# investment banking questions and answers

**investment banking questions and answers** are essential for anyone preparing for interviews or seeking to deepen their understanding of the investment banking sector. This article provides a comprehensive overview of common questions encountered in investment banking interviews, along with detailed answers that cover technical, behavioral, and industry-specific topics. The purpose is to equip candidates and professionals with the knowledge to confidently navigate the rigorous interview process and excel in their roles. Topics include fundamental finance principles, valuation techniques, deal structuring, market trends, and the skills required to succeed in this competitive field. Additionally, strategic advice on how to approach complex questions and demonstrate analytical thinking is discussed. This resource serves as an invaluable guide for students, analysts, associates, and anyone interested in the dynamic world of investment banking. Below is the table of contents outlining the main areas covered.

- Common Technical Investment Banking Questions and Answers
- Behavioral and Fit Questions in Investment Banking Interviews
- Valuation Techniques and Financial Modeling Questions
- Industry-Specific and Market-Related Questions
- Tips for Answering Complex Investment Banking Questions

# Common Technical Investment Banking Questions and Answers

Technical knowledge is fundamental in investment banking interviews, as it demonstrates a candidate's understanding of financial concepts and their practical application. Interviewers frequently assess proficiency in accounting, financial statements, and basic finance principles. Being well-versed in these areas is crucial for success.

#### **Understanding Financial Statements**

One of the most common technical questions involves explaining the three primary financial statements: the income statement, balance sheet, and cash flow statement. Candidates are expected to describe how these statements interconnect and why they are important for investment decisions.

The income statement shows a company's revenues and expenses over a period, resulting in net income. The balance sheet provides a snapshot of assets, liabilities, and

shareholders' equity at a specific point in time. The cash flow statement tracks the inflows and outflows of cash, categorized into operating, investing, and financing activities.

#### Difference Between Enterprise Value and Equity Value

Understanding valuation metrics is critical. Enterprise value (EV) represents the total value of a company, including debt and excluding cash, while equity value only accounts for the value attributable to shareholders. The formula for EV is:

• EV = Equity Value + Debt + Preferred Stock + Minority Interest - Cash

Interviewers often ask candidates to explain how changes in capital structure affect these values.

#### **How Does Depreciation Affect Financial Statements?**

Depreciation is a non-cash expense that reduces the book value of assets over time. It impacts the income statement by lowering taxable income, thus affecting net income. On the cash flow statement, depreciation is added back to net income in the operating activities section because it does not involve actual cash outflow. On the balance sheet, accumulated depreciation reduces the asset's carrying value.

# Behavioral and Fit Questions in Investment Banking Interviews

Investment banking interviews not only evaluate technical skills but also assess cultural fit, work ethic, and interpersonal abilities. Behavioral questions are designed to understand how candidates handle pressure, work in teams, and demonstrate leadership potential.

#### **Common Behavioral Questions**

Some typical behavioral questions include:

- Why do you want to work in investment banking?
- Describe a time you worked under significant pressure.
- Tell me about a challenging team project and your role.
- How do you prioritize tasks when faced with tight deadlines?

Answers should be structured using the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result), showcasing clear examples and outcomes.

### Importance of Demonstrating Commitment and Resilience

Investment banking is demanding, often requiring long hours and intense focus. Interviewers look for candidates who show resilience, a strong work ethic, and a genuine passion for finance. Explaining motivations clearly and providing examples of overcoming obstacles can strengthen a candidate's profile.

#### Valuation Techniques and Financial Modeling Questions

Valuation and modeling are core skills in investment banking. Candidates must understand various valuation methods and be able to build or analyze financial models accurately. Interview questions in this category test quantitative ability and conceptual clarity.

#### **Common Valuation Methods**

Key valuation techniques include:

- **Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) Analysis:** Projects future cash flows and discounts them to present value using the weighted average cost of capital (WACC).
- **Comparable Company Analysis:** Values a company based on valuation multiples of similar publicly traded companies.
- **Precedent Transactions Analysis:** Uses multiples derived from previous M&A deals in the same industry.

Candidates should be able to explain when and why each method is appropriate and the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

#### **Building a Financial Model**

Interviewers may ask about the steps involved in constructing a financial model. This typically involves historical data analysis, forecasting revenues and expenses, calculating free cash flow, and performing sensitivity analysis. Accuracy and attention to detail are emphasized, as errors can lead to significant misvaluation.

#### **Industry-Specific and Market-Related Questions**

Investment banking professionals must stay informed about industry trends, market dynamics, and regulatory changes. Interview questions often explore candidates' awareness of the current economic environment and industry-specific challenges.

#### **Understanding Market Trends**

Candidates may be asked to discuss recent developments in the financial markets, such as interest rate movements, geopolitical events, or technological disruption. Demonstrating the ability to connect these trends to investment banking activities, such as deal flow or sector performance, is highly valued.

#### **Sector-Specific Knowledge**

Depending on the division or specialization, candidates might need to answer questions about sectors like technology, healthcare, energy, or consumer goods. Understanding key drivers, competitive landscapes, and typical deal types in these sectors helps provide tailored responses.

# Tips for Answering Complex Investment Banking Questions

Complex questions in investment banking interviews test analytical thinking, problemsolving skills, and clarity of communication. Approaching such questions methodically is essential.

#### **Structured Problem Solving**

Breaking down questions into manageable parts and addressing each systematically helps maintain clarity. Interviewees should articulate their thought process clearly, explaining assumptions and calculations step-by-step.

#### **Utilizing Frameworks and Examples**

Applying frameworks such as SWOT analysis, Porter's Five Forces, or financial ratios can organize responses effectively. Providing concrete examples from past experiences or hypothetical scenarios reinforces arguments and demonstrates practical understanding.

#### **Maintaining Confidence and Composure**

Remaining calm under pressure and taking a moment to think before answering complex questions can improve performance. If a question is unclear, asking clarifying questions shows engagement and thoroughness.

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### What is investment banking?

Investment banking is a sector of banking that helps individuals, corporations, and governments raise capital by underwriting and issuing securities, as well as providing advisory services for mergers and acquisitions.

#### What are the main functions of an investment bank?

The main functions include underwriting new debt and equity securities, facilitating mergers and acquisitions, providing market making and trading services, and offering financial advisory services.

### What skills are important for a career in investment banking?

Key skills include strong analytical abilities, financial modeling expertise, understanding of financial markets, excellent communication skills, attention to detail, and the ability to work under pressure.

#### How do investment bankers value a company?

Investment bankers commonly use valuation methods such as discounted cash flow (DCF) analysis, comparable company analysis, precedent transactions, and sometimes leveraged buyout (LBO) models to estimate a company's value.

# What is the difference between bulge bracket and boutique investment banks?

Bulge bracket banks are large, full-service global investment banks offering a wide range of services, while boutique banks are smaller firms specializing in specific sectors or services like M&A advisory.

#### What is a pitch book in investment banking?

A pitch book is a presentation created by investment bankers to pitch their services to potential clients, outlining the bank's capabilities, market analysis, and proposed transaction ideas.

### What is the typical career progression in investment banking?

Typically, the career path progresses from analyst to associate, then vice president, director or executive director, and finally managing director.

#### How do investment banks earn revenue?

Investment banks earn revenue through fees and commissions from underwriting securities, advisory fees from mergers and acquisitions, trading profits, and asset

#### **Additional Resources**

1. Investment Banking Interview Questions & Answers

This book is a comprehensive guide designed to prepare candidates for investment banking interviews. It covers a wide range of topics including technical questions on valuation, financial modeling, and market concepts, as well as behavioral questions. The answers are detailed and practical, helping readers build confidence and improve their chances of securing a job.

- 2. Vault Guide to Finance Interviews
- A trusted resource for aspiring investment bankers, this guide compiles hundreds of questions commonly asked in finance interviews. It includes both technical and fit questions, with clear, concise answers and explanations. Additionally, it offers tips on how to approach interviews and insights into the culture of investment banking firms.
- 3. Investment Banking: Valuation, Leveraged Buyouts, and Mergers & Acquisitions Written by Joshua Rosenbaum and Joshua Pearl, this book is often used as a reference for understanding core investment banking concepts. It includes Q&A sections to test comprehension on valuation techniques and deal structuring. The text breaks down complex financial theories into accessible language, making it ideal for interview preparation.
- 4. Breaking Into Wall Street: Investment Banking Interview Guide
  This guide focuses on the most frequently asked questions in investment banking
  interviews, including technical, behavioral, and market-related questions. It provides model
  answers and tips on how to tailor responses to different interviewers. The book also covers
  resume writing and networking strategies specific to the finance industry.
- 5. Investment Banking: Questions and Answers by John McNellis
  A straightforward Q&A format book that addresses fundamental and advanced topics in investment banking. It covers financial analysis, deal processes, and industry-specific scenarios. The concise answers help readers quickly grasp essential knowledge required for interviews and on-the-job challenges.
- 6. Financial Modeling & Valuation: A Practical Guide to Investment Banking and Private Equity

This book provides a practical approach to answering technical questions related to financial modeling and valuation. It includes step-by-step examples and exercises that mimic real interview problems. Readers can gain hands-on experience which is crucial for succeeding in technical rounds of investment banking interviews.

7. Investment Banking Interview Prep: Questions & Answers
Designed specifically for interview preparation, this book compiles a broad spectrum of questions ranging from market concepts to case studies. Each question is followed by a detailed answer and explanation, helping candidates understand both the "what" and the "why." The book also offers strategic advice on managing interview nerves and structuring responses.

- 8. The Complete Investment Banking Guide: Questions & Answers for Success
  This comprehensive guide not only provides typical interview questions and answers but also insights into the day-to-day responsibilities of investment bankers. It covers technical, behavioral, and situational questions, making it a well-rounded resource for interviewees. Additional chapters focus on career development and networking within the industry.
- 9. Investment Banking Technical Interview Questions and Answers
  Focusing exclusively on the technical side, this book prepares candidates for challenging
  questions related to accounting, valuation, and financial statements. It includes practical
  examples and detailed explanations to clarify complex concepts. Ideal for those who want
  to strengthen their technical foundation before interviews.

#### **Investment Banking Questions And Answers**

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investment banking questions and answers: Top Banking Interview Questions and Answers -English Navneet Singh, Here are some of the most common banking interview questions, along with guidance on how to answer them effectively: 1. Tell me about yourself. How to answer: Provide a concise overview of your background, focusing on your education, experience, and skills related to banking. Highlight any relevant achievements or responsibilities that demonstrate your fit for the role. Example answer: I have a degree in finance, and I've spent the last three years working as an analyst at [Company Name], where I gained experience in financial modelling, credit analysis, and risk management. I'm passionate about banking because it allows me to apply my analytical skills and help clients achieve their financial goals. 2. Why do you want to work in banking? How to answer: Show enthusiasm for the industry and align your interest with the key aspects of the banking role, such as financial services, client interaction, and the fast-paced environment. Example answer: I'm drawn to banking because I love working with numbers and solving complex financial problems. I'm also excited by the opportunity to work closely with clients and help them grow their wealth. 3. How do you stay updated on financial news and trends? How to answer: Demonstrate that you are proactive in staying informed about the industry through credible sources such as financial news websites, industry reports, and networking with professionals. Example answer: I regularly read publications like The Wall Street Journal and Financial Times, and I follow industry trends through platforms like Bloomberg. I also participate in webinars and discussions with finance professionals. 4. What do you know about our bank? How to answer: Research the bank's history, products, services, and market position. Mention recent achievements, core values, or strategic initiatives to show you're well-prepared. Example answer: I know that [Bank Name] is one of the leading banks in retail and investment banking, with a strong presence in emerging markets. I've also read about your recent initiative to expand digital banking services, which I find exciting. 5. What are the key differences between retail and investment banking? How to answer: Show your understanding of the two sectors and their unique characteristics. Example answer: Retail banking focuses on individual consumers and offers services like checking accounts, loans, and mortgages, while investment banking deals with corporate clients, providing services such as mergers and acquisitions, underwriting, and asset management. 6. How would you evaluate a company for a

loan? How to answer: Explain the typical steps in credit analysis, including reviewing financial statements, assessing cash flow, and evaluating collateral. Example answer: I would start by analysing the company's financial health through its income statement, balance sheet, and cash flow statement. I'd also assess its debt levels, industry risks, and whether it has sufficient collateral to secure the loan. 7. What is the difference between credit risk and market risk? How to answer: Clarify the distinction between these two types of financial risk. Example answer: Credit risk refers to the risk of a borrower defaulting on their loan, while market risk is the risk of losses due to changes in market conditions, such as fluctuations in interest rates, exchange rates, or stock prices. 8. Explain the concept of NPV (Net Present Value) and why it's important in banking. How to answer: Provide a clear definition and relate it to banking decisions. Example answer: NPV is the difference between the present value of cash inflows and the present value of cash outflows. In banking, NPV is used to evaluate the profitability of investment projects or loans, helping banks determine whether they should proceed with an investment based on its future cash flows. 9. What are the current challenges facing the banking industry? How to answer: Show your awareness of broader industry challenges such as regulatory pressures, digital disruption, or economic uncertainties. Example answer: Some of the biggest challenges include increasing regulation and compliance costs, the rise of fintech companies that disrupt traditional banking models and adapting to rapidly changing customer expectations in a digital-first world. 10. How do interest rates affect the banking industry? How to answer: Explain how changes in interest rates impact banking operations, profitability, and client behaviour. Example answer: Interest rates affect banks' lending and borrowing rates, which in turn impact profitability. Higher interest rates can reduce borrowing demand but increase profit margins on loans, while lower interest rates may boost loan demand but reduce margins. Banks also face pressure to adjust deposit rates to remain competitive. 11. Can you explain the Basel III Accord? How to answer: Summarize the key components of Basel III and its impact on banks. Example answer: Basel III is a set of regulatory standards introduced to strengthen the regulation, supervision, and risk management of banks. It focuses on improving banks' capital adequacy, stress testing, and market liquidity risk. One key feature is the requirement for banks to hold higher levels of capital to protect against financial shocks. 12. What is the difference between Tier 1 and Tier 2 capital? How to answer: Provide a clear distinction between these two types of bank capital. Example answer: Tier 1 capital is the core capital of a bank, including equity capital and disclosed reserves, and it's the primary buffer against risk. Tier 2 capital includes subordinated debt and other instruments that provide secondary support in the event of losses. 13. Describe a time when you worked under pressure and how you handled it. How to answer: Use a specific example, detailing the situation, task, action, and result (STAR method). Example answer: At my previous job, we were preparing for a major client presentation when a key team member fell sick. I had to guickly take over their responsibilities, reallocate tasks, and work long hours to meet the deadline. In the end, the presentation was successful, and the client was very impressed. 14. How would you manage a difficult client? How to answer: Focus on listening, empathy, and problem-solving. Example answer: I would start by listening carefully to understand the client's concerns. Then, I'd empathize with their situation and work collaboratively to find a solution that addresses their needs while also protecting the bank's interests. 15. Where do you see yourself in five years? How to answer: Demonstrate ambition but remain realistic. Align your goals with the bank's opportunities for growth and development. Example answer: In five years, I see myself taking on a leadership role within the bank, possibly as a senior relationship manager. I hope to develop deep expertise in financial products and expand my ability to contribute to the bank's growth and client satisfaction. These questions assess your knowledge of the banking industry, analytical skills, and ability to handle challenges in a fast-paced, client-focused environment. Be sure to prepare examples from your own experience to back up your answers!

**investment banking questions and answers:** *Investment Banking Interview Questions and Answers Prep Guide* (200~Q&As) Chris J. Brodie, 2019-03-04 You are sure that being an I-Banker is for you! You are willing to grunt the 100 hours work week as an Analyst to become the next Gordon

Gecko. Unfortunely, so does thousands of new business grads each year. Hi, my name is Chris J. Brodie I am former MD at a buldge bracket firm. During the hiring seasons I could potential get as many as 1500 resumes to sort though and of that, I can hire only 4 in any given hiring season. So what is it that set those few apart? It is not only the technicals or grades, or being good looking. We need someone that has a passion, that has the hustle and a story that gives us a good iindicator of future success in this unforgiving, but hugely rewarding field. Because of my experience I can give you an insider look at the hiring process and help you craft the perfect answer to the toughest of questions, both Behavioral and Technical questions See this book as the ultimately cheat book to an Investment Banking Interview In this book you get 200 Question with full answers. If you want to get the edge that you need to stick out from the crowd Click Buy Now and have the most comprehensive interview prep guide available on Amazon

**investment banking questions and answers:** The Recruiting Guide to Investment Banking Jerilyn J. Castillo, Peter J. McAniff, 2006 Intended to demystify what has historically been a closed-door world, The Recruiting Guide to Investment Banking provides insights into many of the formal and informal aspects of working on Wall Street. Here are answers to the questions you were reluctant to ask. From an insider's view of the hiring process and an understanding of life on the job to an introduction to the technical aspects of investment banking, this book is the equivalent of having an older sibling in the business.

investment banking questions and answers: Top Investment Banking Interview Questions and Answers - English Navneet Singh, Here are some common investment banking interview questions along with suggested answers: 1. What is investment banking? Answer: Investment banking is a financial service that helps companies and governments raise capital by underwriting and issuing securities. Investment banks also provide advisory services for mergers and acquisitions (M&A), restructuring, and other financial transactions. 2. Can you explain the three financial statements? Answer: The three main financial statements are: Income Statement: Shows a company's revenues and expenses over a specific period, resulting in net profit or loss. Balance Sheet: Provides a snapshot of a company's assets, liabilities, and equity at a specific point in time. Cash Flow Statement: Breaks down the cash inflows and outflows from operating, investing, and financing activities, showing how cash moves in and out of the business. 3. What is a DCF analysis? Answer: Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) analysis is a valuation method used to estimate the value of an investment based on its expected future cash flows, which are discounted back to their present value using a discount rate. This method helps determine whether an investment is worthwhile. 4. What are some valuation methods? Answer: Common valuation methods include: Comparable Company Analysis (Comps): Valuing a company based on the valuation metrics of similar firms in the industry. Precedent Transactions: Valuing a company based on historical transactions of similar companies. Discounted Cash Flow (DCF): As explained earlier, this method involves estimating future cash flows and discounting them to present value. 5. What are some key metrics you would look at when analysing a company? Answer: Key metrics include: Earnings Before Interest and Taxes (EBIT): Measures a company's profitability. Price to Earnings (P/E) Ratio: Indicates how much investors are willing to pay for a dollar of earnings. Debt to Equity Ratio: Assesses a company's financial leverage and risk. Return on Equity (ROE): Measures how effectively management is using a company's assets to create profits. 6. How do you handle tight deadlines? Answer: I prioritize tasks by assessing their urgency and importance. I break down projects into manageable segments and set clear milestones. Additionally, I maintain open communication with team members to ensure everyone is aligned and can support one another to meet deadlines effectively. 7. Why do you want to work in investment banking? Answer: I am drawn to investment banking because it offers a dynamic and challenging environment where I can apply my analytical skills and financial knowledge. I am passionate about helping clients achieve their financial goals and being part of high-stakes transactions that can significantly impact their businesses. 8. Describe a time you worked in a team. Answer: In my previous internship, I collaborated with a team to prepare a pitch for a potential merger. I contributed by conducting market research and financial analysis, which helped us identify key synergies between the companies. We held regular meetings to share updates and feedback, and ultimately delivered a successful pitch that impressed the client. 9. What are the current trends in the investment banking industry? Answer: Some current trends include increased focus on sustainability and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) investing, the rise of technology and fintech in banking operations, and greater emphasis on data analytics for decision-making. Additionally, the industry is adapting to changing regulations and the impact of global economic conditions. 10. Where do you see yourself in five years? Answer: In five years, I aim to be a well-rounded investment banker with a strong track record in deal execution and client management. I hope to take on more leadership responsibilities, mentor junior analysts, and contribute to strategic decisions within my firm. Ultimately, I aspire to specialize in a particular sector and become a trusted advisor to clients. Preparing answers tailored to your experiences and knowledge can enhance your responses during an interview.

**investment banking questions and answers:** Investment Banking Interview Questions and Answers - English Navneet Singh, Preparing for an investment banking interview involves understanding both technical and behavioural questions. Below are common categories of questions you may face, along with sample answers to guide your preparation. 1. Basic Finance Concepts Q: What are the three main financial statements, and how do they relate to each other? A: The three main financial statements are the Income Statement, Balance Sheet, and Cash Flow Statement. The Income Statement shows a company's revenues, expenses, and profits over a period. The Balance Sheet shows a company's assets, liabilities, and shareholders' equity at a specific point in time. The Cash Flow Statement reconciles the beginning and ending cash balances by outlining cash inflows and outflows from operating, investing, and financing activities. These statements are interconnected. For example, net income from the Income Statement feeds into the Shareholders' Equity section of the Balance Sheet (retained earnings), and it also flows into the top line of the Cash Flow Statement (starting point for operating cash flows). 2. Valuation Techniques Q: Walk me through a discounted cash flow (DCF) analysis. A: In a DCF, we project a company's free cash flows over a period (typically 5-10 years), discount them to the present value using the company's weighted average cost of capital (WACC), and then calculate the terminal value. The two components, discounted free cash flows and terminal value, give the enterprise value (EV). Steps: Project free cash flows for a set period. Determine the terminal value using either the Gordon Growth Model or Exit Multiple Method. Discount both the projected cash flows and the terminal value back to present value using WACC. Add the discounted cash flows and terminal value to determine the company's enterprise value. Q: What are some other methods to value a company? A: Besides DCF, common methods include: Comparable Companies Analysis (Comps): Comparing valuation multiples of similar public companies. Precedent Transactions Analysis: Looking at valuation multiples paid in similar historical transactions. Leveraged Buyout (LBO) Analysis: Estimating what a private equity firm would pay, leveraging a large portion of the purchase with debt. 3. Market and Industry Questions Q: What's happening in the market right now? A: Stay updated with current events, like interest rate changes, M&A trends, or economic reports (e.g., inflation rates, GDP). For instance, if interest rates are rising, it might affect valuation by increasing the cost of debt and reducing DCF valuation. Be prepared to discuss specific industries relevant to the firm you're interviewing with. 4. Accounting Knowledge Q: How does depreciation affect the financial statements? A: Depreciation affects all three financial statements: Income Statement: It reduces taxable income as an expense, lowering net income. Balance Sheet: It reduces the value of fixed assets (PP&E) and is reflected in accumulated depreciation, a contra-asset account. Cash Flow Statement: Depreciation is added back to operating cash flow because it is a non-cash expense. Q: What is goodwill, and how is it treated in financial statements? A: Goodwill arises when a company acquires another company for more than its fair value. It is an intangible asset on the Balance Sheet. Goodwill is not amortized but is tested for impairment annually. If impaired, the loss is recorded on the Income Statement, reducing net income and assets. 5. Behavioural and Fit Questions Q: Why do you want to work in investment banking? A: Highlight a passion for finance, analytical challenges,

and deal-making. Example: I'm drawn to investment banking because it offers a unique combination of strategic thinking and analytical rigor. The fast-paced environment and exposure to large transactions align with my long-term goals of learning the intricacies of corporate finance and working on complex deals. Q: Tell me about a time you worked in a team under pressure. A: Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result). Example: During my internship, my team was tasked with completing a valuation for a client's acquisition target under a tight deadline. I took the initiative to create detailed financial models, dividing the tasks among the team, and ensured we communicated effectively. We delivered the analysis ahead of schedule, impressing both the client and senior leadership. 6. Technical Questions Q: What is EBITDA, and why is it important? A: EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization) is a proxy for a company's cash flow from operations. It's important because it removes the impact of non-cash items (depreciation and amortization) and financing decisions (interest and taxes), allowing investors to compare operational performance across companies. Q: How would you value a company with negative earnings? A: When a company has negative earnings, methods like DCF and comparable multiples based on earnings may not be appropriate. Instead, you can use: Revenue multiples (EV/Revenue). Adjusted EBITDA multiples if the company has positive cash flow before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization. Asset-based valuation, particularly in distressed situations. 7. Brain Teasers / Problem Solving Q: How many gas stations are there in the U.S.? A: This question is testing your ability to think logically. Example approach: U.S. population is roughly 330 million. Estimate there's 1 car for every 2 people (165 million cars). Each car needs gas about once per week. Assume a gas station serves 2,000 cars per week. Divide 165 million by 2,000: around 82,500 gas stations. By preparing answers that demonstrate strong technical skills, awareness of current market conditions, and teamwork abilities, you'll be ready to tackle both the technical and behavioural parts of your investment banking interview.

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