

10 PMO DIRECTOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

January 15, 2020 By **Ten Six**
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We've previously shared [10 killer interview questions for PMO roles](https://tensix.com/2018/08/10-killer-interview-questions-for-pmo-roles/) (<https://tensix.com/2018/08/10-killer-interview-questions-for-pmo-roles/>), but what if you are recruiting a PMO Director or Manager? The questions for senior candidates can be a little different. Here are 10 excellent PMO Director interview questions.

Regardless of the job title you will actually use for the role, these questions are aimed at people who will lead your strategic implementation of the PMO, set processes

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and standards, and champion the goals of the PMO across the organization at an enterprise level.

If you found this article because you're getting ready to be interviewed for a senior PMO Manager or Director role, then you can use these PMO Director interview questions as part of your preparation!

1. Explain how you have implemented/how you would implement portfolio management across a business. How successful was it?

Here, you are looking for examples of how they have set up a portfolio management structure and culture. You should expect answers that refer to different tools used for portfolio management, but it's also important that they address points around culture.

Portfolio management is a very different way of thinking for organizations that have not used that structure before. Ideally, they should be able to describe how they went about creating that culture change and moving the business to a way of thinking about change in the portfolio.

2. Tell me about a time where you have had to challenge a decision, for example about a project that should not have been approved.

Part of portfolio governance is ensuring the portfolio is balanced, reasonable and that managers have the right information to make sound decisions about which projects move

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forward. However, many of us will know of situations where senior leaders have tried to bypass the formal process and get pet projects approved, regardless of whether they fit the criteria or are appropriate to do at that moment.

Someone in a senior PMO role should be able to successfully challenge leaders who wish to bypass the process, in a respectful way. This question gives you the opportunity to find out if they have done that in the past and how successful they were at the time.

3. Share your process for managing resource capacity planning to ensure there are enough people to deliver the changes required.

Resource management is one of the more challenging aspects of keeping a portfolio of change moving forward! Candidates may talk about tools they have used in previous jobs, but their response should also consider how they identify resource requirements for projects in the pipeline, skills analysis. They should demonstrate the ability to look into the future and make sound judgements.

4. Tell me about your experiences of setting up a cross-program or portfolio level change control board.

A change control board is important for ensuring projects aren't falling over each other to change the same thing. Effective change control across a program or portfolio

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is essential if you want to avoid conflicts and rework. Change control boards pick up things like a project changing something, only for another project to change it back a week later, and situations where one area might be receiving multiple changes in a very short period of time, leading to overload.

If your business does not already have a mechanism to review change across projects, you will want your new senior PMO leader to put this in place. Change control boards can be seen as an overhead by people who don't understand their function, so it's important to implement them sensitively and explain the business benefit.

5. If you were successful in securing this role, what would be your first steps to audit what we already have in place?

Any new director or manager is going to want to do a full review of the existing services before making changes. This question will give you an idea of the process they would use to do a PMO Pulse Check (<https://tensix.com/pmo-implementation/pmo-pulse-check/>), and how they would approach their first few months in post.

6. What experience do you have in supplier management?

PMO Directors may get involved with supplier management, either through procurement of services (such as PMO software tools (<https://tensix.com/software->

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services/)) or via securing additional contract resources. Either way, it's useful to know how much experience they have had in working with third parties.

7. What would you say are the primary objectives of a PMO?

There is no right answer to this PMO interview question, but the response will help you understand how well the candidate would fit within the structure you already have and your goals for your PMO.

8. Can you share an example of a situation where you have had to gain support for the work of the PMO?

A person interviewing for a senior role like this should already have practical experience of leading a PMO. Therefore, it's likely they will have encountered resistance to the PMO in some form in the past. It's very common for PMO leaders to face challenge about the services they provide, so this question gives the candidate an opportunity to showcase their influencing, conflict management, negotiating and other skills to demonstrate how they dealt with it.

9. How do you motivate a team?

The PMO Director role is likely to have direct reports: individuals in the PMO who report to them. You'll want to ask some questions that uncover their leadership style and how they go about working with a team. This question about motivation is one, but you could also ask about their preferred management

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styles, how they deal with conflict in a team, or other similar questions.

- 10. Tell me about a time where the message you were communicating wasn't understood. How did you deal with that?**

PMO leaders have to have good communication skills. This question will show you their ability to admit when things didn't go to plan, and how they responded in that situation. Ideally, you'll be able to see that they are capable of changing their style to fit a different audience and learning from mistakes.

A PMO director is an important post, so you'll want to make sure you find the perfect candidate for the role. These PMO Director interview questions will give you a good starting point for your hiring process.

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