

20 QUESTIONS TO ASK IN YOUR NEXT NONPROFIT EXECUTIVE INTERVIEW

According to [Fortune Magazine](#), approximately 40% of executives who change jobs or get promoted fail in the first 18 months. If you're searching for a new leader at your nonprofit, you might find this statistic alarming. The last thing you want is to select someone who you believe to be a perfect fit for your organization only to find out a few months later that they're not up to the job.

Fortunately, a comprehensive and effective executive interview can help you avoid a hiring mistake. It all starts with asking the right questions.

WHERE TO START:

While every nonprofit has unique needs around which specific questions should be formulated, organizations of all shapes and sizes will benefit from ensuring their interview questions are capable of uncovering insights on:

- **Leadership style**
- **Track record**
- **Mission alignment**
- **Ability to deliver results**

Here are 20 questions to ask in your next executive interview to spark meaningful conversation on those themes. Keep in mind: while these questions can and should act as the foundation of your executive interviews, they will be most effective when supplemented with other questions specific to your organization and its unique needs.

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LEADERSHIP STYLE

There is a direct connection between a candidate's leadership style and their ability to be successful within your organization. Different types of organizations require different types of leaders, so be sure to assess responses to these questions with the unique fabric of your organization in mind.

Questions to ask:

1. How do you define leadership?
2. What do you believe to be the three most important qualities of a [INSERT POSITION TITLE]?
3. How do you describe *your* leadership style?
4. Describe the most significant leadership challenge you've faced and how you addressed it.
5. How do you empower others on your team to become leaders themselves?

TRACK RECORD

You need someone who is capable of moving your mission forward, and the things a candidate has achieved in the past tend to be the best indicators of what they will accomplish in the future.

Questions to ask:

6. How has your most recent role positioned you for success at our organization?
7. What strengths would you bring to our organization? What are some areas where you'd like to grow?
8. How have you measured your impact in the past? What kinds of quantitative results have you achieved in your past roles?
9. Describe your coalition building/community outreach experience.
10. Describe your financial management experience.

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MISSION INSIGHT AND ALIGNMENT

Whether a candidate comes from within or outside of the nonprofit sector, it's important for them to understand and align with your mission on a deep level.

Questions to ask:

11. Why did you apply for this position? Share with us what you know about our organization's mission that keeps you interested in the opportunity.
12. What is your understanding of the top three issues affecting the stakeholders we serve?
13. How would you explain our organization's long-term and short-term goals?
14. What role do you see yourself playing in the achievement of those goals?
15. Why do you feel others should support our mission? How would you go about educating and engaging them?

ABILITY TO DELIVER RESULTS

More than anything else, you should walk away from your executive interviews confident that the candidate you're selecting has the ability to move the needle and achieve the key objectives you've set for their role.

Questions to ask:

16. How would you go about identifying the key challenges and opportunities of this position?
17. Describe how you would engage our staff and senior management as well as external stakeholders to advance our mission and vision.
18. How would you go about increasing our organization's visibility and/or donor dollars?
19. What would your plan of action look like for the first 90 and 180 days in your role?
20. How will you measure your results?