

1. Confirm your name, as you would prefer to see it in print, your year of birth and the year you joined the organization.
2. Recall your earliest memory of the organization? What, when and where was your first encounter? *For founders, this will elicit the story of how it all began. For hired employees, subsidiaries, suppliers and other partners whose involvement is relevant to your organization's history, this will elicit the story of their earliest impressions...and what it was that made them believe an alignment would be in the mutual interest of the organization and themselves.*
3. Describe your initial role/involvement with the organization, and how that role has evolved over the years.
4. Why was the organization the right fit at the right time for you? *This will help you identify those shared values that first resonated with this individual.*
5. Describe any aspect of your pre-organization life that helped prepare you for your role with the organization? *Prompt the interviewee for information not only about their prior work experience, but also anything relating to their childhood, their education, their avocations or their adult family life that may have helped prepare them for a relationship with your organization.*
6. Who in the organization has been the biggest influence on your career. Please describe how...and why.
7. What is your best, most joyful memory from your years with the organization? *Remember, you are looking for stories that are likely to resonate across generations, stories that speak to the core values your organization has embraced.*
8. What is your most troubling memory from your years with the organization? *Topic-specific follow-up questions are likely to be required here. Remember, your goal is not to "spill the dirt" on your organization, but rather, to identify weaknesses or challenges that have been overcome. Sometimes selectively exposing an overcome vulnerability is the shortest path to rapport. Yes...the answers to this question will likely fall into the "blunders-to-discard" category, but understanding weaknesses can help you clarify strengths.*
9. Can you describe a typical day in your current relationship with the organization...and if that typical day has changed dramatically over the years, explain in what ways things have changed.

10. Do you have any keepsakes, documents, photographs, videos etc. from your earliest years with the organization that might help us in putting together a historical record? *Depending on the media chosen to communicate those relevant portions of your organization's history, some or all of these examples may be relevant. Feel free to drill down more specifically by mentioning tools (e.g., an "sales bag" a "sample kit") or other artifacts that you suspect may be useful in telling your story.*
11. Try to imagine what the organization might be like today, if deprived of your involvement...then describe as best you can what your personal contributions have been. *You are looking for two separate categories of information here...the practical measurable contributions as reflected in growth/prosperity...but also the culture-related contributions that may have made a difference to the heart and soul of the organization.*
12. Has there ever been a time when you thought the organization might not survive? If so, please recall and describe.
13. Think for a minute about those things that were threats/challenges to the organization when you first became involved with it. Then compare and contrast those challenges with those being faced by the organization today. *You may need to follow up here with a more specific prompt; what you are looking for is changes in the environmental, social, economic, market and/or political climate that have affected or are currently affecting your organization.*
14. An organization is about a lot of things: its people, its services, its product, its culture. Think for a minute about those things, as they were constituted when you first became involved with this organization. Then, compare and contrast those with what constitutes this organization today. What has changed for the better? For the worse? And what things haven't changed at all? *This question should get you to the heart of your organization's vision, mission, purpose and core values...and any deviations that have occurred over the years.*
15. Who within the organization over the course of your years as a (founder, employee, subsidiary exec, supplier, etc.) do you most admire...and why? *Remember: this conversation is a journey of discovery. You are trying to identify those lasting, universal values that truly distinguish your organization from others.*
16. What do you believe has been the single biggest mistake this organization has made in the course of your shared histories...and why?
17. What do you believe has been the greatest success this organization has made in the course of your shared histories...and why?
18. If you could change one thing, and only one thing, about this organization as it exists today, what would it be...and why?

19. When you first became involved with this organization, how did you envision your shared futures at that time...and how has that future-vision changed? From today's vantage point, what does the future of this organization, and your role in it, look like?
20. Have you ever lost sleep worrying about this organization...and/or about your relationship to it? If so, when? Why? And how did things eventually resolve themselves?
21. What has your journey, thus far, with this organization taught you? What do you know or understand today, that you may never have learned except through your journey with this organization?
22. Do you have any favorite anecdotes you'd like to share that you believe capture for you the heart and soul of this organization?
23. Is there anything else you've been thinking about sharing for this interview that we didn't cover...and that you would like to share now?