

27 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**FOR HIRING MANAGERS
IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**



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Introduction

Despite what you may think, the true secret to finding the next member of your construction team can be found in the construction interview questions you ask each candidate. In today's world, a company is dependent on the professionalism and expertise your team can bring to the client. For that reason, you need to be able to count on them to get their projects completed in a timely and efficient manner.

This especially holds true within the construction industry, where workers also need to be prioritizing the safety and security of themselves as well as others around them. Therefore, it is imperative to prepare construction interview questions that will give you direct insight into whether or not each candidate will be a fit for your needs.

Zoro knows that properly vetting your prospective candidates will ensure they have the experience and skill set needed for the job for which they're applying. As an employer, it can be challenging to know whether or not you are asking the right questions. Continue reading for not only construction interview questions based on specific construction job types, but also the hard and soft skills to look for in order to spot the most ideal candidate.

Chapter 1

8 IMPORTANT HARD AND SOFT SKILLS FOR CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES

Many people know that working in the construction industry is no easy profession. The duties performed can vary significantly, requiring a unique set of hard and soft skills in order to complete various projects and tasks successfully. But first, what is the difference between these two skill sets?

Hard skills include specialized knowledge and technical abilities that are easier to define and measure, whereas soft skills are associated with a worker's personal and behavioral traits that help them thrive in their current role. Both skill categories prove important due to the job's versatility, physical requirements, and independent direction needed.

In the following chapters, you will find the most important hard and soft skills a construction worker could possess.

Qualities to Look for in Construction Candidates

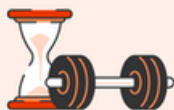
HARD SKILLS

Specialized knowledge and technical abilities



Construction Certifications

Certifications represent **extensive knowledge** within the construction field.



Physical Strength & Stamina

The candidate should be **conditioned to the physical requirements** of the job to complete tasks efficiently.



Technical Building Knowledge

Familiarity with required job duties promotes accurate **project planning and scheduling**.



Strong Reading & Math Skills

Strong reading and math capabilities are needed to **interpret maps and blueprints**.

SOFT SKILLS

Interpersonal skills and behavioral traits



Leadership

Leadership helps **promote collaboration and efficiency** among the rest of the team.



Communication

Underdeveloped communication skills can lead to potential **team conflicts and safety hazards**.



Work Ethic

Workers need to have a **passion for hard work** and the ability to keep the greater vision of a project in mind.



Time Management

Properly estimating construction timelines **keeps projects on track**.

Chapter 2

QUESTIONS TO ASK PROJECT MANAGER CANDIDATES

Construction teams are highly dependent on the presence of qualified project managers. These individuals should have a robust understanding of the building process from start to finish, with experience tracking budgetary expenses.

In addition, project managers should demonstrate strong leadership, time management, and communication skills in order to give proper direction to fellow coworkers and ensure accurate labor schedules. Ask the following questions when you're interviewing for project managers.

1 Describe a time when a project got delayed and how you handled it.

Construction delays are common, but a good project manager knows how to get a project back on track efficiently. This question helps reveal leadership and communication style, and gives insight into how the project manager accepts ownership of the job site.

What to look for:

- **Communication style:** How did the candidate communicate with team members and stakeholders to get the project back on track?
- **Sense of project ownership:** Did the project manager accept some responsibility for the delay or pass the blame onto others?

Detail some of the most recent projects you've managed from start to finish.

Project managers should have extensive experience ideating and planning construction projects from beginning to end. This question will give you a better understanding of whether or not a candidate can function independently while remaining efficient and on schedule.

What to look for:

- **Organization skills:** Was the candidate able to instinctively strategize a plan to tackle the main objectives of the project?
- **Time management:** Did the candidate consider the duration of each high-priority task and its impact on the overall schedule?

What are your first steps in planning a construction project?

All construction projects require detailed planning, from creating labor schedules to maintaining worksite safety standards. This question ensures you'll have a manager with project management experience who is knowledgeable about the construction process.

What to look for:

- **Confidence:** Does the candidate have a sense of confidence around their ability to take on a new development project because of their prior work experience?
- **Scope and scheduling:** Is the candidate able to understand what needs to be done to complete a project—from the type of labor required to the duration of each necessary task?

Tell us about the most recent contract you negotiated with a general contractor.

Negotiations are routine when handling projects from start to finish. Project managers should be able to conduct distributive and integrative negotiations as they see fit in order to formulate a contract that will satisfy both parties.

What to look for:

- **Conflict resolution and mediation skills:** Is the candidate able to keep their goals in mind while also considering the needs of the client?
- **Strong decision-making capabilities:** Does the candidate display a sound sense of judgment in terms of the decisions made throughout the negotiation process?

Specify a time when you were juggling multiple projects simultaneously. What was your strategy for prioritizing them?

Project management skills are a must when it comes to this specific role. This question will enable you to see if a candidate can handle a seemingly intimidating workload or lacks the ability to properly manage and prioritize tasks as needed.

What to look for:

- **Established technique:** What techniques does the candidate use to manage their time and projects effectively?
- **Analytical skills:** Does the candidate have the ability to accurately scope projects to estimate their completion?

How have you been able to solve issues with little or no direction from upper management?

Being able to function independently under pressure without the guidance of upper management distinguishes great managers from average ones. A well-rounded project manager will be able to detail instances in which they had to think on their toes to keep a project on track.

What to look for:

- **Leadership:** How does the candidate collectively guide their team through adjustments that need to be made due to unexpected mishaps?
- **Adaptability:** Can the candidate adapt their original plan to implement new changes?

What is your process for building out a team for a project? What do you consider?

Without a construction team made up of experienced professionals, a project may go nowhere. Having a project manager that knows how to strategically select individuals based on their proven hard and soft skills is key for success.

What to look for:

- **Strategic mindset:** Do you believe the candidate will be able to identify ideal construction workers based on their individual skill set?
- **Goal-oriented:** Does the candidate have the ability to keep the goals of a project at the forefront of their vision, enabling them to only select professionals who will propel them closer?

How do you prioritize construction site safety?

The protection and safety of all working personnel on a construction site should be of the utmost importance for all project managers heading a team of workers. Ideal candidates will have proven knowledge of workplace safety best practices and experience with implementation.

What to look for:

- **Acknowledging the reality:** Does the candidate express the importance of upholding safety standards on construction sites and the negative impact that lack of safety has had on the labor force?
- **Knowledge of safety practices:** Is the candidate aware of current legislation regarding safety standards and the requirements that need to be met in order to operate?

How have you demonstrated strong leadership?

Without an effective leader keeping the overarching scope of a project in mind, deadlines and construction regulations could be missed or forgotten. An experienced project manager can successfully lead a team through the development of a project with specific direction and transparent communication.

What to look for:

- **Determination:** Does the candidate show their desire to be the best they can be with every assignment they take on?
- **A sense of character:** Will the candidate show compassion and care for their team?

Chapter 3

QUESTIONS TO ASK CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN CANDIDATES

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Can you describe your typical work week? More specifically, what are you personally responsible for?

Ensuring that your foreman is accustomed to the role and its accompanying responsibilities is essential. They should have experience leading teams, managing labor schedules, tracking project expenses, and prioritizing health and safety regulations.

What to look for:

- **Acclimation to fast-paced environments:** Does the candidate prove they can handle a fast-paced work environment where projects and tasks overlap on a day-to-day basis?
- **Responsibility:** Can the candidate handle a significant amount of high-priority tasks and manage them effectively?

Describe an experience where your attention to detail allowed you to identify a problem or prevented one from occurring.

While working on a construction site, there are many different things happening simultaneously. A foreman needs to be highly detail-oriented to avoid unwanted accidents from occurring, ensuring the safety of everyone on the site.

What to look for:

- **Attentiveness:** Can the candidate speak to their ability to spot errors and devise recommended actions for a timely solution?
- **Passion:** Does the candidate appear passionate about playing an integral role in the project?

Do you have experience assisting with the creation of different construction teams?

A foreman assists with a variety of construction projects, usually consisting of differing designs, structures, and time frames. This professional should have a background of successfully putting together teams that will be able to complete projects based on the predetermined time frame and resources available.

What to look for:

- **Decision-making abilities:** Has the candidate highlighted their ability to make time-sensitive project decisions with positive outcomes?
- **Project organization:** Can the candidate use their experience to make an accurate estimate of what kind of teams are needed for specific construction projects?

What is your experience with data analysis? Would you consider it a personal strength?

A foreman should be comfortable with reviewing and analyzing data in order to draw actionable conclusions. This skill is needed in order to make budgetary adjustments and realign structure specifications to the desired outcome.

What to look for:

- **Strong reading and math skills:** Has the candidate developed their reading and math skills enough for them to interpret large amounts of data?
- **Application:** Does the candidate have experience turning data results into actionable recommendations?

Describe the ways you monitor the performance of your work and of those you are overseeing.

One of the key responsibilities of a foreman is to maintain and promote efficiency among the construction workers fulfilling their duties. The candidate should utilize performance measures that will give them insight into whether their work is on track or not in order to make necessary adjustments.

What to look for:

- **Increased efficiency and productivity:** Have their performance measures led to an increase in the productivity and efficiency of themselves or their team?
- **Corrective action:** How did the candidate take action to fix a decrease in productivity?

Has there been a time when your ethics have been tested?

In construction, it can be tempting to take the easy way out. It's not difficult to ignore a code regulation that will likely be overlooked by a building inspector. It's important to remember, however, that choices like this often lead to greater headaches and possibly disastrous outcomes in the future. You should have a foreman who cares more about the quality of their work than how long it takes to get it done.

What to look for:

- **Personal values:** Do you believe the candidate's individual values will allow them to be left responsible for the development of a building structure?
- **Trustworthiness:** Based on the interview, can you say the candidate can be trusted to carry out the duties of a foreman honestly?

Can you give an example of how you prioritize environmental and safety precautions throughout the construction site?

Construction site closures are no rare occurrence when health and safety guidelines are not met. Making sure you have a foreman who knows the importance of following regulations may lessen the likelihood of unexpected shutdowns.

What to look for:

- **Proactivity:** Does the candidate take the time to stay up-to-date on building codes and on-site construction regulations?
- **Transparency:** Is the candidate clear with on-site workers about the environmental safety regulations that should be followed?

Do you routinely perform pre-building assessments prior to beginning a project?

A foreman should be proficient in performing pre-building assessments, which will allow them to plan and strategize the different aspects of a construction project that need to be completed. This enables them to see the full project scope and determine an estimated financial cost.

What to look for:

- **Attention to detail:** Have the pre-building assessments performed by the candidate been comprehensive and accurate?
- **Budgeting experience:** Does the candidate have a consistent track record of producing pre-building assessments reflecting an accurate budget?

What is essential in ensuring all regulations are upheld throughout the areas of the construction process that you are responsible for?

As previously mentioned, being ignorant of legally mandated construction regulations and safety guidelines can lead to indefinite shutdowns, delaying any further progress. Not only does this negatively affect the predetermined time frame, but also increases the cost. Having a foreman with a knowledge base around best practices to maintain a legally sound construction site is an asset.

What to look for:

- **Building code expertise:** Has the candidate demonstrated knowledge of existing building codes and regulations?
- **Initiative:** Does the candidate take initiative to research changes in regulation codes and laws to ensure their construction site is adhering to mandated guidelines?

Chapter 4

QUESTIONS TO ASK CONSTRUCTION WORKER CANDIDATES

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How familiar are you with interpreting blueprints and reading electrical maps?

Without a proficient background in interpreting blueprints and electrical maps, a construction worker may not be able to fulfill the requirements of a given construction project. The candidate should be more than comfortable dealing with various blueprint schematics and electrical maps. You should be able to give the candidate an example and have them give their thoughts about the potential structure.

What to look for:

- **Fluency:** Can the candidate speak fluently when describing or reviewing blueprint schematics or electrical maps?
- **Collaboration:** Does the candidate acknowledge the importance of asking for help from a foreman to save time and money in the long run if they don't understand something?

Do you have a fear of heights?

Many construction jobs require the workers to either be located at or suspended from high floors for long periods of time. Being a construction worker with a phobia of heights may prevent them from doing any work that takes them off the ground, greatly limiting their assigned duties. Candidates should be comfortable with all aspects that a construction job would entail.

What to look for:

- **Acrophobia:** Does the candidate have an apparent fear of heights, or will they be able to work from high floors if necessary?
- **An understanding of the job:** Do they exhibit a complete understanding of what the job requires of them on a daily basis?

Can you describe some of the construction projects you've worked on in the past year?

Highly valued construction workers showcase their versatility when it comes to the range of projects they can handle, both independently and with a team. From laying concrete to erecting scaffolding, a candidate should be able to speak to the differing projects they've worked on that highlight the skill set they will bring to their new team.

What to look for:

- **Versatility:** Does the candidate have experience handling a wide range of projects?
- **Ambition:** Is the candidate eager to learn more about the construction industry and grow their skill set to take on more responsibility?

Do you have experience wearing personal protection equipment and following safety regulations?

There are a seemingly endless array of dangers on a construction site. From potential electrocution risks to noise hazards: if unregulated, these types of safety issues may lead to potential accidents and costly legal proceedings should the development company be held liable. You want to make sure you're hiring workers who already prioritize their individual safety so you don't have to worry as much about accidents occurring.

What to look for:

- **Regulation knowledge:** Is the candidate knowledgeable about the current regulations in place that need to be adhered to?
- **"Safety first" mentality:** Will the candidate work longer to prioritize the safety of themselves and their team, or do they care more about getting the job done quickly?

Has there been a time when you've disagreed with a foreman about how to perform a certain task? How did you handle the situation?

While construction workers have a vast amount of experience interpreting and constructing building designs, there is always more to learn within this particular field. Being open to the feedback and advice that a foreman or project manager has to offer can propel their career in the right direction.

What to look for:

- **Receptive to feedback:** Does the candidate respect the opinions of foremen and project managers, learning from their work experiences?
- **Interpersonal skills:** Can the candidate effectively communicate their thoughts with upper management without aggression or frustration?

How flexible and/or open is your work schedule?

Complex projects are known for their odd and long hours, oftentimes requiring construction workers to put their personal schedule aside in order to get the job done. A potential candidate should have the flexibility to accommodate such labor schedules so that time frames can be estimated accurately.

What to look for:

- **Open availability:** Does the candidate have an open schedule that will allow them to work abnormal hours?
- **Dedication:** Do you believe the candidate will be dedicated to producing their best work, regardless of what is required from them?

Are you comfortable with teaching new concepts and helping others develop their skills?

A significant part of working on a construction project is functioning as a team player. Many workers are coming in with different levels of experience, and sometimes more-experienced members will have to take the time to explain concepts to newer members of the team.

What to look for:

- **Compassion:** Will the candidate be able to naturally level with those trying to learn concepts for a current project?
- **Patience:** Does the candidate exhibit a sense of patience when describing their ability to mentor others?

What aspects of a career in construction appeal to you the most?

Working in the construction industry isn't for everyone. There are long hours, demanding physical labor, and a vast amount of experience required to be proficient at the job. When interviewing a candidate, they should display their desire to grow and prosper within the industry to make certain they won't abandon ship once things get tough.

What to look for:

- **Genuine interest:** Do you believe the candidate is truly passionate about the construction industry or just trying to get the job?
- **Commitment:** Has the candidate proven that they're invested in pursuing a career in construction?

Can you detail some of the biggest roadblocks you've faced while working on a project?

Sometimes construction workers are faced with issues they don't know how to handle, even after years of experience in the field. Being able to work past those roadblocks and think critically to find a resolution is essential.

What to look for:

- **Resilience:** Does the candidate ignore limitations and find a way to get the job done?
- **Work ethic:** Do you believe the candidate has a strong work ethic that will support current workflow and upcoming projects?

Final Thoughts

As of today, the construction industry is on the rise. Having unique and thought-provoking construction interview questions is going to be key in identifying the most experienced individuals in a sea of candidates.

Zoro understands the need to have a safely functioning and efficient construction site, and that starts with the team that runs it. Use this guide as a framework to design your construction dream team.