon today? What would be expected of me in my first 90 days at Amazon? What makes people want to continue working here? When preparing for an Amazon behavioral interview, take time to think about situations you have encountered, and how you can use them to demonstrate you are the right person for that job at Amazon. Being prepared for these types of questions will make you more confident and allow you to pay attention to the rapport you develop with your interviewer. Author Biography Keith Miller has over 25 years of experience as a CEO and serial entrepreneur. As an entrepreneur, he has founded several multi-million dollar companies. As a writer, Keith's work has been mentioned in CIO Magazine, Workable, BizTech, and The Charlotte Observer. If you have any questions about the content of this blog post, then please send our content editing team a message here. --- If you're interviewing for a tech role at Amazon (or AWS), be prepared to face lots of behavioral questions focused on Amazon's leadership principles. No other FAANG company uses behavioral questions quite as much as Amazon does. Behavioral questions form the core of the Amazon interview process, no matter what role you're applying for. You'll be required to give detailed, structured answers that target a variety of leadership principles, and you'll need to respond convincingly to tricky follow-up questions as the interviewer probes for specific details. Luckily, we're here to help. This interview prep guide gives you everything you need to know to crack Amazon's behavioral interview, including example questions targeting each leadership principle, how to answer them, insight and tips from ex-Amazon interviewers, and a practice plan to make sure you land your dream job at the company. Thanks to Dessy, ex-Amazon interviewer and Senior PM, and Bilwasiva, Applied Scientist and interviewer at Amazon, for their expert collaboration on this article. Here's a brief overview of what we'll cover. Click here to practice 1-on-1 with ex-Amazon interviewers 1. What is a behavioral interview at Amazon?↑ Amazon uses behavioral interviews to assess job candidates based on their past experiences. These questions typically start with "Tell me about a time you…" and focus on soft skills articulated in the 16 leadership principles. Areas of focus usually include leadership, ambiguity, problem-solving, bias for action, etc. (we'll go into more detail on these below.) For more information on the process for a specific role, consult one of our comprehensive interview guides below: Now, what will your interviewers be looking out for? Let's take a look at those leadership principles. 1.1 What is Amazon looking for in a candidate? As we mentioned before, learning and demonstrating your adherence to their leadership principles is key to landing your dream job at Amazon. Interviewers like the Bar Raiser are frequently assigned one or multiple leadership principles to focus on per round, meaning that you'll encounter them at every stage. There are even reports of interviewers asking candidates to recite each principle from memory. So it's imperative that you prepare at least one practical example from your past that demonstrates each principle. As you may be asked more than one question on a given principle, we'd also recommend crafting a few 'flex' stories that you can apply to different principles. See more on answer techniques in section 3. 1.2 What are Amazon's leadership principles? Amazon's Leadership Principles encapsulate the core values and behaviors that guide decision-making and actions across the company. Each principle emphasizes different aspects of Amazon's culture, from prioritizing customer needs to fostering innovation, maintaining high standards, and acting with urgency and integrity. The idea is that these principles serve as a common language and framework for Amazonians to align their work and behaviors with the company's long-term vision and goals. As you might have guessed, candidates need to be very familiar with them! Amazon's leadership principles: In section 2 we'll dig deeper into each principle and the interview questions that will test you on them. 2. 60+ Amazon behavioral interview questions↑ To help you prepare strategically for your job interview, we have used Glassdoor data to identify the real questions asked in different Amazon interviews. The questions we've chosen come from our research on five Amazon tech roles: product manager, TPM, program manager, software development engineer, and data scientist. The questions below can appear at every step of the interview process at Amazon and AWS, from the initial recruiter screen all the way through to the onsite interviews. Some could even appear as ice-breakers or transition questions during technical screens. The frequency and type of behavioral questions will vary per role, but be prepared to answer many. Let's get into it. 2.1 Amazon behavioral questions: Top 5 First, we wanted to highlight the most common behavioral questions that Amazon asks across every role we've studied. You'll likely be asked at least one of these questions. You'll see that regardless of the role, Amazon is curious about why you want to work for them specifically, how you face setbacks, and whether you're willing to stand up for your ideas. Here are the questions. Right, let's go through more common behavioral questions at Amazon. Each category below tests a different leadership principle, and the frequency of questions testing certain principles will vary depending on the role. For instance, interviews for managerial roles will include a higher number of questions targeting the principles "hire and develop the best" or "strive to be Earth's best employer." 2.2 Amazon behavioral questions: Customer obsession "Leaders start with the customer and work backwards. They work vigorously to earn and keep customer trust. Although leaders pay attention to competitors, they obsess over customers." Empathy is important in all customer obsession questions. Interviewers want to see that you understand the consequences that every decision has on customer experience. You need to know who the customer is as well as their underlying needs. Example behavioral questions asked at Amazon: Customer obsession How to answer customer obsession questions (according to Bilwasiva, an Amazon interviewer): Begin by explaining the significance of customer obsession at Amazon, emphasizing that it's the foundation of everything the company does. Provide examples of how you've prioritized customer needs in your previous roles, showcasing your commitment to understanding and addressing customer pain points. Discuss specific initiatives or projects where you've gone above and beyond to deliver exceptional customer experiences, highlighting the outcomes and impact. 2.3 Amazon behavioral questions: Ownership "Leaders are owners. They think long-term and don't sacrifice long-term value for short-term results. They act on behalf of the entire company, beyond just their own team. They never say 'That's not my job.'" To work at Amazon, you can't be a person who thinks, "That's not my job!" when facing a task that needs to get done. When answering ownership questions, you'll want to prove that you take initiative, can make tough decisions, and accept responsibility for your mistakes. Dessy (ex-interviewer/Senior PM at Amazon) told us that Amazon loves "single-threaded-ownership", where each project/product belongs to one person. "It makes accountability very clear and means there's no potential for people passing blame around", Dessy says. How to answer ownership questions (according to Dessy, ex-Amazon interviewer): Be ready to talk about how you own a product or feature end-to-end. Even though you work cross-functionally or with other stakeholders, show how you go to extreme distance to follow through on your projects and do whatever it takes to deliver For example, you escalate to other team's leadership if necessary. 2.4 Amazon behavioral questions: Bias for action "Bias for Action — Speed matters in business. Many decisions and actions are reversible and do not need extensive study. We value calculated risk-taking." Amazon likes to learn by doing, with an eye on results over user projections and research. This is part of what helps them act quickly and ship their products to customers as fast as they do. So your interviewer will want to see that you can take calculated risks and move things forward. How to answer Bias for action questions (according to Bilwasiva, Amazon interviewer): Discuss how you prioritize action and drive momentum in your work, highlighting instances where you've made decisions quickly and decisively. Provide examples of how you've taken calculated risks to achieve desired outcomes, demonstrating your ability to navigate ambiguity and drive results in a fast-paced environment. Emphasize the importance of learning from failures and iterating on ideas to continuously improve and move forward. 2.5 Amazon behavioral questions: Have backbone; disagree and commit "Leaders are obligated to respectfully challenge decisions when they disagree, even when doing so is uncomfortable or exhausting. Leaders have conviction and are tenacious. They do not compromise for the sake of social cohesion. Once a decision is determined, they commit wholly." Any group of smart leaders will disagree at some point. Your interviewer will want to see that you know when to challenge ideas and escalate problems to senior leadership if necessary. At the same time, they want to know that you can sense the right time to move forward regardless of your disagreement. Show that you're capable of striking that balance. How to answer Have backbone; disagree and commit questions (according to a Dessy, ex-Amazon interviewer): Have an example ready where you were able to deliver successfully on a project even though you had voiced your disagreement earlier in the process Show that you understand the pros & cons of a certain decision (even though you don't 100% agree, you can still see the merit of the decision). 2.6 Amazon behavioral questions: Invent and simplify "Leaders expect and require innovation and invention from their teams and always find ways to simplify. They are externally aware, look for new ideas from everywhere, and are not limited by "not invented here." Because we do new things, we accept that we may be misunderstood for long periods of time." As Dessy explained to us, teams at Amazon operate relatively independently and are almost like their own start-ups. This is because, despite its vast size, Amazon likes to move quickly and launch things fast. Related to this is the fact that engineering resources are always limited ("Frugality" being another principle!) and so products are launched at minimum viability. Interviewers want to know that you can respond to these limitations and thrive under them. Example behavioral questions asked at Amazon: Invent and simplify How to answer Invent and simplify questions (according to a Dessy, ex-Amazon interviewer): Describe how you came up with a MVP or phase 1 in a long-term project. Think about examples where you've come up with innovative, alternative solutions instead of building a feature that required engineering resources. For example, maybe you used a Google form instead of building your own registration form, or changing the standard operating procedure instead of building a separate feature. 2.7 Amazon behavioral questions: Dive deep "Leaders operate at all levels, stay connected to the details, audit frequently, and are skeptical when metrics and anecdote differ. No task is beneath them." When something isn't working, Amazon employees need to be able to find solutions quickly. Interviewers want to see that you are excited to dive deep and work out a durable response when problems arise. How to answer Dive deep questions (according to Bilwasiva, Amazon interviewer): Illustrate your ability to analyze complex problems by sharing examples of how you've conducted thorough research, gathered data, and delved into root causes to understand underlying issues. Highlight instances where your attention to detail and analytical skills have enabled you to uncover insights and drive informed decision-making. Emphasize your willingness to dig deeper, ask probing questions, and challenge assumptions to arrive at effective solutions. 2.8 Amazon behavioral questions: Are right, a lot "Leaders are right a lot. They have strong judgment and good instincts. They seek diverse perspectives and work to disconfirm their beliefs." Amazon expects its employees to produce solutions as quickly as possible and to be capable of making decisions with little information. Show that you know how to take calculated risks and that you're comfortable disproving your own opinions before moving ahead. When describing past failures, show what you've learned. Example behavioral questions asked at Amazon: Are right, a lot Tell me how you deal with ambiguity Tell me about a time when you were faced with a problem that had a number of possible solutions. Tell me about a time you applied judgment to a decision when data was not available 2.9 Amazon behavioral questions: Deliver results "Leaders focus on the key inputs for their business and deliver them with the right quality and in a timely fashion. Despite setbacks, they rise to the occasion and never settle." Amazon values action over perfection. When answering questions related to delivering results, you'll want to indicate that you work to avoid slipped deadlines and failed goals. If you have missed deadlines and goals in the past, explain the methods you've put in place to avoid this in the future. How to answer Deliver results questions (according to Bilwasiva, Amazon interviewer): Showcase your track record of delivering measurable results and achieving key objectives in your previous roles. Provide specific examples of projects or initiatives where you set clear goals, developed action plans, and executed effectively to drive impactful outcomes. Quantify your achievements wherever possible, using metrics and data to demonstrate the impact of your contributions. 2.10 Amazon behavioral questions: Think big "Thinking small is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Leaders create and communicate a bold direction that inspires results. They think differently and look around corners for ways to serve customers." Amazon is an enormous company, and its employees need to build products and structures that reach a significant scale to make a difference for the business. As a result, interviewers will want to see that you can develop and articulate a bold vision. Example behavioral questions asked at Amazon: Think big Tell me about your most significant accomplishment. Why was it significant? Tell me about a time you proposed a non-intuitive solution to a problem and how you identified that it required a different way of thinking What was the largest project you've executed? How to answer Think big questions (according to Bilwasiva, Amazon interviewer): Discuss your ability to envision and pursue ambitious goals that have a transformative impact on your team, organization, or industry. Share examples of how you've challenged the status quo, pursued innovative ideas, and inspired others to think beyond conventional boundaries. Emphasize your long-term vision and strategic thinking, as well as your ability to break down big ideas into actionable plans and milestones. 2.11 Amazon behavioral questions: Hire and develop the best "Leaders raise the performance bar with every hire and promotion. They recognize exceptional talent, and willingly move them throughout the organization. Leaders develop leaders and take seriously their role in coaching others. We work on behalf of our people to invent mechanisms for development like Career Choice." Amazon wants every new hire to "raise the bar." Interviewers will want to see that you seek to hire people smarter than you. You should also show you enjoy coaching younger colleagues and know how to get the most out of top performers. This leadership principle is typically discussed in interviews for very senior engineering positions that involve people management or building a team. Example behavioral questions asked at Amazon: Hire and develop the best How to answer Hire and develop the best questions (according to Bilwasiva, Amazon interviewer): Describe your approach to talent acquisition and development, emphasizing your commitment to building high-performing teams and cultivating a culture of learning and growth. Share examples of how you've recruited top talent, assessed candidates effectively, and onboarded new hires to set them up for success. Discuss your efforts to mentor, coach, and provide opportunities for skill development and career advancement to members of your team. 2.12 Amazon behavioral questions: Frugality "Accomplish more with less. Constraints breed resourcefulness, self-sufficiency, and invention. There are no extra points for growing headcount, budget size, or fixed expense." Amazon strives to provide customers with as much value for as little cost as possible. Interviewers will be looking for how you can support this idea while maintaining a constant drive for innovation. 2.13 Amazon behavioral questions: Learn and be curious "Leaders are never done learning and always seek to improve themselves. They are curious about new possibilities and act to explore them." Amazon demands constant improvement in every part of its business. You'll want to show that you are interested in learning new things and exploring new ideas that can be applied to the job. Some examples listed here are general interview questions, but they provide a perfect opportunity for you to address this principle. How to answer Learn and be curious questions (according to Bilwasiva, Amazon interviewer): Highlight your passion for continuous learning and professional growth, emphasizing your curiosity and eagerness to explore new ideas, technologies, and methodologies. Share examples of how you've pursued learning opportunities, whether through formal education, self-study, or hands-on experimentation. Discuss specific instances where your curiosity led to valuable insights, innovations, or improvements in your work. 2.14 Amazon behavioral questions: Insist on the highest standards "Leaders have relentlessly high standards — many people may think these standards are unreasonably high. Leaders are continually raising the bar and drive their teams to deliver high quality products, services, and processes. Leaders ensure that defects do not get sent down the line and that problems are fixed so they stay fixed." At Amazon, rarely is anything deemed "good enough." They'd like to see how you have pushed yourself to reach standards that were difficult to meet, and how you will continue to do so in the future. Example behavioral questions asked by Amazon: Insist on the highest standards Tell me about the most successful project you've done Tell me about a project that you wish you had done better and how you would do it differently today Tell me a time that a goal was hard to achieve. What did you learn from that? How would you improve this [project on your resume] if you had more time? How to answer Insist on the highest standards (according to Bilwasiva, Amazon interviewer): Explain your uncompromising commitment to excellence and quality in everything you do, highlighting your attention to detail and pursuit of perfection. Share examples of how you've set and maintained high standards for yourself and your team, ensuring that deliverables meet or exceed expectations. Discuss how you've established processes, guidelines, and quality assurance measures to uphold standards and drive continuous improvement. 2.15 Amazon behavioral questions: Earn trust "Leaders listen attentively, speak candidly, and treat others respectfully. They are vocally self-critical, even when doing so is awkward or embarrassing. Leaders do not believe their or their team's body odor smells of perfume. They benchmark themselves and their teams against the best." The key part of this principle that candidates often miss is the "vocally self-critical" detail. Amazon wants its employees to focus on fixing mistakes instead of figuring out who to blame. You'll want to show that you take action when something is wrong and acknowledge your own faults before resorting to blaming others. Example behavioral questions asked by Amazon: Earn trust How do you earn trust with a team? Tell me a piece of difficult feedback you received and how you handled it A co-worker constantly arrives late to a recurring meeting. What would you do? How to answer Earn trust questions (according to Bilwasiva, Amazon interviewer): Highlight your commitment to building trust and credibility with stakeholders, both internally and externally. Share examples of how you've demonstrated integrity, transparency, and reliability in your interactions and decision-making processes. Discuss your approach to building strong relationships based on mutual respect, open communication, and delivering on promises. 2.16 Amazon behavioral questions: Strive to be Earth's best employer "Leaders work every day to create a safer, more productive, higher performing, more diverse, and more just work environment. They lead with empathy, have fun at work, and make it easy for others to have fun. Leaders ask themselves: Are my fellow employees growing? Are they empowered? Are they ready for what's next? Leaders have a vision for and commitment to their employees' personal success, whether that be at Amazon or elsewhere." Like the principle "hire and develop the best," this is more likely to come up in interviews for senior and/or managerial positions. In this case, you'll want to show that you'll not only boost your team, but also create a safe, diverse, and just work environment. Essentially, if "hire and develop the best" means picking and training a top team, being "Earth's best employer" means keeping that team safe, enriched, and engaged once you've got them. Example behavioral questions asked by Amazon: Strive to be Earth's best employer How do you manage a low performer in the team? Tell me about a time that you went above and beyond for an employee Tell me about a time you saw an issue that would negatively impact your team. How did you deal with it? How do you identify a good performer in the team and help in their career growth? 2.17 Amazon behavioral questions: Success and scale bring broad responsibility "We started in a garage, but we're not there anymore. We are big, we impact the world, and we are far from perfect. We must be humble and thoughtful about even the secondary effects of our actions. Our local communities, planet, and future generations need us to be better every day. We must begin each day with a determination to make better, do better, and be better for our customers, our employees, our partners, and the world at large. And we must end every day knowing we can do even more tomorrow. Leaders create more than they consume and always leave things better than how they found them." Amazon wants its employees to understand the responsibility of working for a vast, impactful company. Show how you measure the impact of your decisions, both in your workspace and in the world around you (e.g. sustainability, justice, etc.). Example behavioral questions asked by Amazon: Success and scale bring broad responsibility Tell me about a time when you made a decision which impacted the team or the company Tell me about a decision that you made about your work and you regret now Tell me about a time when you failed to do the right thing 3. How to answer Amazon behavioral interview questions↑ Now that you've seen some of Amazon's top questions, let's work on a technique for answering them. 3.1 Technique When answering behavioral questions, you should focus on your most relevant achievements and communicate them clearly. An easy way to achieve this is to use a step-by-step method to tell your stories. The STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) is a popular approach for answering behavioral questions because it's easy to remember. You may have already heard of it. However, we've found that candidates often find it difficult to distinguish the difference between steps two and three, or task and action. Some also forget to include lessons learned in the results step, which is especially crucial when discussing past failures. So we've developed our own, IGotAnOffer method to correct some of the pitfalls we've observed when using the STAR method. We call it the SPSIL method (not catchy, but it works!). 3.1.1 SPSIL method Let's step through our suggested five-step approach: Situation: Start by giving the necessary context of the situation you were in. Describe your role, the team, the organization, the market, etc. You should only give the minimum context needed to understand the problem and the solution in your story. Nothing more. Problem: Outline the problem you and your team were facing. Solution: Explain the solution you came up with to solve the problem. Step through how you went about implementing your solution, and focus on your contribution over what the team / larger organization did. Impact: Summarize the positive results you achieved for your team, department, and organization. As much as possible, quantify the impact. Lessons: Conclude with any lessons you might have learned in the process. You'll notice that this method covers very similar themes to the STAR method. We like it because a lot of the candidates we work with find this framework easier to use, as there's no overlap between any of the steps in your story. You should practice using whatever method you're the most comfortable with. If you'd like to start practicing right away, jump back to the full list of questions here. Otherwise, to get a better idea of how our method works, work through the example below. 3.2 Example answer: Tell me about a time you failed at work. What did you learn from it? Now that you know how to approach answering behavioral questions, let's look at a full example. We'll use one of Amazon's most frequently asked questions. You'll see that it can be tailored to match a few different leadership principles, such as Ownership, Learn and Be Curious, and Deliver Results. Try answering the question below following your preferred method. Play both the role of the interviewer and the candidate. Write down your answer, then practice saying it out loud before going through our example response. Once you've finished, compare your response to our example to fill in any gaps in your story. Try this question: Tell me about a time you failed at work. What did you learn from it? Answer: We'll use the SPSIL method described above and answer as if interviewing for a product manager job at Amazon. You will find our proposed answer to the question below. Note that this question isn't necessarily about a specific role and allows you to describe a variety of situations. We'll use a generic example, but you should of course use an example from your own work experience. 1. Situation You could start by saying something like, "In my last position, I was the product manager for a key feature of a new product we were about to launch. My team had been able to roll through research and development ahead of schedule, so I was excited to beat our deadline. In an update with our chief product officer, I told her that we were working quickly and would likely finish a week before the deadline. She was pleased to hear this and rearranged launch dates accordingly." Without giving too much detail, this gives a quick sense of the setting you were in. Now we'll get into the problem. 2. Problem Once you outline the situation, you can explain the problem by saying something like, "However, I had allowed myself to get swept up in our previous progress and moved up our deadline without fully considering all the factors at play. As we continued work on the launch, it quickly became clear that the final details would take longer than anticipated, and we would not be meeting the earlier deadline." Here, you don't spend too much time describing the situation and problem, but your answer so far has given the interviewer a clear sense of the setting and issue that arose. 3. Solution When describing the solution you came up with to solve the problem, it's important to step through your thinking. And it's especially important to focus on YOUR contribution. Of course, this will look a little different for a question asking about a failure, as it would mean you may not have solved the initial problem. However, you can underline the steps you took to address the failure once you realized it. You could say something such as, "As it was my mistake to move up the deadline, and not my team's, I took it upon myself to speed up the process. First, we discussed our progress, and I added some of their workload to my plate to accomplish everything faster. I worked overtime to take care of the loose ends, then booked a new meeting with the chief product officer. I explained to her that I had spoken too hastily and that we would not meet the new deadline that I had imposed. We reworked the launch plan and returned to the original timeline. Ultimately, we were able to complete our preparations a couple of days before the original launch date, though not a full week ahead like I'd anticipated." Let's take a step back and look at what you've shown with this answer. While you are putting on display a big mistake, your work to resolve it shows personal accountability. Instead of blaming the mistake on others, you accept blame and act to fix it. This is a key aspect of Amazon's Ownership leadership principle. Also, you went out of your way to speed up the process, working overtime to arrive closer to the due date. This shows that you can Deliver Results, another leadership principle. 4. Impact After explaining the actions you took, it's a good idea to quantify both the impact of the failure itself and how you mitigated it. You could say something like, "Clearly, the deadline mixup had some negative repercussions, as the launch date was pushed forward and then moved back again. Thankfully, since it was only the earlier deadline I failed to meet, the product was still able to be launched on the original launch date one week later." 5. Lessons Finally, wrap up your answer by describing any lessons you might have learned. This is the most important step for a question about a past mistake or failure, as Amazon wants to be sure you know how to avoid that mistake again. Also, constantly learning aligns with the principle Learn and Be Curious. You could say, "The failure to meet that deadline reminded me to make decisions based on data and observation, not excitement. Also, the final details of a project are extremely important and shouldn't be rushed. These were both things I had been aware of before, but I had forgotten them in the excitement over how quickly we were progressing in other areas. Thankfully, since this mistake, I've always been meticulous about deadlines, only setting or changing them after I've discussed them with the team and considered the repercussions. Thanks to that, I haven't missed a deadline since. " 3.3 Example answer: Customer Obsession Let's see how you could answer a typical question on the customer obsession principle. Question: "How have you previously measured customer satisfaction?" Example answer (from Jason, ex-Amazon PM) (Situation) "In my role as a product manager in the Amazon Marketplace organization, I encountered a significant challenge regarding declining retention rates among customers purchasing from individual sellers. (Problem) Despite consistent conversion rates, there was a noticeable decline in repeat purchases, indicating dissatisfaction among customers with their overall experience. (Solution) To address this, I conducted extensive research by engaging with both customers and individual sellers to understand their pain points. Through one-on-one conversations and surveys, I delved into their satisfaction levels, browsing experiences, and purchase behaviors. Additionally, I analyzed metrics such as conversion rates and repeat purchases to gauge overall customer satisfaction. (Impact) By triangulating qualitative feedback with quantitative data, I was able to pinpoint areas for improvement and devise targeted solutions to enhance customer satisfaction. Implementing improvements such as enhancing product detail pages, adding more images, and improving product descriptions resulted in a notable increase in repeat purchases and overall customer satisfaction. (Lessons) This experience taught me the importance of combining qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of customer satisfaction. It underscored the significance of proactive engagement with customers and continuous iteration to meet evolving needs and preferences." 3.4 Example answer: Bias for Action Let's see how you could answer a typical question on the Bias for Action principle. Question: Tell me about a time you struggled to meet a deadline Example answer (from Jason, ex-Amazon PM) (Situation) "As a lead product manager for a travel company, I faced a daunting challenge of increasing mobile ad revenue, which was significantly below industry standards. (Problem) Tight deadlines and resistance from other product teams advocating for the removal of ads posed significant obstacles to achieving our revenue targets. (Solution) To tackle this challenge, I initiated a comprehensive strategy that involved leveraging existing technology infrastructure, conducting rigorous A/B testing, and prioritizing mobile web and app platforms. (Impact) Despite initial skepticism and tight deadlines, I led my team through the execution of nine A/B tests, with seven yielding positive results. Through meticulous analysis and iterative improvements, we not only met but exceeded our revenue targets, ultimately demonstrating the effectiveness of our approach and reinforcing the importance of perseverance in the face of adversity. (Lessons) This experience underscored the importance of resilience, strategic planning, and collaboration in overcoming challenges and meeting deadlines in a dynamic and fast-paced environment." 3.5 Example answer: Ownership Let's see a typical question on the Ownership principle and what a good answer looks like. Question: Tell me about a time you had to improve a difficult process Example answer (from Dessy, ex-Senior PM at Amazon) (Solution) "While working in e-commerce, we aimed to enable sellers to accept cash on delivery, leading to complex money flow processes. (Problem) Inaccuracies in invoicing, due to multiple money flows for each transaction, resulted in a 5% error rate. (Solution) After analyzing transaction processes, I simplified money flows, reducing them from four to two, and implemented flexible payment methods for sellers. (Impact) Accuracy in invoicing improved to over 99.5%, saving $400,000 and reducing finance operation time from five hours to less than one hour monthly. (Lessons) Reviewing processes comprehensively and implementing strategic changes can significantly enhance efficiency and accuracy." 3.6 Example answer: Have Backbone, Disagree & Commit Let's see what an answer to the common 'Have backbone, disagree & commit" principle might look like. Question: Example answer (from Dessy, ex-Senior PM at Amazon) (Situation) "While managing a tool for seller inventory management, my manager aimed to sunset an old widget quickly, but I disagreed due to potential customer impact