



The Marketing Interview Guide

Real Questions,
Real Answers, and
Real Strategies...

To Help You Land
The Marketing Job
Of Your Dreams!

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The Marketing Interview Guide

Table of Contents

- 2** Introduction
- 3** Overview
- 4** New Product Launch Questions
- 8** Business Situation Questions
- I3** Creativity Questions
- I4** General Marketing Questions
- I6** Project Management Questions
- I8** More Real Sample Questions





WELCOME

to The Marketing Interview Guide!

Kraft is excited to bring you this guide that we hope will help you navigate the ambiguous world of interviews and help you land the marketing job of your dreams!

We hope the strategies contained in this guide will help you ace the questions you'll face in your marketing interviews and wow your interviewers with your marketing acumen. Good luck using the guide and more importantly, good luck in your interviews!

The structure of the guide is pretty straightforward: It starts with an overview of the types of questions that are asked in interviews, followed by specific sections on the five major types of questions that you'll face (including real questions and answers from real interviews). At the end is a list of other typical questions that you may face in your interviews (but for these, you'll have to draw up your own answers).

Overview

Contrary to popular opinion, marketing companies don't ask interview questions to embarrass you. Rather, the range of questions that you'll face in your interviews can provide you the opportunity to show off the skills that marketing firms look for when they interview you. These skills include leadership, creativity, teamwork, strategic thinking, analytical abilities, and a general understanding of marketing concepts. Lucky for you, there are no right answers to any interview question. Rather, the interviewers are looking for concise, well-thought-out responses that answer the question and leverage as many of the skill-sets that they are looking for. This is especially true for the much-feared "case" questions. Though case questions seem to evoke the most anxiety among interviewees, they serve the same purpose as any other type of question: helping marketing firms assess your thought process and your skills.

To give yourself the best chance of success in your interviews, we offer you three words of advice:

**PRACTICE,
PRACTICE, and
PRACTICE.**

Please note that this guide is meant to stimulate your thinking and does not necessarily include full and complete answers to any of the questions that are presented. It is intended to help you prepare for the types of questions that you may face in your interviews and to help you focus on the key skills and issues that you may want to highlight. Good luck!

New Product Launch Questions

New product launch questions are designed to test your understanding of basic marketing concepts (i.e. Segmenting/Targeting/Positioning and the 4Ps) and assess your ability to logically answer a question. Here are some steps to help you approach these questions:



Strategy

1) Always start with the consumer. Do consumers want and need this product? If consumers don't want this product, then you do not want to pursue the opportunity.

2) Group consumers according to why they want the product (which is called "Segmenting the Market"). Your objective is to figure out what market segment of consumers is ideal for this product.

- Determine what benefits the consumer is looking for in the new product (i.e. good taste, inexpensive, makes you feel good, etc.) Consider both tangible and psychographic benefits. Prioritize them.
- To uncover consumer benefits, you'll most likely conduct qualitative market research (such as focus groups).
- Based on the prioritization of the consumer benefits, segment the market. Which competitors are already providing these benefits? Are these existing products doing a good job at meeting consumer needs?
- Based on your segmentation, determine the strategic openings in the market that you can seize. Are these strategic openings big enough to justify the investment required to launch a new product?

3) Choose your TARGET for the new product. In your segment, what group of consumers do you want to serve?

- Identify what consumers would use the product?
- Determine who are the heavy users of the product? Generally, you want to launch a new product aimed at the product's heavy users to achieve more "bang for the buck".
- Choose your target consumer group.

4) Determine your POSITIONING for the new product.

Choose the one benefit that you intend to deliver to your target consumers. Ensure that your company can deliver this benefit in the new product.

- Assess whether your company has the core competencies to deliver the consumer benefit you've chosen in your positioning (i.e. can you make a product that delivers superior taste to all others?) If not, can you partner with another company to achieve the positioning.
- Assess the financial merits of the new product. Does this new product generate a high enough return to justify the expenditure?

5) Determine the 4Ps (Product, Price, Placement, and Promotion) for the new product. This is the heart of the marketing of the new product.

- **Product:** What product attributes will you offer (i.e. flavor, size, etc.) Most importantly, make sure you are offering what the consumers want!

- **Price:** What price should you set for the product relative to your competitors? Do you price at a premium, parity or discount to your competition?

- **Placement:** Where does the product need to be so consumers can buy it? Consider grocery stores, drug stores, mass channels (Wal-Mart, club stores) convenience stores, and the Internet.

- **Promotion:** How will you inform your target consumers about the new product? Consider using television and print advertising, consumer promotions, sampling, etc.

6) LAUNCH!

Sample Question #1

The head of Marketing at Kraft stops by your office on Monday and says that his kids were really excited about beets at a weekend picnic. He wants to know if Kraft should enter the beet market? How would you approach answering this question?

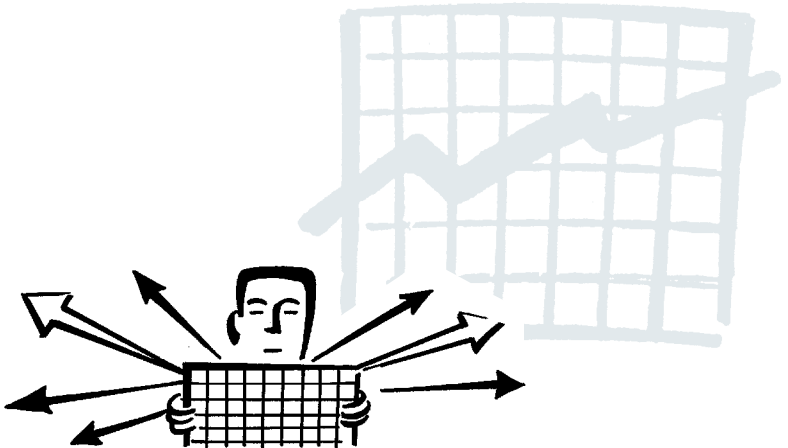
Sample Answer #1

1) Start with the consumer – do kids want beet products? Based on the excitement generated at the picnic about beets, it seems like kids might be interested in beets. But, you would need to conduct a lot more research including focus groups to find out if there is a large group of kids that are truly interested in beets (and not just this group of kids at the picnic).

2) If you found that kids liked beets, you'd want to know why they like them. Your objective is to determine what benefits kids are looking for regarding beets. For example, do they like the taste of beets, the texture of beets, or the healthy aspects of beets? Through your market research as well as assessing what type of beet products are already in the marketplace, you can begin to **SEGMENT** the market according to the different benefits provided by beets. After doing this analysis, you'd be able to determine if there was an unmet need for beets in the marketplace. (For this example, let's assume that there was an unmet need for beet-flavored products and since the company in this question is Kraft, you have determined that kids really want a beet-flavored cookie which no one is currently marketing.)

3) You need to figure out which group of kids you are going to **TARGET** with the beet-flavored cookies. After conducting market research and doing your competitive analysis, you'd be able to choose your target. (In this example, let's assume that kids 6-12 are the expected users of beet-flavored cookies.)

4) You have to choose a **POSITIONING** for the beet-flavored cookie. Since you have discovered that there is an unmet need for a great-tasting beet-flavored cookie, your positioning is going to be: "the best beet-flavored cookie because it is the only cookie to contain natural beet extract." In order to pursue this positioning, you need to make sure that Kraft can actually produce a cookie with natural beet extract. At the same time, you would want to test this positioning with consumers to make sure that they respond positively to it. Lastly, you would want to make sure that Kraft can make money developing this product given the investment required to develop it.





Step 5) Now that you have your positioning, you want to examine the 4Ps, which represent the 4 primary areas of marketing for this new product.

- **Product:** You want to ensure that

the final product is exactly what consumers want. This would include all aspects of the product, including its texture, size, shape, etc.

You would also want to ensure that the packaging for the product was appropriate and helped communicate the product's benefits.

- **Price:** You need to determine what price Kraft should charge for the product. If there are other products like it in the marketplace, you might want to price the new product at a discount to encourage consumers to try the product. You need to make sure that at whatever price you set, consumers will be willing to buy the product, and that there is enough profit margin built into the price for both Kraft and its distribution partners to share.

- **Placement:** You need to determine where the product should be sold. This will be based on your research to understand where consumers would likely buy the product. You should get a lot of input from your sales force as well as potential retailers who might sell the product. For the beet-flavored cookie, you would most likely want to sell it in food, drug and mass channels, but not over the Internet.

- **Promotion:** You need to figure out how to inform consumers about the launch of this new product and encourage them to try the product. Since your marketing objectives for the new product are generating awareness and trial among consumers, you are probably most interested in using print and television advertisements (which are strong awareness-raising mechanisms) as well as FSIs (newspaper coupons) which help encourage trial. Since it is a new product, another promotional opportunity is sampling the product so consumers have a chance to taste it.

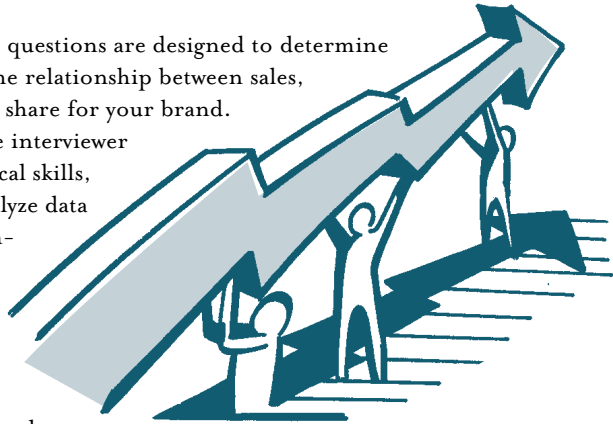
Step 6) After doing all of this work, you launch the product and then let out a huge sigh of **RELIEF** as you watch sales go through the roof!

Business Situation Questions

Strategy

Business situation questions are designed to determine if you can assess the relationship between sales, profit and market share for your brand.

They also help the interviewer assess your analytical skills, your ability to analyze data quickly (and often-times, in your head) and your ability to make logical decisions based on the data presented. A general



strategy to follow for many of these questions is as follows:

- Focus on the competitive situation facing the brand. Are there new entrants in the category? Is your brand's category increasing or decreasing? Have your competitors introduced new packaging sizes, changed prices, or introduced new products?
- With questions like these, feel free to ask for more detail. Make assumptions if need be.

Sample Question #1

You are the brand manager of a product whose sales have been flat for the last five years. However, the brand's market share has been growing by 5% per year for the last five years. What is happening to the brand? What would you do about this trend?

Sample Answer #1

Step 1) Figure out what is happening to the brand. Since the brand's sales are flat but its market share is growing, then the product's category is shrinking (i.e. your brand is getting a larger slice of a shrinking pie).

Step 2) As the brand manager, you want to find out why the category is shrinking in size.

Step 3) Then you need to determine what to do with the business since the category is shrinking. Your options include: harvesting the business, investing in the business to try to reverse the category trends, or exiting the business completely. If you choose to invest in the business, you should provide some examples of how you would make the business viable for the long-term. These could include:

- 1) Are there any new ways to use the product? (Example: Using Arm & Hammer Baking Soda in the refrigerator as a freshening agent).
- 2) Offer new products in other categories that leverage the equity of your brand (Example: Introduce Arm & Hammer toothpaste, laundry detergent, etc. Though it doesn't necessarily solve the category problems you are facing, it does enable you to grow the overall brand by reaching across categories).
- 3) Alter the product in some way to better meet the changing needs of your consumer. (Example: Offering ready-to-drink refrigerated juice in boxes/cans instead of just frozen juice concentrate).
- 4) Encourage your existing consumers to use more of your product (Example: Offering recipes to consumers through cookbooks or on package).
- 5) Utilize additional distribution vehicles (such as the Internet, mass merchants or club stores, etc.)

Sample Question #2

You are the brand manager on A.1. Steak Sauce and a competitor recently added a taste superiority claim on their label. What do you do in response?

Sample Answer #2

1) You should assess the risk facing the brand by asking yourself the following questions:

- Who is the competitor? How big are they relative to you? How much do you compete with each other (for consumers, channels, regionality, pricing, positioning, etc)? Overall, how big a threat does this brand/company represent to your brand?
- What is the specific claim they are making? How important is this specific claim to steak sauce consumers, in general, and specifically, to YOUR loyal users? Is the superiority claim true among either, or both of those groups? How likely would your consumers be to try and switch to this competitive brand based on this claim? It is possible that the taste of your competitor (such as hot and spicy) is not the taste that your consumers prefer which your product offers them (such as bold).
- Assess how loudly they are making the claim (prominence on label, in advertising/promotion, etc.)?
- Based on how big a risk you think this is for A.I. Steak Sauce, you need to decide whether or not you need to respond, and if so, how aggressively and quickly.

2) If the risk is significant, then assess your alternatives (how you can leverage the 4 P's to counter the claim):

- Can you challenge the claim's validity or legitimacy?
 - **Product** – assess your options keeping your loyal consumers in mind. If your competitor delivers superiority on a meaningful benefit to your consumers, consider the cost/benefit of product options to thwart their claim, such as introducing a line extension, reformulating your current product, etc.
 - **Promotion** – can you reinforce loyalty (and keep your consumers from switching) via promotion (such as by offering a bonus pack or multiple purchase incentive, other value-added promotions like coupons, buy one get one free offers, etc.) or focus your advertising on a different, more important benefit among steak sauce consumers that your product offers?
 - **Placement** – are there any opportunities in the various distribution channels to enhance your brand's presence?
 - **Price** – has this claim damaged your price/value equation among your consumers relative to this competitor? If so, are you taking any other actions to offset its impact (product, promotion, placement), or should you consider a price adjustment to re-balance the price/value relationship?

Sample Question #3

How would you determine how many gas stations there are in the USA? (This type of question is very similar to questions asked by consulting firms).

Sample Answer #3

- Though this question is designed to test your logical reasoning skills, there may be one or more simple ways to gather the information being asked for in the question. For example, you could contact the American Automobile Association or check to see if there is a trade association for gas stations that would have the answer.
- In many cases, you might still be asked to logically reason out how you would derive this answer. Although there is no one right way of answering this question, one possibility is: Determine how many cars there are in the US, then approximate how many cars are serviced by one gas station. By dividing these two numbers, you can estimate the number of gas stations in the US.

1) To determine the number of cars in the US, start with the US population (an educated guess is about 280 mm people), then approximate the number of drivers in the population (around 70%). Then, make an assumption about how many cars a typical driver has. Though not every driver has a car, it is probably a high fraction (such as 0.75 cars per driver). So, by multiplying these three numbers ($280\text{mm} \times .70 \times .75$), you would approximate that there are approximately 147 mm cars in the US.

2) Then, you need to figure out how many cars frequent a typical gas station. Assuming that all cars fill up once a week, the average gas station is open 13 hours a day (7am - 8pm), 7 days a week and 20 cars fill up every hour (one every 3 minutes), then the average gas station receives 1,820 different cars per week. By dividing 1,820 into 147 mm, your best approximation of the number of gas stations in the US is 80,769.

- Whatever approach you take, make sure you explain the assumptions you are making.



Sample Question #4

You are the brand manager on the third largest brand in a category. The brands in the category are essentially commodities with very few distinguishing characteristics among them. The category is projected to have a zero growth trend. Your brand has a significantly smaller advertising and promotional budget than your competition. How would you compete in this category?

Sample Answer #4

Since it is unlikely that you will be able to leapfrog your competition given your limited spending, your focus should be on targeting a particular consumer segment that will yield the largest return for your investment. Ideally, you would want to focus on one of the core heavy user segments in the category and ensure that you fully satisfy their needs. Once you properly pick your **TARGET**, then you can identify those vehicles that will enable you to efficiently reach your target consumer. In general, you will want to consider using more tactical and focused promotion and advertising vehicles rather than mass reach vehicles. Since you can't outspend your competition, you need to spend your dollars more wisely and targeting a narrowly defined heavy user segment is a more efficient use of your budget.

Possible strategies to accomplish this include:

- Identify your brand's heavy users and if they represent a significant group of consumers in the category, focus all of your resources on satisfying their needs and reaching them with your advertising and promotions.
- Use regional activity in place of national programming to promote the brand.
- Explore relationship marketing vehicles to target your heavy users (such as the internet, grocery store shopper card programs).
- Explore creative ways to market your brand, including generating free news coverage or PR opportunities for your brand.

Creativity Questions

Strategy

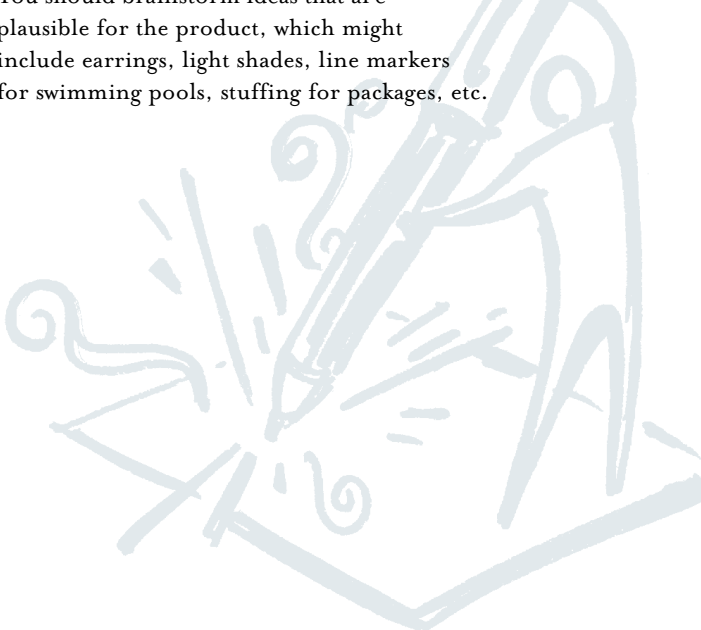
Interviewers ask these questions to see if you can think creatively on your feet. In addition, they are also trying to see if you can link creativity to strategy. So, think strategically!

Sample Question #1

If you were the brand manager on PING-PONG balls and the U.S. government suddenly banned the game of PING-PONG, what five alternative uses for PING-PONG balls could you come up with?

Sample Answer #1

You should brainstorm ideas that are plausible for the product, which might include earrings, light shades, line markers for swimming pools, stuffing for packages, etc.



Strategy

Aside from new product launch questions and business situation questions, other types of marketing questions are designed to test your understanding of basic marketing concepts. When answering these questions, follow these steps:

- 1) Always identify the brand's target and positioning.
- 2) Assess whether the brand's marketing elements (i.e. the 4 Ps) present a consistent message that supports the brand's positioning and resonates with the target audience.
- 3) Assess whether the brand's marketing efforts have been successful, and met the brand's objectives (which could be increasing sales, revitalizing a category or creating a new use for an old product).



Sample Question #1

Tell me about a brand that you think is an example of good marketing (or, give me an example of good marketing)?

Sample Answer #1

Step 1) Identify one of your favorite brands and its positioning and target. In other words, who is the brand trying to reach and what are they trying to tell them. Ideally, a brand's positioning should be clear and single-minded so that it easily fits a "position" in consumers' minds. (For example, DiGiorno is the brand of frozen pizza with the fresh-baked taste of carry-out/delivery because of its self-rising crust and great toppings.) For a brand to be well-marketed, it must deliver this positioning consistently across all aspects of the marketing mix. (Here, we'll use DiGiorno to show how it is a well-marketed brand across all 4 Ps — *note this is done in summary fashion so as to not bore you!*)

Step 2) Discuss how the brand uses the marketing variables to support its positioning. Again, try to think through the 4 P's (remember, great marketing is more than great advertising!) and give examples about how this brand delivers against each.

Here are a few questions to stimulate your thinking:

- **Product:** Is the product suitable for its target? Does it fulfill an existing need in a unique way? Does it address a need that has been ignored by other products? Does it offer a benefit that is meaningful to its target?

(Using DiGiorno as an example, you could say that DiGiorno is the perfect product for its consumers because they are adults who lead busy lives and enjoy the superior taste of carry-out/delivery pizza. The product's benefit/positioning is exactly what its target consumers want.)

- **Price:** If this is a "prestige" product, does the pricing reflect it? Is it using price as a competitive advantage?

(Using DiGiorno as an example, the brand is positioned as a premium brand to other frozen pizza brands because of its superior taste and thus can charge a higher price than its competitors.)

- **Placement:** Is it distributed in the right place to find its target? Are they doing anything unique to get it in front of their consumers outside of the usual channels?

(Again, using DiGiorno as an example, the product is sold where adults would likely buy it, including grocery stores, mass merchandisers, club stores, etc. The brand also woos its consumers directly through the sale of single and multi-serve packages in convenience and drug stores.)

- **Promotion:** Is the positioning communicated in a way that reaches the target and gives them a memorable way to think about the brand, keeping it top-of-mind? The message can be communicated through things like advertising, consumer promotions (such as sampling techniques, consumer giveaways, contests), public relations, and web sites. How does the brand's choice of promotional vehicles help support its positioning?

(Again, using DiGiorno as an example, the brand does a great job communicating its positioning, beginning with its packaging which includes the label "It's Not Delivery, It's DiGiorno". Also, the brand's advertising supports this positioning because it elevates DiGiorno to the status of carry-out/delivery. The advertising resonates with its target because it communicates this positioning in an irreverent way and it is usually shown on cable stations/network TV that adults watch. The brand also utilizes sports arenas as alternate venues to reach its target consumer and encourages trial through sampling. Furthermore, the brand's promotions reinforce the positioning. For example, the "Be the DiGiorno Delivery Guy and Win a \$100,00 salary to do nothing" promotion further communicates the brand message that DiGiorno is a substitute for carry-out/delivery pizza.

Project Management Questions

Strategy

These types of questions are designed to probe your managerial and team skills and how you would deal with difficult project management issues. In answering these questions, you should focus on identifying the key issues and how you would work with members of your team and/or senior management to resolve these issues.



Sample Question #1

You are the team leader on a project team working to develop a line extension for your brand. The team is pursuing a concept that scored very well in consumer testing and is projected to be a huge success for the company. The team is facing complicated production issues that will require a significant capital investment to correct. Without this investment, the project will fail. What would you do to secure the funds for this investment?

Sample Answers #1

In this case, the key issue is that your project is in need of a significant capital investment to finish the project. This key issue involves "managing-up" the organization to generate support and resources for your project. Since capital investments are difficult to obtain in most companies, there are certain steps that you should take as project leader to improve your chances of obtaining the needed resources.

You need to meet with the critical decision makers and present your rationale for why the capital expenditure should be made.

Questions to address when doing this include:

- Is your project aligned with the organization's overall strategy?
- Does this capital investment generate a positive NPV for your project?
- Does your project ultimately meet unmet consumer needs? Is there a realistic threat that one of your competitors will make a similar capital expenditure and beat you to market?
- Do you have strong cross-functional support for the project?

If the answers to these questions are "yes", it is very likely that you will receive funding for the capital expenditure.

Sample Question #2

You are the leader of a very experienced and talented cross functional team. Unfortunately, there is one team member, Homer, who has a very negative attitude and regularly criticizes and interrupts team members. Several team members have complained to you that Homer's behavior is negatively impacting the team. What do you do to correct this situation?

Sample Answers #2

As the team leader, you must address this situation immediately or risk damaging team chemistry. However, you must resolve this situation without alienating Homer, since he is a necessary member of the team. Your first step should be to meet with Homer and discuss some of the disruptive behaviors that you have witnessed. Find out if Homer has any hidden issues with the team that might be causing his behavior. If there are, work together to resolve them. If not, you must help Homer understand that his behavior is hurting the team and it can't continue. You have to let Homer know that the team values his input, but his input would be more valuable if it was provided in a constructive manner. Ultimately, you need to create an action plan with Homer to ensure that this type of behavior doesn't occur anymore. One suggestion would be to work on different ways for Homer to share his feelings in a more constructive way.

More Real Sample Questions

Personal Qualities

- Be prepared to provide examples of each of the following:
 - 1) Leadership
 - 2) Analytical abilities
 - 3) Creativity/Innovation
 - 4) Teamwork
 - 5) Action orientation/Drive for results



Your Interest In Marketing

(Particularly for career changers, you need to convince the interviewer that you are **PASSIONATE** about marketing and introduce marketing experiences from your background).

- Why are you interested in marketing/brand management?
- Why do you want to work for Company XYZ? Why do you want to work for a food company or a household products company?

General Questions

- Walk me through your resume and explain the career decisions you have made to date?
- What are your three most important accomplishments?
- Tell me about a time you failed?
- Describe a situation when you had to make an important decision without having all of the necessary information at hand.
- What is your greatest weakness?

Marketing Questions

- Identify a brand that you feel is marketed well. Why is it marketed well? (Identify a brand that you feel is not marketed well. Why is it not marketed well?)
- What would you do if your brand had lost market share over the last five years? What would you do if this was true, and your promotional budget was limited?
- How do you determine whether or not to do a line extension?
- A brand is very powerful in one product category of the supermarket. How do you determine whether to leverage the brand in another category? (i.e. Should Snackwell's enter the pudding market?)
- You are charged with marketing a cookie in the U.S. which has been very successful in the United Kingdom. What things should you consider in bringing the product to market in the US?
- What are the pros and cons of licensing another brand's trademark vs. launching a new product independently?
- What if you had the opportunity to run the concession stands at the next Super Bowl. What would you do (without any limits) to maximize your sales/profits.
- What is your favorite and least favorite tv commercial? Why?
- Tell me about a web site that markets consumer goods well and why?
- What are the 10 most important questions that you would ask to find out about a brand on your first day of work as a brand manager?
- Sell me a pen.
- R&D comes up with a new formula to revitalize your product. What questions would you ask to evaluate this improvement?
- Tell me one of your greatest ideas for a new product and why I should fund it.

Creativity Questions

- If you were going to design your website, what would it look like?
- If you were a print ad, what would it look like?
- What are the two most creative ideas that you have generated in the last two years?

The Marketing Interview Guide

We hope you found the Marketing Interview Guide useful in your job search! If you are interested in pursuing career opportunities with Kraft (and we hope you are!), please look for us on your campus, or check out our website:

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