

Van Salesperson interview questions

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What to expect

Van Salesperson interviews combine a conversation about your driving and sales experience with practical questions about route planning, stock control and customer service. Employers want to know you can work unsupervised, keep accurate records and represent their brands well on the road.

- **Process:** Questions that ask you to walk through a typical day or route, from loading the van to end-of-day reconciliation.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about past experience with customers, upselling or handling a difficult delivery, answered with a real example.
- **Scenario:** Questions that put you in a specific situation, such as a customer refusing a delivery or a stock discrepancy, to see how you judge and respond.
- **Technical:** Questions about stock rotation, payment handling, using a mobile sales app or a handheld scanner, and reading an inventory system.
- **Safety:** Questions about road safety, manual handling, fatigue management and meeting delivery windows without cutting corners.
- **Sales:** Questions that probe your ability to sell face to face, negotiate and grow an existing customer's order.

The interview usually starts with a phone screen covering your licence, driving record, availability and route experience. A face-to-face interview with a sales manager or area manager follows, often including a practical element such as planning a sample route or completing a short sales scenario. Some employers also arrange a ride-along day so you can show your customer manner and time management on the road.

1. Walk me through how you prepare and run your van route from start to finish.

Why they ask

This is a process question. The interviewer wants to see whether you work in an organised, repeatable way and whether you understand the sequence of loading, checking, driving, selling and reconciling.

How to structure your answer

Use a step-by-step walk-through. Start with the night before or early morning, cover the load check, the route order, each customer visit, payment handling and what you do at the end of the day.

Example answer

"I start by checking the load sheet against the van, making sure the stock matches the route and that any special orders are in the front. I follow the route in a set order so customers know when to expect me. At each stop I greet the customer, check their shelf and back stock, write the order, and offer two or three products that suit their trade. I process payment or invoice on the spot using the mobile app and EFTPOS terminal. At the end of the run I reconcile stock, log any credits or returns, and report competitor activity or shelf gaps to the sales manager."

2. Tell me about a time you turned a routine delivery into a bigger sale.

Why they ask

This is a behavioural question. It tests whether you can sell face to face without being pushy and whether you can spot an opportunity in a customer's own store.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Describe the situation (customer, route), the task (routine delivery), the action (how you spotted a gap and what you said), and the result (a larger order or a repeat line).

Example answer

"I had a bakery on my route that only ever ordered the same two lines. One morning I noticed their cold display had space near the front, and a nearby cafe was selling a lot of a new iced tea. I asked the baker if they had tried it, and mentioned that two other customers on the route had taken it that week. They agreed to a small trial box. By the next visit they had sold through and added it to their regular order, so that one conversation turned into a repeat line."

3. A customer says they don't need anything this week and you can see gaps on their shelf. What do you do?

Why they ask

This is a scenario question. It tests your judgement, your sales manner and whether you can respect a customer's decision while still doing your job.

How to structure your answer

Show your thinking under pressure. Acknowledge the customer's position, then describe how you would check, ask, and suggest without pushing too hard. Finish with how you would leave the relationship positive.

Example answer

"I would thank them for their time and ask if anything has changed, like a quiet week or a shift in what's selling. I would point out one or two gaps gently, not a list. For example, I might say, 'I noticed you're low on the small bags of chips that usually go well at lunch. Would a single box help, or would you rather I check again next week?' If they still say no, I would note it in the app, keep the visit friendly, and make sure the shelves I can reach are tidy and front-faced before I leave."

4. How do you keep stock rotation and freshness under control across a busy run?

Why they ask

This is a technical question. It checks whether you understand date codes, stock rotation and the cost of credits, which matter in food and beverage routes.

How to structure your answer

Explain your system or habit. Cover how you check dates, how you load the van, how you rotate on the customer's shelf, and what you do when you find short-dated stock.

Example answer

"I load the van so the oldest stock is at the front and the newest at the back, and I check dates again before each customer visit. On the shelf I pull the older stock forward and put the new stock behind it. If I find short-dated product on a customer's shelf, I rotate it to the front and flag it to the customer so they can sell it first. If something is too close to code, I process a credit or swap it for fresh stock rather than leave it to become a write-off."

5. What would you do if you noticed a discrepancy between your stock count and the van's inventory app?

Why they ask

This is a technical and problem-solving question. It tests your accuracy, honesty and ability to follow process when something does not add up.

How to structure your answer

Describe a calm, methodical response. Start with stopping and checking, then recount, then report. Do not guess or hide the issue.

Example answer

"I would stop and recount the item before moving on. If the count still did not match, I would check the load sheet, the last few delivery dockets and any credits I had processed that day. If I still could not find the difference, I would report it to the sales manager or warehouse at the end of the run with the details. I would not adjust the app without checking first, because accurate stock matters for the next order and for the customer's trust."

6. How do you stay safe and compliant on the road while meeting delivery windows?

Why they ask

This is a safety question. Employers need to know you will not trade safety for speed, especially with a loaded van and a tight route.

How to structure your answer

Show that safety is part of your routine. Cover pre-start checks, load restraint, fatigue, parking and how you communicate delays. Give a real example if you can.

Example answer

"I do a quick pre-start check on the van each morning, including tyres, lights and load restraint. I plan the route to avoid the worst traffic, but I do not rush or tailgate to make up time. If I am running late, I call the next customer or the sales manager to let them know, rather than skip a break or park somewhere unsafe. I also keep my manual handling sensible when I am lifting boxes in and out of the van, and I take my scheduled breaks on longer runs."