

Weston Career Center

 Washington University in St. Louis  
OLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL

---

## Functional/Technical Questions

Supplement to the WCC Interview  
Questions Guide

---



## Functional/Technical Questions

Supplement to the WCC Interview Questions Guide

### TABLE OF CONTENTS:

- Corporate Finance and Strategic Planning
- Consulting
- Health Care Management
- Human Resources
- Investment Banking – General
- Investment Banking – Sales and Trading
- Marketing – General
- Marketing – Brand Management
- Supply Chain Management/Operations
- Venture Capital

### 1. Corporate Finance and Strategic Planning

- What is the bond yield on 5-year and 30-year treasuries?
- Explain discounted cash flow analyses or valuation methodology.
- Define the concept of cash flow vs. net income.
- What is our stock price trading at? Market value? Sale? Net income? Price-earnings ratio?
- Why corporate finance as opposed to sales and trading?
- What do you know about our industry?
- Our \_\_\_\_ division is thinking of introducing a widget new product. How would you go about determining if this is a good idea?
- How does M&A activity in banking affect our industry?
- We are having trouble managing our (division). What do you think the key performance metrics might be and how might you go about improving them?
- How would you go about valuing our (division) for a potential sale, spin-off, or liquidation?
- What are the 3 major valuation methodologies and when would you use them?

### 2. Consulting

*Note: In addition to trait and behavioral questions, you will want to practice case interview question. Check with the Weston Career Center for more information.*

- Why consulting? Why this firm?
- What does a consultant do? What are the three most important qualities of a successful consultant?
- How do you think the consulting industry is structured? How is our practice different from other consulting firms?
- How do you rank in relation to your peers?
- Do you view consulting as a permanent career choice?
- How would you describe the competitive niche of your most recent employer?
- Give me an example of a business problem and tell me how you solved it.
- How do you feel about the lifestyle issues associated with consulting?
- Imagine we are reviewing your performance at our firm after working for us for six months. What do you think our evaluation would be?
- With whom are you interviewing? How have you fared?
- What is the most important thing you have learned in the past year?

- If given an offer, how will you decide whether or not to accept it?
- How have you been doing at Olin (Washington University)? What are your grades? What are your GMAT scores? What is your undergraduate GPA? (as applicable for each candidate)
- Are you competitive?
- What do you have to offer this firm?

### 3. Health Care Management

- Why have you focused on the health care industry?
- Why an MBA? Why not a Masters in Health Administration?
- What are the attributes of management success in the health care industry?
- Where/How have you developed those attributes?
- Did you ever think of pursuing a career in medicine as a health service professional?
- Choose one of these issues and give some recommendations on addressing it: accountability, accountable care organizations, electronic health records and IT interoperability.
- What are the most important issues emerging in health care management? Prioritize them.
- What functional skills will you bring to a hospital environment?
- The three big issues in healthcare today are quality of care; access to the system; and efficiency. What skills do you bring to address these issues?
- Any thoughts on the culture of a healthcare organization?

### 4. Human Resources

- Why an MBA? Why not a Masters in Labor Relations or a Masters in Sciences in Human Resources?
- Why Olin (Washington University)? Why not Michigan or Cornell?
- What are the most significant challenges confronting the human resources function over the next five years?
- How do you think human resource activities add value to our company?
- Describe a change effort you have undertaken. What was your role? What specifically did you do?
- If you were responsible for picking your successor, what would you look for in that person? What important skills (technical and non-technical) and characteristics would that person need to possess?

- What will the human resources function look like in the future?
- How will human resource professionals' responsibilities change over time? What skills and/or competencies will human resources professionals need in the future?
- How would you measure or evaluate the value of human resources to a business?
- Some argue human resources are an organization's most critical resource. What do you think and why?
- What does the human resources function need to "bring to the table" to provide "value added" as a business partner?

### 5. Investment Banking – General

- Why investment banking? Why this bank?
- What are your outside activities? Why would you be willing to give them up for such a demanding job?
- What would you do if offered drugs as part of the deal? (or other ethically focused questions)
- How smart are you? How do we know how smart you are?
- Sell us on your quantitative skills.
- If we made you an offer today, would you take it?
- What did the Dow, S&P and NASDAQ close at yesterday?
- What stocks do you follow and why?
- What other firms have you talked to?
- What does it take to be successful in investment banking? Highlight those skills from your experience.
- What qualifies you to work in I-banking? In which department will you be most successful? Why?
- What motivates you?
- How do you perform under pressure? In what kind of environment do you work best?
- Where is the \_\_\_\_\_ industry going? The market? This firm?
- Ethics and I-banking: has the industry been represented fairly?
- How do you regularly read on the industry?
- What do you regularly read on the industry?
- Name the top firms. For what are they known?
- How would selling a long-term bond affect all three of the financial statements?

- What is the difference between an operating lease and a capital lease? How are they reported on each of the three financial statements?
- I am the owner of a privately held company and I want to take one of my subsidiaries public. I come to you for advice. How would you find the subsidiary's value and IPO price range? How would you go about obtaining the information you need?
- What is our ticker symbol? Market Cap?
- What is DCF analysis (discount cash flow)?
- If a company has a consistent negative earning record and wanted to raise capital and could only do so by issuing debt, what type of debt should they issue? Why?

### 6. Investment Banking – Sales and Trading

- Sell me this pencil.
- What other firms have you talked to?
- What makes you think you can sell?
- What is a bond?
- What would you personally invest in?
- What are forward rates, LIBOR rates?
- What particular markets or instruments are you interested in? Why debt vs. equity?
- Where is the market going? Where are rates going?
- What does the yield curve look like? What does it mean?
- Tell me what you think a trader does.
- Why not corporate finance?
- Describe an instance where you persuaded someone to do something they initially didn't want to do.
- What about your personality will make you a good trader?
- How will you motivate yourself to make the calls you hate to make?
- What are your grades?
- What do you think having an MBA does for you in this field?
- Tell me a joke.

### 7. Marketing – General

- Why Olin (Washington University)? Why not Kellogg?
- What is marketing? Define the difference between marketing and advertising.
- What does it take to be successful in marketing?
- What are the attributes of a successful marketing campaign?
- How do you motivate others, particularly those over whom you have no direct authority? OR I'm sure you've been in a situation where you had to get participation from people who don't report to you. How do you motivate these people?
- How have you developed your interpersonal skills?
- Give me a specific example of a time you solved a problem creatively?
- What is the most important thing that you've learned about managing people from your previous work experience?
- What are you looking for in a consumer goods (or manufacturing, financial services, etc.) company?
- Give an example of an innovative solution to a business problem.
- Tell me about a marketing campaign that you think is particularly effective/ineffective.
- What are some examples of good and bad marketing and why.
- Describe your biggest accomplishment in marketing.
- What do you do to keep in touch with current happenings in marketing?

### 8. Marketing – Brand Management

- What do you think are the most important traits in a product marketing person?
- Pick a product and position it.
- Give an example of a good new product introduction. Give me another. Give me another. Give me another.
- Pretend today is your first day at work as a brand manager for Brand X. What are the ten most important questions would you ask to find out about the brand?
- I see that most of your experience has (not) been in consumer products. Do you think you would be as successful as an industrial marketer? (or vice-versa)
- Rank order characteristics important for brand management.
- Give me a 30-second commercial about yourself.

- Give an example of a well-managed brand.
- How do you calculate market share?
- Define market segmentation? Pick a brand and segment it for me.
- Describe your experience with syndicated data.
- Have you been involved in any custom/primary research?
- Provide an example of your experience with marketing planning or strategy.
- Describe your experience managing cross-functional teams.
- Describe your budget management experience.

### 9. Supply Chain Management/Operations

- What do you understand by Supply Chain Management?
- How do you select a supplier? Explain the process and criteria you would use.
- What are the risks in Supply Chain and how would you manage them?
- What is the difference between safety stock and cycle stock? How would you calculate those? State any assumptions and information you need for these calculations.
- What is Bullwhip effect in Supply Chain, how it affects the supply chain and how would you reduce it?
- How would you evaluate inventory performance? What are "inventory turns" or "turnover ratio"?
- How do you manage stock out situations?
- What is the difference between "pull" and "push" production? Can you describe the benefits of "pull"?
- What is inventory pooling? Give an example of how to implement this strategy.
- Describe the Sales and Operations Planning (S&OP) function. How does it relate to the supply chain?

### 10. Venture Capital

- Why venture capital?
- Why Olin (Washington University) to study venture capital? Why not Stanford?
- What particular strengths do you have for venture capital?
- What do you think a venture capitalist does?
- What motivates you? How do you motivate others?
- Give me an example of when you interacted with a variety of people from all levels from CEO to technician? What were the results?
- How strong is your grasp of technical issues/technology?

- What operations exposure, management experiences have you had?
- In addition to high-tech ventures, where do you think VC money should be going?
- Do you think emphasis should be on raising money and investing or working closely with the management team?
- What do you look for in a venture? Which is more important, the product or the people behind it?
- Describe your analytical and interpersonal skills.
- Do you have a high energy level?
- Are you a good team player?
- Have you had to deal with failure in a professional context?
- Walk me through how you value a company and your due diligence process?
- What have you personally invested in? What were the results?
- What is the difference between Series A and mezzanine financing?