

# Sample distribution manager job description and interview questions

Supply chain management is a complex area of business that has become increasingly important in recent years due to supply chain shortages and disruptions as well as the increased globalization of the economy. A Distribution Manager is a key member of the logistics and supply chain team that can help your company ensure that goods are being sent and stored in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

If you're looking to hire a Distribution Manager or hoping to become one, take a look at this sample Distribution Manager job description to learn about the key job duties and required qualifications. You can also explore some useful questions to ask Distribution Manager candidates during job interviews.

## What is a Distribution Manager?

A Distribution Manager is a logistics and supply chain professional that oversees the distribution of goods. Distribution Managers are responsible for coordinating the transportation, storage, and timely delivery of goods. They work with other members of the logistics team, vendors, and customs officials to ensure that deliveries arrive on time while working to minimize costs. To accomplish this, they route shipments, forecast product demand to plan for stock and storage needs, and negotiate with vendors on shipping rates.

## Distribution Manager Job Description Template

### Overview

This role will manage the distribution operations for the company. They will be responsible for working with carriers, Warehouse Managers, and insurance companies to coordinate shipments in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The ideal candidate will have strong negotiation skills and prior experience in warehousing, logistics, and inventory control.

### Job Responsibilities

- Plan, direct, and coordinate the storage and distribution operations within the company.
- Develop and document standard and emergency operating procedures for receiving, handling, storing, shipping, and salvaging products or raw materials.
- Negotiate with carriers, warehouse operators, and insurance company representatives for services and preferential rates.
- Advise the Sales and Billing departments of transportation charges for customers' accounts.

- Evaluate freight costs and the inventory costs associated with transit times in order to ensure that costs are appropriate
- Examine invoices and shipping manifests for conformity to tariff and customs regulations.
- Issue shipping instructions and provides routing information to ensure that delivery times and locations are coordinated.
- Forecast product demand and distribution needs to maintain appropriate stock levels

## Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Supply Chain Management, or a related field required. A Master's degree is a plus.
- 2-4 years of work experience in a related job role.
- Clear understanding of inventory management best practices.
- Strong knowledge of regulations related to commerce and transportation that may impact company operations.
- Excellent communication skills and problem-solving abilities.

## Distribution Manager Interview Questions

Here are some helpful questions to ask when interviewing candidates for a Distribution Manager role.

### **What was the best shipping decision you ever made? What were the alternatives? How did you go about making it?**

This is a great question to ask because it allows the candidate to show off their past accomplishments. Including a question like this that lets them brag a bit toward the beginning of the interview can make the candidate feel more comfortable and confident. It also allows you as the interviewer to learn more about their past experience and their thought process when making shipping decisions.

There are a ton of possible answers here, and the question is open-ended enough that everyone with prior shipping and logistics experience should be able to find an example from their past work experience. It could have been the best decision they made because it saved the company money, such as changing carriers because they negotiated a better rate. It could also be a decision that improved delivery times or customer satisfaction.

Listening to how they made the choice and what alternatives they considered also helps you understand their analytical thinking process. You may also learn more about their teamwork or communication skills if they included others in the decision-making process.

**Tell me about a time when you ran into a distribution challenge or setback. How did you handle it?**

Unexpected challenges frequently arise in distribution. Weather conditions or issues with a carrier or customs can lead to last-minute delays on important shipments. There are also times when even the best Logistics Managers can't accurately forecast stock needs (for example, the demand for masks during the covid-19 pandemic or products that go viral on social media). They may also just have encountered a particularly difficult customs official. This question allows you to dive into how they approach such challenges or setbacks to provide a positive outcome for the company and its clients.

**Do you have experience using logistics software?**

Hiring a candidate with strong computer skills and prior experience using related logistics software is a good idea. There are a number of different software tools that can be used in logistics, and it is helpful to understand which ones the candidate has experience with. Transportation management software generally provides tools for route management and dispatch, which can be helpful for a Distribution Manager. There are also supply chain management systems and warehouse management systems that may be helpful in this role.

**If hired, what strategies would you utilize to improve delivery times?**

Balancing fast delivery times and cost reduction is a major challenge in the distribution field. This question allows you to learn more about the candidate's strategic thinking skills as well as the strategies used in past roles to improve efficiency. You can see how they would work with others in the supply chain to improve delivery times and how they balance costs with a goal like faster delivery.

**Did you ever have a problem with a customs official or government regulator? How did you solve it?**

If your business is involved in international trade, either for shipping or receiving, you probably already know that dealing with customs can be a pain at times. However, resolving issues with customs takes some tact and excellent communication skills. This question helps you better understand their experience working with customs officials or government regulators as well as their skill in navigating customs or regulatory issues.