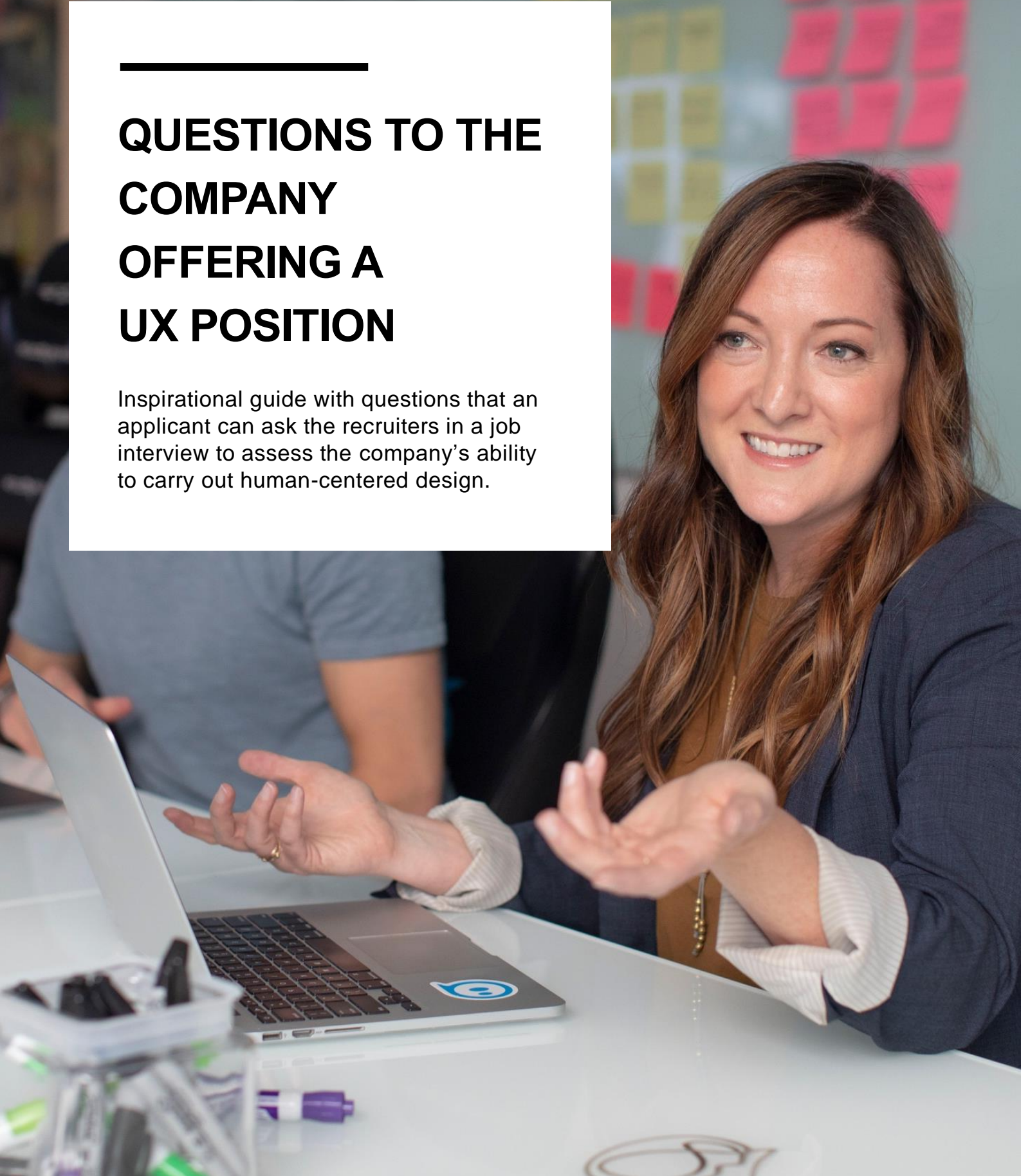

QUESTIONS TO THE COMPANY OFFERING A UX POSITION

Inspirational guide with questions that an applicant can ask the recruiters in a job interview to assess the company's ability to carry out human-centered design.



Introduction

This guide is intended as an inspirational aid for job interviews for UX professionals. The term “User experience professional” (“UX professional”) represents a multitude of different job titles, for example, UX researcher, UX designer, UX manager, usability engineer. The focus in the guide is on the technical questions of a job interview to assess the UX maturity of the company. By this we mean the awareness and capability of a company in the operational implementation of a systematic process of human-centered design of interactive systems¹. General questions about the company are not addressed.

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¹ Based on ISO 9241-220:2020 on Human-Centered Design process capability and ISO 33020:2019 on general process assessment. Technically correct in terms of process and awareness, it is therefore theoretically called HCD maturity or HCD process capability. However, we use the term UX maturity used in the market. Cf. with the definition in the CPUX-F Curriculum of UXQB e.V. (<https://uxqb.org/en/documents/>).



The document was prepared by the German UPA e.V. Working Group for Quality Standards with the participation of the Young Professionals Working Group and numerous volunteer UX professionals, who provided valuable comments and suggestions during workshops and by email.

A companion guide, Questions for Applicants for a Position as User Experience Professional, provides inspiration for questions that a recruiter might ask to get an impression of the UX maturity of the applicant.



Section 1

Procedure for a Job Interview

A job interview can be conducted in many ways. This guide assumes the following approach:

1. The participants of the job interview introduce themselves.
2. The recruiter introduces the company, the work situation and the position to be filled.
3. The recruiter asks the applicant general questions.
The purpose of these questions is to get an idea of the applicant's personality and potential.
4. The recruiter uses the UX related questions in the guide, Questions for Applicants for a Position as User Experience Professional, to get an idea of the UX knowledge and maturity of the applicant.
5. The applicant uses the questions in this guide to get an idea of the UX knowledge and UX maturity of the company.
The applicant asks further questions about team size, hierarchy, colleagues, managers, challenges, and more.
6. The participants agree on how to proceed.

Applicants should familiarize themselves with the questions in advance and determine the questions that are relevant for the position. Some of the questions may be irrelevant if it is clear that the company has a low UX maturity. Applicants should also consider adapting the questions to the desired conversational tone.



The structure of the questions

- **Purpose** – The purpose of the question.
- **Supplementary questions** – Questions that can be used to expand on the original question, or alternative phrasings of the original question.
- **Indicators of a high company maturity** – Provides examples of answers that indicate a high UX maturity.



Section 2

Questions to the Company

2.1 About My Role and Person

A1. Why did you advertise this position?

Purpose:

- To find out how mature the understanding of the job is; expectations.

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- The company is making an honest effort to strengthen the UX team or create a UX team.
- The response is not limited to visual design and "making things beautiful". The company understands the difference between attractive graphic design, UX design and UX research.
- There is a budget and clear management support for at least the next two years – after which success must be demonstrated.

A2. What will be my most important work tasks?

Purpose:

- To find out how mature the understanding of the job is; expectations.

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Talks about high-value activities in core UX areas such as user research, prototyping, usability evaluation and UX evaluation, UX strategy, UX evangelism, but not "a little bit of everything."
- The response is not limited to visual design and "making things beautiful."
- The company understands the difference between attractive graphic design, UX design and UX research.



A3. What UX competencies are most important for the position?

Purpose:

- Content of the job.

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Names concrete UX methods, for example, interviews, prototypes, usability testing.
- Knows the difference between UX research and related terms, for example, graphic design and visual design.

A4. How will the company tell that I am doing a good job?

Purpose:

- Expectations, performance evaluation.

Supplementary question:

- How will you measure whether I am doing a good job?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Meeting appropriate KPIs.
- Compliance with style guide and regulations.
- Successful reviews of own products.
- Constructive reviews of colleagues' products.
- Good results in usability tests of created products.
- The understanding of UX in the company and the ability of teams to deliver products and services with a high UX increases over time.



A5. How will you support me in maintaining and improving my professional knowledge?

Purpose:

- Among other things, this question shows that maintaining and improving your professional knowledge is important to you.

Supplementary questions:

- How many days per year can I typically spend on continuing education?
- How much is allocated annually in the budget for continuing education?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Has good answers to the supplementary questions.
- The company has training plans, including for UX, or is willing to work with you to develop a training plan for UX. Proven training such as the CPUX-certifications are advocated.

A6. What do you see as the biggest challenges for my role?

Purpose:

- Suitability of the job for you. Expectations.

Supplementary question:

- What qualities should I bring to the job?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Talks honestly about problems and challenges.



2.2 About the Company's Ability & Awareness to practice Human-Centered Design

Many of the following questions are also relevant for an application to a consultancy. Consultancies also have an internal culture and internal UX maturity.

A7. What does your onboarding for new UX colleagues look like?

Purpose: Company culture; HR professionalism.

Supplementary questions:

- What specific tasks will I have in my first few months with you?
- How will you support me during onboarding?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- There is an onboarding plan for new UX colleagues; the plan looks reasonable.
- A named colleague will be available to guide you.

A8. How do you rate the importance of UX in your company?

Purpose:

- UX maturity.

Supplementary questions:

- How do you justify your ratings?
- How do you try to increase maturity?
- What do you understand by UX maturity?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Knows a generally accepted maturity model and applies the model to reasonably classify the company based on examples.



A9. How does your top management react when a time-critical product gets a red light from the UX team because usability is critically inadequate?

Purpose:

- Role and importance of UX.

Supplementary question:

- How does your management react when it has to choose between meeting a completion date and achieving a good UX?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- The justification for the red light is immediately reviewed thoroughly by top management.
- The delivery date is postponed until an acceptable solution has been implemented.
- Top management justifies its decision to the UX team.
- With high UX maturity, this scenario should not happen because the UX team is always involved and therefore takes care of the problems in time.

A10. What is an example of how UX is valued in the organization?

Purpose:

- Role and importance of UX.

Supplementary question:

- How do you assess the understanding of UX at management level?
- How do you assess the understanding of UX among stakeholders?
- How do you assess the understanding of UX at developer level?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- UX activities are carried out in a timely manner.
- UX findings are either implemented or rejected with adequate justification.
- Creation of UX positions, team building, more budget.



A11. Which meetings and decisions typically involve UX and which do not?

Purpose:

- Role and importance of UX.

Supplementary question:

- Are UX professionals involved in key decisions? For example, Go/NoGo decisions, product feature decisions, portfolio decisions, or at the organizational level, budget, personnel, or strategic decisions.

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- UX is consulted in the initiation phase of a project and not only after the contract has been signed and it is time for implementation.
- UX research is also applied when it comes to internal processes, the introduction of new software or the design of workspaces.
- UX has one or more advocates at the highest management level.

A12. How do you ensure that UX is considered sufficiently during design?

Purpose:

- Development process.

Supplementary question:

- What resources and how many resources are allocated to UX?
- Who decides about these resources?
- How does the effort estimation process work?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- The first step in a project is always contextual observation, contextual interviews or focus groups with users.
- User involvement, iteration and usability evaluation are core elements of the product design process.



A13. Which people in the company are judged on their ability to give products an agreed UX?

Purpose:

- Find out who in the company has the task of ensuring a good UX.

Supplementary question:

- Are UX targets generally set in the company?
- Are there target agreements for individuals, for example a bonus system?
- Who has these UX goals – only UX professionals or can everyone in the company in principle have a UX goal?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Understands that goals are achieved by teams rather than individuals.
- UX goals are based on business goals.
- Management is also evaluated based on the achievement of UX goals.
- Knows that bonuses carry a risk of making decisions based on the bonus rather than objective measures.
- The rules governing the bonuses are available so stakeholders can take the bias they introduce into consideration.



2.3 About the Concrete Project Work

A14. When do you start considering UX in projects?

Purpose:

- Role and importance of UX.

Supplementary questions:

- At what points are UX activities carried out?
- What does the timing depend on?
- What does a typical project workflow look like?
- Is this the same for all projects or can you describe any differences for me?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- UX is involved from the start of a project and not only after the contract has been signed and project work starts.
- The first step in a project is always contextual observation, contextual interviews, or focus groups with users.
- UX research plays an important role when deciding on new projects.
- Users are involved early and regularly.
- Prototypes are created early and tested with typical users.

A15. Which methods are particularly popular?

Purpose:

- Knowledge and use of methods.

Supplementary questions:

- Why are these methods so popular?
- Which frequently used methods are not used?
- How do you use prototypes in development?



Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Changes method according to context
- Is aware of the advantages and challenges with agile, scrum and waterfall.
- Has good reasons for opting out of frequently used methods.
- Involves representative users throughout development, evaluates early and regularly, and iterates.

A16. How do you involve customers and users?

Purpose:

- User research.

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Explains customer and user involvement based on specific examples.
- It is a matter of course to involve representative users throughout development, evaluate early and regularly, and iterate.
- The company's decisions and actions are based on user research and active user involvement.

A17. How do you collect, formulate and prioritize user requirements?

Purpose:

- User research.

Supplementary questions:

- How are user requirements typically formulated in your company?
- How do you obtain and maintain an overview of users' tasks, and user requirements and their priorities for developing solutions?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- User requirements are based on contextual observation and contextual interviews.
- User requirements are suitable for usability evaluations.



- The development process ensures that errors in the user requirements are detected as early as possible.

A18. How do you ensure a consistent design of your products?

Purpose:

- Design process.

Supplementary questions:

- To what extent do you use style guides?
- How is the style guide maintained and what does maintenance include?
- What happens if colleagues violate the style guide? What if they do it repeatedly?
- How do you ensure that all employees use the style guide or the design system?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Company representatives are familiar with terms such as style guide, design patterns, design system, standard, DIN, ISO, and governance.
- Compliance with the style guide or design system is checked regularly. Deviations must be objectively justified and discussed.
- There is a specified process for the enhancement of the style guide and a defined responsible person.
- The style guide or design system is generally known. Employees know how to use the components and principles.

A19. What key figures do you use to measure UX?

Purpose:

- Understanding of KPIs.

Supplementary question:

- How are these key figures used?
- What happens if the goal defined for a key figure is not met?
- Do you have key figures for your UX processes?



Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Uses relevant examples to explain KPIs, Key Performance Indicators, in UX
- Understands that KPIs cannot always be used in a meaningful way.
- Mentions important KPIs, for example, time on task, completion rate, satisfaction.
- Does not rely solely on NPS, Net Promoter Score, or similar measurement tools.

A20. What role do UX process standards play in your work?

Purpose:

- Design process; work discipline; quality.

Supplementary question:

- Do the same standards apply throughout the company, that is, across products, sites and teams?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- All projects adhere to the UX quality system, which consists of the UX process standard and the style guide.
- The company has rules for following up on the quality requirements of the quality system.
- The UX process is consistent. Projects may still differ in the way the UX work is done if the quality system allows the UX work to be adapted to specific needs.
- The company improves UX process standards based on stakeholder feedback.

A21. How do you document results of UX tests?

Purpose:

- Documentation, artefacts; information about UX culture based on specific examples.

Supplementary question:

- Please show me a current example of how you document a usability test.



Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Places greater emphasis on good communication than on reports.
- Discusses results with stakeholders.
- Involves stakeholders in determining the results, for example by using the KJ method (affinity diagramming).
- A good usability test report is usable: short and to the point with a brief summary for managers. See the CPUX-UT curriculum and the associated example of a usability test report.
- The test report includes as many visuals as possible, for example, diagrams, visualizations, photos and sketches. Striking videos from test sessions are made available.

A22. How do you handle usability test results?

Purpose:

- Information about UX culture based on specific examples.

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Test results are communicated actively and discussed with stakeholders.
- Problems are tracked until they are solved. Positive findings are tracked to see if teams learn from them.



2.4 About the UX Vision

A23. What is your idea of the future UX of the product?

Purpose:

- This makes it clear if there is a UX vision, even if it is not named as such.

Supplementary question:

- How would users describe the interaction with the product in the future?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- The company has a long-term plan and strategy with approaches that are already partly concrete.
- The company has a vision for the UX of the product; the vision is professional, realistic, ambitious and non-trivial.

A24. Where do you see UX as a discipline in your development process in five years?

Purpose:

- UX vision.

Supplementary question:

- How do you see UX being incorporated into your development process in five years?
- What needs to happen for you to be there in five years?
- Where do you see the UX department in five years?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- The company has a long-term plan and strategy with approaches that are already partly concrete.
- The company has a vision for increasing its UX maturity; the vision is realistic, ambitious and not trivial.



- The relevant elements of an ambitious vision depend on the current UX maturity of the company; examples are:
 - regular usability tests;
 - UX activities are planned at the start of the project; the plan is followed, monitored and adjusted if the need arises;
 - all projects comply with the quality system for UX consisting of procedural standards, a style guide and rules for following up on the quality system;
 - metrics are used to define and measure the success and quality of a product;
 - the organization's decisions and actions are based on user research and active user involvement.

A25. What have been the biggest challenges for UX within the company since you joined?

Purpose:

- Handling challenges; UX culture; frankness.

Supplementary question:

- What has improved in the meantime and what has not and why?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Cites concrete examples.
- Talks honestly about internal problems and hurdles.
- Challenges are seen as a chance for improvement.



2.5 Company Culture

Company culture is a key indicator of high UX maturity. A human-centered design of interactive systems thrives on making concepts tangible (prototyping), and on evaluations and feedback from users. Findings should flow iteratively into the process. This requires an openness to revise wrong decisions, for example completely change prototypes on the basis of findings, or even discard them.

A26. How are errors handled?

Purpose:

- Learning culture where mistakes are accepted; error culture.

Supplementary question:

- Let's assume that in the middle of a project it becomes apparent that design decisions were based on wrong assumptions because the user research was not complete. How does the company deal with this?

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Errors are accepted in the sense of: "We are not omniscient, we are all human."
- Errors are openly analyzed together.
- Insights from errors are used to improve processes.
- Managers first and foremost support the process of correcting errors and learning from them; it is not a matter of finding culprits and punishing them. You can always safely tell a manager about an error.

A27. How do you actively learn from the past?

Purpose:

- Learning culture.

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Managers speak openly about errors they have made, how the errors were corrected, and what they learned from them.
- Successes and errors are openly analyzed together.



- Standards and guidelines are regularly updated to reflect experiences and correct errors.

A28. How are UX-related decisions made?

Purpose:

- Decision-making principles.

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Management discusses with teams and individuals before decisions are made.
- Decisions are justified.
- Teams and individual employees have a certain amount of decision-making leeway and do not have to ask a manager every time.
- Primarily independent work.

A29. How is feedback given in your company and how is it handled?

Purpose:

- Feedback culture.

Indicators of a high company maturity:

- Broadly speaking: The iterative process is also followed by management.
- Managers set the tone from the top by asking for feedback and visibly showing that they receive feedback well.
- There is a feedback-safe environment. Employees feel safe and know that if they give honest feedback they won't face negative repercussions.
- Managers praise publicly and critique privately. They give feedback close in time to the activity that prompted the feedback.
- There are regular one-on-ones.
- Early exchange about project progress and thus early feedback and faster adjustment in own work possible.
- Open, constructive feedback on a factual and professional level.



2.6 General, non-UX Specific Questions

We have been asked about general questions in the context of UX positions, so we have included some as examples in this section. These questions are not directly related to UX maturity.

Questions that have little relation to UX issues, such as working hours or vacation arrangements, are not covered here.

A30. About working in a team

Questions:

- How is the work divided in the (UX) team?
- What is the UX team size?
- How many UX professionals work for you?
- Are your UX professionals networked with each other, for example via a community?
- How many UX people are on each product or project team?
- How many development teams are there?
- Tell me about my future colleagues.

A31. About management culture, management philosophy

Questions:

- Tell me about my future manager (if not present).
- If the future manager is present: when did the topic of UX really annoy you, and when did it surprise you in a positive way? Tell me about yourself, especially your attitude towards UX and your UX background.
- What is the hierarchy like?
- What are the career paths and hierarchies for UX employees? What role models do you have?
- Tell me about the management philosophy.



A32. About the practical aspects of my daily work

Questions:

- Which UX tools do you use? For example, Figma, Axure, Adobe XD, InVision, Balsamiq.
- What UX budgets are available to the teams?



Section 3

Overview of the Questions

- A1. Why did you advertise this position?
- A2. What will be my most important work tasks?
- A3. What UX competencies are most important for the position?
- A4. How will the company tell that I am doing a good job?
- A5. How will you support me in maintaining and improving my professional knowledge?
- A6. What do you see as the biggest challenges for my role?
- A7. What does your onboarding for new UX colleagues look like?
- A8. How do you rate the importance of UX in your company?
- A9. How does your top management react when a time-critical product gets a red light from the UX team because usability is critically inadequate?
- A10. What is an example of how UX is valued in the organization?
- A11. Which meetings and decisions typically involve UX and which do not?
- A12. How do you ensure that UX is considered sufficiently during design?
- A13. Which people in the company are judged on their ability to give products an agreed UX?
- A14. When do you start considering UX in projects?
- A15. Which methods are particularly popular?
- A16. How do you involve customers and users?
- A17. How do you collect, formulate and prioritize user requirements?
- A18. How do you ensure a consistent design of your products?
- A19. What key figures do you use to measure UX?
- A20. What role do UX process standards play in your work?
- A21. How do you document results of UX tests?
- A22. How do you handle usability test results?
- A23. What is your idea of the future UX of the product?
- A24. Where do you see UX as a discipline in your development process in five years?
- A25. What have been the biggest challenges for UX within the company since you joined?
- A26. How are errors handled?



- A27. How do you actively learn from the past?**
- A28. How are UX-related decisions made?**
- A29. How is feedback given in your company and how is it handled?**
- A30. About working in a team**
- A31. About management culture, management philosophy**
- A32. About the practical aspects of my daily work**



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