



# TOP 25Q & A INTERVIEW QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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## **INTERVIEW QUESTION:**

# **1. Why are you looking for a new Quality Management position and what are your criteria for a new job?**

### **What does this question try to uncover?**

This question is nearly guaranteed to come up in some variation or another, so it is one that all candidates should consider before the interview. The primary purpose of the question is to determine why you are leaving your current position and if you are likely to be a good fit for the position and for the company.

### **What you should say -**

This is a rather blunt question, but answering it honestly is the best policy. Make sure to pay attention to the information they provide early on for clues to what they offer, and mentally compare how it fits with your own criteria. Consider different, neutral ways to explain why you are looking for a new job. If you are currently unemployed, focus on the criteria you are looking for in your next job. If you are employed, make sure to paint your current position in a light that is not too negative.

### **What you should not say -**

This is a difficult question to answer if it is asked early in the interview. If you have not gotten enough information about what they offer or what they are looking for in Quality Management, don't launch into a lengthy discussion about what Quality Management is. This does not answer the question, even though it is tempting to provide a very generic answer. Also, make sure you do not sound overly eager or negative. If you come across as either of these two, most companies are going to feel you are a bad fit for their current needs.

### **What should you highlight in your answer?**

The best approach is to emphasize how your experience aligns with where they would like to see you in the company. Many people overlook the value of QA, thinking of it as one of the first things to cut when a deadline is looming. Use your answer to highlight what process you can implement to improve revenue and reduce rework, and that you will work to ensure that no compromise will be made when it comes to managing quality.



### **INTERVIEW QUESTION:**

## **2. Briefly describe your experience in Quality Management.**

### **What does this question try to uncover?**

This query is not simply looking for the candidate's experience. It is meant to gauge the candidate's grasp of the fundamentals of quality management, and whether they possess a readily recallable storehouse of working knowledge in the domain of their choice. The candidate usually should describe both, what is frustrating for that candidate, and what the person is likely to zero in on if selected for the position.

### **What you should say -**

This is a difficult question to balance because it can be difficult to gauge what kind of answer the interviewers are looking for. Talk about areas where you found strengths and share a few weaknesses, and make sure you talk about the projects or processes where you have confidence. You can discuss the range of quality controls, tests, and monitoring you have encountered, but you need to make sure to mention tasks for which you were responsible. As the Quality Manager, you will need to be able to provide direction and help others to perform to the best of their abilities to achieve organization goals

### **What you should not say -**

Don't say anything negative about an organization's existing Quality Management framework. This is not a time to bring up your past mistakes. They are looking for an overall review of what you did, and that is where you need to direct most of your efforts. Nor should your answer be wordy and vague. Don't muddle through the answer trying to find the right angle. This is another question that you need to have a prepared focus for before the interview begins.

### **What should you highlight in your answer?**

Quality Management positions have a slightly different focus, and interviewers are seeking information about how you have helped guide the process more than how you worked within it. If you have experience implementing, updating, or transitioning Quality Management, even if you weren't in a managerial role, this will help illustrate what they can expect if they hire you for the position.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

### 3. Describe a time when you had to manage multiple projects at the same time.

#### What does this question try to uncover?

Usually people who are intimately familiar with the process will ask this question knowing full well that Quality Management is a feast or famine position. You are either waiting for engineers or peers to finish so that QA can begin or you are swamped. Because of the way companies set up the schedule, especially around quarters and the fiscal year, you are probably more than accustomed to being hit with several high priority projects at the same time. The interviewers are looking for your approach to dealing with this all too common Quality Management issue and as well as looking for your prioritization skill.

#### What you should say -

Everyone develops a unique way of coping with the bottleneck that happens in QA. To stand out from other candidates, you should start with how you manage the times where there is too little to do. Even though there isn't a product to review yet, there is always plenty of documentation you can review so when the team is ready for QA you can immediately start performing the review and walkthrough. You can talk about different types of QA reviews and techniques to perform those reviews. Take the interviewers through your specific process for keeping deadlines separate and how you prioritize them.

#### What you should not say -

If they ask this question, the interviewers know that it happens often. The worst thing a candidate can do is to brush it off as a typical part of the job and then not provide details. Since they know that it is a problem, usually the biggest problem the QA Department faces, they want to know specifically how you handle it. If you dismiss it as just part of the job, you have demonstrated that you are more likely to ignore the problem than resolve it.

#### What should you highlight in your answer?

Preparation tends to become second nature once a person enters QA. Illustrate that you communicate with all of the teams and closely track the progress of each deadline to better manage each project. Once you establish this, highlight what your preferred process is for ensuring that nothing slips through the cracks on the projects. If this involves delegating, make sure to discuss that, depending on how many deadlines coincide. Also highlight your email writing skill and escalation management skill.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 4. What is your experience developing a quality assurance manual?

### What does this question try to uncover?

QA involves a lot of established processes and information for team members to learn before they even begin to test. Candidates for a Quality Management position should have experience developing manuals that help new hires through the process. These documents also need to be maintained for current employees so that changes in the process are easier to follow. This question largely shows an interest in whether you have worked with these documents because many businesses do not keep a manual.

### What you should say -

This is another time where honesty is the best answer. Since most companies are looking for ways to cut corners, QA manuals are not something that get the attention they deserve. If you have worked for companies take this approach, you do need to let the interview panel know that you don't have experience. If you do have experience with QA manuals, give a brief overview of how you managed them.

### What you should not say -

If a company is asking this question, that means they want to have a manual, whether the manager will be working on it from scratch or making sure an existing one stays current. If you don't have experience, do not express the sentiment of your previous employers who felt it was unnecessary. Nor should you spend a long time discussing the answer. Mostly they are looking to see if you have the experience.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

One of the best answers to this question is to highlight how effective and automated manuals are, whether or not you actually have experience with them. If you don't have experience, you can mention times when they would have helped. If you do have experience, emphasize the importance of keeping the manuals current.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 5. What do you consider the role of documentation is in Quality Management?

### What does this question try to uncover?

While similar to the previous question, there is a definite right answer and a definite wrong answer. Companies may be able to get by without a manual, but for real Quality Management documentation is a required part of the process. Regardless of the industry, all QA requires a paper trail, especially as a means to safeguard against negative audit findings. The question is meant to determine how you feel about the necessity of documentation.

### What you should say -

You don't have to like documentation to know why it is important during the QA process. If nothing else, it is a great tool for showing companies why they cannot try to cut corners by taking up QA time to finish a product. It gives you the necessary metrics to aptly demonstrate what kinds of problems are found and how long it takes to find them.

### What you should not say -

Documentation is almost never anyone's favorite aspect of a job, but that is definitely not something a candidate for Quality Management should say, not even as a joke. The role of documentation is essential to the position, and knocking it shows a lack of regard for that role.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

Essentially, the interviewers want to hear your personal take, and that should always include how important documentation is and why. Highlight the main benefits of documentation in ensuring a baseline quality for a project or product, as well as how documentation can help reduce effort, rework, and improve knowledge sharing, how it establishes accountability within the team, and meets both internal and external requirements.



## **INTERVIEW QUESTION:**

# **6. What kinds of interfaces have you used?**

### **What does this question try to uncover?**

Technology has given rise to too many tools and methods of Quality Management. Companies are usually either quick to jump to the latest technology, even when it is not necessary, or to stick Quality Management with a cumbersome interface that is difficult to use. This is not a make or break question, but companies do tend to favor candidates who have worked with a QA interface similar to their own.

### **What you should say -**

This can be answered with a relatively short list. If you know what system the company uses, talk about your experience with that interface, or if you haven't used that interface, talk about a similar system you have used at a previous job. If you have used a large number of different interfaces, this can actually be a real benefit as the interviewers may consider using your experience to find a better method to the one that is currently being used.

### **What you should not say -**

Most companies use some form of software to ensure QA runs smoothly, whether it is between internal QA teams or customer service and the customer. You should not dismiss the question by saying that if you have used one interface you have used them all. If you have actually used a number of different systems, you know this is absolutely not true.

### **What should you highlight in your answer?**

Your highlight should focus on the type of interface the position requires. If you will be primarily working internally with little or no contact with customers, talk about what you have done to improve the interface (all of them are flawed). If you will be working with clients, talk about how you used the interface to address customer concerns and keep communication open. In either case, the correct action plan is an important aspect to cover.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 7. Describe how you handle management of critical defects.

### What does this question try to uncover?

Defects are expected at pretty much every level in the process, even at the end because nothing is perfect. However, critical defects are a big deal. The further into the process that a critical defect is discovered, the more questions there will be about how it could have gone unnoticed for so long. This particular question is looking for the answer to how you address something that should be a rare occurrence and has a serious impact on the final product.

### What you should say -

It is usually best to start your answer by addressing how rare these should be and that if they are a common occurrence, the entire process (not just QA) needs a serious review, along with the SME, by using specific QC techniques. This should be followed by an example of how you actually managed a critical defect from beginning to end. Discuss the process and tools that were used to detect the defect, then how long it took for the proper people to be identified and notified of the problem.

### What you should not say -

This is not a short answer question. Candidates who qualify for Quality Management positions have all encountered critical defects at some point during their careers. The first time should have been memorable enough for you to have established your own way of managing those defects. As a Quality Manager, the correct answer is never to leave it up to others to resolve. You should be driving the process to a resolution.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

Usually an example is a candidate's best way to highlight how he or she handles a critical defect. Starting with how the defect was detected, and if you were the one to detect it, take the interviewers through the process used to finally resolve the issue. Take them through the tools, resources, and methods of communication used to address the problem. Once it was resolved, talk about what was learned and implemented to ensure it did not happen again.





## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 8. How do you use data to improve the QA process and the overall product?

### What does this question try to uncover?

Quality Management is heavily dependent on metrics and data to be effective. When there is a dip in the metrics or when data indicates a high defect or bug rate, it means there is a flaw. It is a sign that the project or product team needs to meet and begin troubleshooting the issue. The question is trying to determine if you work to improve the process, or if you are more complacent as long as the numbers are good.

### What you should say -

A large part of the Quality Manager position is to find ways to improve the process. Data analysis is a large part of what you should be doing in the position, whether it is determining if there are certain conditions that are lowering the product quality or if the group has flat lined on productivity. Particularly in the technology industry, there is always room for improvement.

### What you should not say -

The adage “If it isn’t broken, don’t fix it” does not apply. If you indicate this in your answer, you stand a very good chance of being dismissed before you even walk out of the interview.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

The best way to answer the question is to emphasize an example of when you made a decision based on data to implement a process improvement. Also discuss what kind of statistical knowledge you have and how you have used it to analyze data in previous positions.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 9. Do you have experience with quality audits? If so, please describe one experience.

### What does this question try to uncover?

Audits are an unfortunate reality of Quality Management, and it is important for candidates to know how to prepare for them, even if they lack personal experience with an actual audit. Interviewers want to see how much exposure a candidate has had with audits, particularly for things like ISO and ASO Certification.

### What you should say -

If you have experience with quality audits, talk about your role in the audits. If you were the auditor, you have a very different experience than someone who was a participant. If you are a candidate who have not been through an audit, you can still talk about how you prepared for a quality audit. It could be that you have experience dealing with audit findings, in which case you can talk about how you ensured corrective actions addressed the shortcomings listed in the findings.

### What you should not say -

One of the primary functions of Quality Management is ensuring that there is proper documentation and a reliable process that does not have gaps. Ensuring that these are both considered in terms of possible audits is the minimum requirement by most companies. This means that even if you have not been a part of a formal audit, you do have experience at least in thinking in terms of an audit.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

Highlight the kind of audit you participated in, whether it was ISO/ASO, internal requirement, client requirement, or a regulation audit. The context of the audit determines how to act and where your focus should be, and this highlights the audit's goals. Make sure to cover audit standard requirements and collecting artifacts, especially if the problems were all minor, and what was done to ensure those issues were not repeated.



## **INTERVIEW QUESTION:**

# **10. How do you ensure that no details are overlooked or forgotten during a corrective action?**

### **What does this question try to uncover?**

Like critical defects, corrective actions are a very serious concern in Quality Management. They are typically closely scrutinized by upper management, and you will likely have had to deal with regular updates to make sure everyone was on the same page. This question seeks to investigate if you have dealt with corrective actions, and how you dealt with them.

### **What you should say -**

The longer your career has been the greater the odds that you have dealt with corrective actions. In the event that you have not been through a corrective action, you have likely considered what would need to be done. Either way, you can talk about how you would work through the necessary steps to reaching a successful conclusion that does not require revisiting the problem again later.

### **What you should not say -**

The question is not looking to find out if you have been able to reduce the number of corrective actions. If you have successfully lowered the instances of corrective actions, there will be other opportunities to discuss this, but for now you should focus on the process to manage a corrective action.

### **What should you highlight in your answer?**

Having experience that you can discuss is the best way to highlight your methods. You should walk the interviewers through your process starting with the finding. Talk about how you document and track the action, how you coordinated the process, and how the results were verified at the end. Vigilance and focus to details should be highlighted because that is the best way to ensure a corrective action meets the requirements the first time.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 11. Describe one of the most difficult problems you have encountered and how you resolved it.

### What does this question try to uncover?

The problems that Quality Management professionals encounter are numerous and usually relatively unique. Because so many things can go wrong, there may be problems that go unnoticed as QA focuses on higher priority issues. These problems are usually discovered later in the process, making it much harder to resolve the issue when it is discovered. This question wants you to reflect on things you have encountered during your career and focus on one of the roughest problems you may have resolved. It is looking for both the ability to find problems that others miss and how you ensured they were resolved. They are looking for your problem solving technique and your approach to managing problems.

### What you should say -

This is usually one of the most important questions, and candidates are heavily judged based on the response. It is best to plan how you will answer this question before you go into the interview. Have several examples prepared, and select the one that most closely aligns with information the interviewers have given you up to this point. As the question is usually asked later in the process, you should be able to tailor the information you provide to align with their concerns.

### What you should not say -

This should be a lengthy answer, but you need to focus on a single example. Do not offer several examples that provide shallow details. The interviewers are looking for depth in the answer, which you cannot do by trying to talk about several examples. Also, don't use an example of a common problem that has a relatively common solution.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

Using a single example of a problem you have found and managed, make sure you cover how you found and organized the data that helped you notice the problem, especially if it was found later in the process. Talk about how you coordinated the resolution and the follow up to see why it wasn't discovered earlier. Make sure to dedicate some time to determining the root cause as well.



### **INTERVIEW QUESTION:**

## **12. How do you handle decision making when you cannot get all of the necessary information?**

### **What does this question try to uncover?**

Communication is always an issue, but QA is too often left out of the loop. It is a common problem that all Quantity Managers have to deal with at one time or another. Then there are times when there simply isn't enough information, but that does not always extend the deadline. The question is looking to see how you determine the right path forward when this inevitable situation arises.

### **What you should say -**

The method a candidate uses to analyze the available information and evaluate how best to proceed is extremely important in Quality Management. Usually you won't be able to discuss a specific situation in adequate detail, so the best answer will focus on the kinds of data you look for when sizing up a problem. Talk about the decision criteria that are required to make a difficult decision when there is a lack of data.

### **What you should not say -**

In most cases, these situations require the project or product to continue moving forward. Saying that you would stop the entire process and block the process until the necessary information is available is only the correct answer in a very small majority of situations. If you use this as your go-to approach, it will come across more like a temper tantrum than a decision making process. Companies do not want to miss deadlines, so you need to be able to analyze what information you do have and make a decision before throwing on the brakes.

### **What should you highlight in your answer?**

The correct answer will highlight several different contingencies based on what information is available, including criteria to proceed, resources available to troubleshoot problems without sufficient data (or if it is possible to gather the necessary data when there is adequate time), and alternate courses of actions.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 13. How do you communicate expected standards to the team?

### What does this question try to uncover?

Expected standards can change with little to no warning. Quality Management requires a reliable network of communication and channeling of information. The question focuses on your method of ensuring the QA team has what they need to meet the product specifications when a change is made.

### What you should say -

Typically any question about communication is going to have a similar answer, regardless of who the candidate is talking to, such as a team, another department, or a customer. For this particular answer, though, you should talk about the process you use to disseminate information to the QA team. This is one of the few times where you should have complete control over what is and isn't communicated, so use it to talk about your ideal communication process.

### What you should not say -

The right answer will not defer the communication to someone else. As the Quality Manager, you should be kicking off the process, not delegating it to someone else. If there is an established process, there is always room for improvement.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

Talk about the way you ensure that everyone gets the same information and how you ensure everyone understands that information. This can be done through a series of emails, meetings, or training. The right communication method is also going to be different based on the severity of the projected change. Also, point out that as soon as you know changes are coming how you alert the team so that they are prepared to incorporate the change when it is enacted.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 14. What areas do you typically look at in the QA process to make improvements?

### What does this question try to uncover?

There are several template QA processes, so candidates are usually familiar with the kinds of problems that are inherent to them. The interviewers want to know where you typically find problems within other companies to see where you focus your attention. Basically, they want to know how you strengthen a particular process or address weaknesses.

### What you should say -

This one requires a somewhat more generic answer because every company implements QA processes differently, even when they are in a controlled environment like ISO. This is a time when you can mention things like pet peeves within the QA process and what areas you ensure work like a well-oiled machine.

### What you should not say -

Giving a vague answer, such as you have to see the process to know what changes need to be made, is not what the interviewers want to hear. The question isn't asking you to determine the problems of a specific system. It wants to know what you consider to be areas that are most likely places for improvement.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

One of the best ways to answer this question is by highlighting process improvement experience in which you came into a company and evaluated a process and made periodic improvements. You can walk the interviewers through the process you used to determine when something needed work and how you implemented a better method with the available time and resources allowed.



### **INTERVIEW QUESTION:**

## **15. What do you think the role of the quality professional is within a company?**

### **What does this question try to uncover?**

While this question sounds a bit predictable and by-the-books, it has a very specific purpose. Ultimately the success of a product hinges on how much quality improvement investment went into it. No matter how innovative a product is, if it does not work as intended, it will fail. Yet, Quality Management gets far less attention and budget than other departments, particularly research and development.

### **What you should say -**

The interviewers want to hear how candidates operate. The best answer is an honest one that points out how much problem solving goes into ensuring the job is done within very strict and often insufficient time frames. Talking about the role and how you perceive it compared to how outsiders think about Quality Management can aptly illustrate how you work within a company where different divisions place a different emphasis on quality.

### **What you should not say -**

It will be tempting to blow off this question, but doing so will work against you. Of course, the role may seem evident to someone who works within QA, but it's really more about how you ensure that communication and Quality Management are handled with other groups, teams, and across the company.

### **What should you highlight in your answer?**

The answer can cover a number of different topics, depending on your personal view of what your role is. However, highlighting the importance of QA in the final stages and ensuring that a team still steps up to get problems resolved is important. Many people view QA as just being critics. Your answer can highlight not only the importance of QA, but also how you keep from ruffling feathers with the final results of Quality Management, so that people feel less defensive.





### INTERVIEW QUESTION:

## 16. Give an example of a situation where you had to persuade the team or a colleague to properly manage a QA activity.

### What does this question try to uncover?

Constant vigilance is a necessity in good Quality Management, not only to ensure the product meets the minimum requirements, but to ensure that the necessary processes are properly followed. This is a constant struggle as people often feel there is not adequate time for the final product to go through the lengthy QA process. You will come across occasions when you have to convince someone to follow the right method instead of taking a shortcut or using a method that is not approved.

### What you should say -

Quality Management professionals already take a lot of flak for doing their job. Patience is absolutely essential, but you also have to be firm. Make sure to use an example of a time when you were able to positively persuade someone of the right method. Talk about the methods you used to convince the person or group that their current approach will result in more problems down the line.

### What you should not say -

It is expected that you will encounter people who try to modify the process without going through the appropriate channels. The harsher you treat them, the more likely the chances they will try to do it behind your back the next time. You want to avoid sounding like it is a power struggle, because the majority of the time it isn't.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

Talk about the example using the steps you took to persuade the person or group, starting with how you found out a particular activity was not being appropriately managed. The answer should highlight how you were able to be positively persuasive. Pointing out the likely problems that will stem from deviating from the established process or that a certain method is required based on the specifications is usually something the interviewers want to hear. If you highlight them here, you are less likely to have follow up questions.



### INTERVIEW QUESTION:

## 17. How do you manage situations in which engineering takes longer than expected, reducing the amount of time QA has to test the product before release?

### What does this question try to uncover?

This is the number one problem in QA, no matter what industry is involved. Every other department is given the time they need to get the product made. When it reaches QA, though, you only have as much time as is left on the clock before the deadline. Timeline slips are essentially a guarantee. This question focuses specifically on how you react to the problem.

### What you should say -

The best answer will focus on how you are able to get some of the front work done while the product or project is still currently going through earlier stages. Detail how you engage with other departments so that your team already has a good idea of what the likely problems are, what has changed since the project started, and when the product will probably be ready for them to start testing.

### What you should not say -

The more experience a candidate has, the more negative experiences that candidate would have with impossible time crunches. The demand to finish a job quickly without losing quality seems nearly impossible. A flippant response to that effect, however, is not what the interviewers want to hear. They want to know that you have an established process for this inevitable scenario. Your answer should not focus on how inevitable it is.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

Depending on your process, this could be a relatively simple answer. Highlighting team development to ensure that internal communication is never the problem is one way to make sure the process goes smoothly once it reaches QA. Ultimately, teamwork (both within the QA team and within the product or project team) is what makes even the tightest deadlines easier to manage. Also, make sure to point out at what point in the process you start to warn the project or product team that they are about to lose quality if any more time is taken away from QA. The team can share interim products for initial review so that the time required for the completed product is reduced.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 18. How do you manage a problem that ends up being a symptom of a much larger issue?

### What does this question try to uncover?

Occasionally this is going to be an issue, and sometimes it won't be noticed until data starts to show an extreme downward trend. There are usually symptoms that should be closely monitored to identify larger issues, but it is easy to miss them during crunch periods. The question really wants to find out how you react to unexpected issues that have a much larger impact than a onetime defect.

### What you should say -

There are several elements to answering this question, including how the candidate monitors for larger problems, how the root cause is assessed, and how the problem is finally resolved. Your answer should follow your established process for monitoring for larger problems, then how to properly respond to those issues once detected.

### What you should not say -

This is another time when Quality Management does not delegate to others to manage the problem. There may be an element of delegating to ensure that the main problem is properly resolved, but ultimately the Quality Manager is responsible for monitoring the process for larger issues.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

The interviewers want to hear about how you use data to identify problems that go beyond what the QA team is likely to notice. Talk about your use of metrics and data to monitor for problems. Provide details on your process to rectify the larger issue. Highlight the areas that you focus on to ensure a similar problem does not reappear.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 19. What do you think the key tasks of Quality Management are?

### What does this question try to uncover?

This question can be asked several different ways, but essentially what the interviewers want to know is how you focus your time and team to get the job done. Every company has its own area of concern. The question looks to determine if your priorities match the company's priorities.

### What you should say -

Safety should always be a primary concern, whether it is for the team or the customers who purchase the product. Then you focus on your priority level for determining how to answer the question. The importance of tasks are usually dictated by the reason they are required, such as contractual or ISO requirements.

### What you should not say -

Giving an open-ended answer is the wrong way to answer this question. Nor should candidates be asking questions in response to the question. You should have an established set of minimum tasks that must be completed before you feel a product can be released.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

As mentioned, safety should always be the top priority, so tasks associated with it should be discussed and highlighted as being safety related. Highlight that the tasks are a minimum to releasing a product, and provide details about what elements each particular task satisfies. The answer may take a little longer than most, but try to boil it down to the things you feel have to be done to meet Quality Management standards.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 20. Describe the most difficult decision you have had to make in Quality Management.

### What does this question try to uncover?

This question has several purposes. First, it seeks to determine what you consider a difficult situation to see exactly what your experience is. Second, it determines how well you perform under pressure. Finally, it helps to establish how your preferred methods of resolving issues are implemented when it is critical.

### What you should say -

This is a very difficult question to answer because it tends to expose where you are weakest or to bring up emotions from when you were in the situation. It is best to select your most difficult decision to illustrate how you work. You need to explain the situation as much as possible without getting too deep or giving too much detail. Explain why it was the hardest decision you have made and why you ultimately choose the path you did. Make sure to explain the results, and if they were not as positive as you feel they should have been, tell how you would make your decision in similar situations going forward.

### What you should not say -

Do not fill in the time by saying things like “That’s a hard one” or indicate that you have a lot of instances you can talk about. This emphasizes that there are a lot of problems with the way you manage quality, even if the problems were largely driven by external issues. There should always be a time that stands out, so take a deep breath instead of delaying the recounting of it.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

The answer should highlight both why it was a difficult decision (risks, lack of information, choosing between quality and a deadline, or other problems that could occur based on the decision) and how you finally made your decision. To demonstrate you understand the results of your decision, talk about what happened afterward, both the positives and negatives.



## INTERVIEW QUESTION:

# 21. What is the most important lesson you have learned about working in Quality Management?

### What does this question try to uncover?

This query actually is more of a throwaway question and it tends to highlight that you have not sufficiently answered earlier questions. If the question is asked early in the interview, the interviewers are using it to gauge what kinds of questions to ask.

### What you should say -

Your answer should either help the interviewers focus on a particular area (usually one that is a strength) or to highlight what your experience is with Quality Management. This question is really a less articulate way of asking what your most difficult decisions have been and how you analyze available data to make a decision. Add an example or two of your real life experiences where you implemented quality management as practice.

### What you should not say -

As easy as it would be to just throw a noncommittal answer out there, you have to try to be focused, even if the question is a bit annoying. Avoid getting bogged down by the answer, though. The interviewer who asks it may be serious, but it does not require a lengthy discussion.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

Your answer should really focus on what you most value in your experience. If your most important lesson was when a project should be stopped because of serious issues discovered in the Quality Management phase, then talk about it. If the most important lesson you learned was to make sure documentation is properly maintained, odds are they will be pleased with the answer, even if it seems trivial to you.



### **INTERVIEW QUESTION:**

## **22. How do you ensure that the QA team follows the process, even on a tight deadline?**

### **What does this question try to uncover?**

Quality Management can be very tricky because of competing priorities and people outside of the QA team trying to pressure those within it to cut corners. Micromanaging the process is not only ineffective, it is usually impossible given the breath and width of the tasks. The interviewers want to know how you ensure at least the minimum level of QA is done and how you track it.

### **What you should say -**

This is a field that does best with well-established processes and rules on what can be skipped and when. Your answer should focus on deciding between what is nice to have and what is absolutely essential to have, and being able to recognize which applies. For example, if you are dealing with software, you may have to let certain defects go out as known issues to be patched in the next release. Your answer should cover what your preferred process is and how you define what is essential and what isn't for the product's release.

### **What you should not say -**

Don't answer this by saying it depends on the situation. It is understood that the situation will affect what you and the team do; they don't need to be told that. It is an evasive answer to the question that does not provide any real information.

### **What should you highlight in your answer?**

Highlight how you bolster the team to help them feel they are supported in their path forward. The best way to ensure a process is followed is to let your team know that you will make sure the outside pressure is stopped. You also need to talk about documentation and tracking systems so that decisions and tasks are recorded in the event of a problem later.



### **INTERVIEW QUESTION:**

## **23. How do you prioritize automation with all of the other aspects of Quality Management?**

### **What does this question try to uncover?**

Automation is one of the best ways of ensuring a consistent product quality. Almost every area of Quality Management has a few areas that can be automated, and some industries place a heavy emphasis on automation, especially things like software. Whether or not it is a priority for your current job, if you are asked this question in an interview it means they are looking to make their QA process more automated.

### **What you should say -**

Knowing that this is a question indicating that automation is a high priority for the company, this question will likely change your answer if you have not had a heavy emphasis on automation in the past. If your experience has been limited, talk about how it would have improved recurring problems. If you have some experience with automation but it was never a high priority, talk about how you would like to move to a heavier focus on automation. If you have extensive experience and it is a high priority for you, then provide a couple of short examples of your experience and the benefits derived from automation.

### **What you should not say -**

If this question comes up in an interview, it is clearly something that the company either uses or wants to implement, so avoid talking about how it is a waste of time. If you have had bad experiences with it in the past, don't use them as a way to prove your point. If you do bring them up, make sure to talk about how the automation could have been changed to be more productive.

### **What should you highlight in your answer?**

Highlight the benefits of automation, but discuss how it is not the highest priority when it comes to meeting a deadline. Talk about times when it can be the priority because either team members are in a lull or another time when there is not a conflict between automation and completing a project.





### INTERVIEW QUESTION:

## 24. What do you feel is the best approach to training a new member of the QA team?

### What does this question try to uncover?

This question can be a sticky one for some employers. Too many companies hire new employees and let them figure things out on their own. Whatever the case in other departments, this approach does not work in Quality Management. The interviewers are looking for how candidates ensure their new members are properly trained and integrated into the team.

### What you should say -

There are usually two ways to ensure that a person is properly mentored into a QA team. They should have a mentor who helps them, reviews the new hire's work for a week or two, pointing out what was missed, things that are typical problems, and helping the new hire get to the know the project team. The other element is documentation. A mentor will not be able to stay with the new hire and get the job done, so documentation provides the process and rules. The mentor provides details and support while the new hire learns. Usually a focused combination of support and documentation is considered a good answer.

### What you should not say -

This is an area of particular concern because companies do not want their Quality Management to be inconsistent in their approach to testing products. It is another time when you should not answer that it depends on the situation, because in this case it really doesn't. Ensuring new hires understand the process and how to work within it has been studied long enough that there are definitely better ways to train new hires regardless of the industry or situation.

### What should you highlight in your answer?

Your answer should highlight the areas where you think a new hire needs the most focused attention. The best answer is the one in which you present your ideal scenario for training new personnel. If there are areas where you know it isn't likely to happen, suggest alternatives.



### **INTERVIEW QUESTION:**

## **25. Besides quality monitoring, what do you think can be done to ensure the quality of the product?**

### **What does this question try to uncover?**

The question is actually a bit abstract, but it is ultimately about improving the process. It is a bit of a sneaky way of finding out how you think about product improvement in terms of everyday tasks.

### **What you should say -**

Even though the focus is on project or product improvement, you need to answer it in a similar form. Focus on the different parts of the typical QA process where the quality checks could be improved to delve deeper into a finished product. This means going beyond the minimum requirements. Taking a step back from the process is usually the best starting point as people get too bogged down in the details to properly analyze where things could be fixed or improved.

### **What you should not say -**

This question is not meant as a way to determine how you find problems or what you do when they are found. Avoid launching into a discussion about corrective actions and other activities required by remediating a problem. This shows that you don't think about product improvement.

### **What should you highlight in your answer?**

Highlight areas where you know there is generally room for improvement. For example, if you are working with software, relate what you can do to reduce the number of known issues. Quality Management should always be thinking in terms of finding a better way to do something because getting adequate time for thorough testing is extremely rare. Highlight things that are possible and why you think they help ensure the quality of the product.

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