

KUMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Any question on your progress with 7A-2A section

When I started Kumon, I was a BCD instructor at NW and transitioned into 7A-2A section when Asha opened the Berwick South centre. Once I was comfortable in my position as a 7A-2A instructor, Asha wanted to pilot the idea of “section or team leaders” and offered the role of 7A-2A section leader to me.

As part of this position, I had three main phases or goals. The first goal was to recruit and train a team of instructors suited to the 7A-2A section. As part of this goal, I was involved in interviewing potential candidates and training the staff. The training covered a range of topics from worksheet training, student motivation to strategies to fast track student progress.

The second goal was to improve retention. I had noticed that students transitioning from 7A-2A to the next section were finding it hard to cope up with the different expectations of the other sections. Therefore, I developed strategies to make students independent learners as they progressed through levels. This meant the transition to higher levels was much smoother and this improved student retention.

My current goal is growth and strategies to manage growth. As part of this goal, I am involved in the generation of promotional content, managing Facebook and Instagram ads, visiting schools and preschools to deliver promotional content. In addition, I am also training staff to provide weekly feedback for each student to ensure we can provide a smooth Kumon journey for all students.

2. Any question regarding BUSINESS ACUMEN

I understand your concerns that I may not have any prior business experience but I believe I am not disadvantaged in any way. New instructors often have business acumen but are not trained in the Kumon process, administration and worksheets. In my case, the experience is just reversed as I am trained in Kumon operations and will have to gain business experience as I grow. As part of my training, I have been trained in cost vs profit analysis, sales and marketing, customer service, student folder planning, goal setting and AB reports.

Furthermore, I believe my background in commerce will further be a valuable asset in helping me run a Kumon centre. As part of my degree, I have learnt how to critically analyse financial data, generate financial reports and come up with strategies to further improve profits. An example of this would be understanding the cost and profit of each section within Kumon. The least profitable section in our centres is 7A-2A and this is because we have a low student:teacher ratio.

However, I believe this is an essential investment because high focus in the 7A-2A section leads to increased retention in BCD which significantly boosts the profits of the centre. To manage the costs of 7A-2A section, I primarily hire school students and past Kumon students to minimise student wages and ensure the staff are well trained to decrease the student cycle period in 7A-2A. Furthermore, increased parent communication also ensures the parents are informed of the student progress and further improves retention rates. By understanding such links between profits, student cycle and student numbers, it provides me an edge over new instructors who will take some time to gather such data points.

3. What are some strategies you have implemented as part of your role as a 7A-2A team leader?

Some of the strategies I have implemented as part of the 7A-2A team leader role are

- To ensure any student is on the fastest track to achieve KIS. Parents of students who have reached KIS see the value of the program and tend to stick with the program for longer.
- Focus highly on student attitude. Students with poor study attitude require more one-on-one attention whereas several students with good attitude can be managed by a single

staff member. This is one way to increase student to teacher ratio and therefore, decrease cost in terms of staff wages. Furthermore, it improves retention rates in higher levels.

- Another strategy is to celebrate all the small wins and share concerns with the parents. This has several benefits as this increases both student and parent motivation, increases parent involvement which reflects on attendance and homework quality and most importantly, it promotes word-of-mouth which is the strongest form of marketing.

I think knowing the numbers and how to tweak is an important part of business and I know that well as far as Kumon is concerned.

The expenses head are only few and there are only less opportunities to monitor spend except on wages / marketing and other ad hoc costs.

Asha does have plans to rotate me across different sections with specific goals to meet and I am sure I will be well equipped in the operations of other sections as well. We have Section leader meetings every fortnight and I am aware of the challenges in other sections and the solutions others are working on. It is just that I have not solved first-hand myself which I will be given the opportunity to.

If they immediately ask, can you say a challenge different to 7A-2A section

- I know in BCD maintaining the volume of pages to 10 is harder and it is the level where most students tend to give up. The section leaders place a lot of emphasis on homework consistency, homework quality and identifying at-risk students.
- I know Maths is more popular in Kumon than in English, at least in our center and we focus a lot on retention of English students and there are always lots of queries from parents on how English is actually helping at school, any drop in reading levels or writing.

The below table for total students NARRE WARREN – 230 and 7A-2A – 100 (approximately for you to understand the cost heads)

Total monthly Tuition fee	140	Total monthly Tuition fee	140
Monthly fee before GST	126	Monthly fee before GST	126
10% GST incl in monthly fee	14	10% GST incl in monthly fee	14
40% Royalty fee	56	40% Royalty fee	56
Ezidebit fee	0.75	Ezidebit fee	0.75
Monthly rent (2372/230)	10.31304348	Monthly rent (2372/100)	10.313043
Monthly wages (5200/270)	22.60869565	Monthly wages (3000/100)	30
Work cover insurance (770/230/12)	0.278985507	Work cover insurance (770/100/12)	0.6416667
Public liability (450/12/230)	0.163043478	Public liability (450/12/230)	0.375
Monthly KSC (100/230)	0.434782609	Monthly KSC (100/230)	1
Monthly cleaning (130/230)	0.481481481	Monthly cleaning (130/230)	1.3
Monthly phone / internet (130/230)	0.608695652	Monthly phone / internet (130/230)	1.4
Monthly LAM expenses (5000/12/100)	1.811594203	Monthly LAM expenses (2500/12/100)	4.1666667
Monthly misc expenses (200/12/230)	0.724637681	Monthly misc expenses (200/12/230)	0.8333333
Total expenses	108.1749597	Total expenses	120.77971
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME PER STUDENT	31.82504026	TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME PER STUDENT	19.22029
TOTAL INCOME NW	7319.759259	TOTAL INCOME NW	1922.029

4. Any question regarding MARKETING

In terms of marketing, I believe the main focus should be on word-of-mouth marketing. This is because they have a high success rate and are virtually free. In addition to this, social media engagement has proven to be highly effective. Prior to COVID-19, we used to also have stalls in social events and shopping centres, and invested in flyer distribution. Recently, I also visited the local schools and childcare centres as part of promotional activities.

5. How do you keep parents happy?

- We communicate to the parents what is the current goal we are working on and seek their help to achieve it. They are treated as equal partners and greatly involved.
- We keep the communication succinct and relevant. For example, if a child moves from 7A to 6A, we make a big deal by giving certificates, followed by sending the 6A video tutorial to the parents and our expectations at the new level.
- Most importantly we ensure the parents queries are responded within the same day.
- Any small or big achievement is conveyed to the parents in a text message and if it is 7A-2A, we show the video or photo to the parents.
- We constantly remind them that the child is in fact progressing. We are also the first one to point out any missed / or delayed progress without being fearful that the students may stop. By me being transparent and honest I believe parents gain trust on the program.

6. What other local area marketing are you exposed to?

We used to do letterbox distribution of flyers before COVID. We no longer do it.

Having stalls in local malls, posters in shops, flyers in childcare centers and medical centers, sponsorship of sports clubs (netball) and newsletter ads in schools.

Facebook ad boosting, Lead generation in Facebook and Instagram, Google ads

We have a weekly schedule and Monday is for marketing. We sit together and schedule ads in Facebook and posts in Google business pages. We also discuss which child can be profiled and any parent who will be willing to give testimonial.

- **What kind of activities are you involved with outside the center?**

Folder filling, stock ordering, entering student records in KSIS, preparing training materials, setting goals for the children, comparing databases to see if the goal has been achieved, parent communication, authoring / formatting newsletters.

- **What do you think are the strengths of the Kumon method?**

- ✓ Starting the program and letting the child advance in small steps is the biggest strength.
- ✓ It removes the pressure of performing as per age and focuses on small wins.
- ✓ More than anything it is a program that can promote self-efficacy and self-regulation more than any others.

- **Do you use any tool for decision making?**

I used SWOT analysis to validate being a KUMON INSTRUCTOR is a good choice and using QFD to eliminate the Berwick South option might not be a great choice for me. (Use the excel we did ie QFD and refer to Asha's BS business plan for SWOT analysis)

- **What do you think would be the biggest challenge for you in taking up the Kumon centre?**

To gain the confidence of the new parents owing to my age and experience but I am planning to mitigate that by establishing myself as subject matter expert during parent orientation and speaking about my experience in Kumon.

- **Why should we select you?**

- I am well aware of the program and passionate about making a difference with the children.
- Have a mentor with good experience who can guide me through every aspect of running the business.
- I do not have any personal commitments and can devote my energy fully and passionately in Kumon.

- **How long will you stay in Kumon?**

Being successful in Kumon requires a greater commitment and investment in terms of time and energy is really a lot. I am in here for passion and would like to establish myself within the community and to reach as many students as possible. I am going to stay for a decade at the least and that is my plan currently.

- **What are you looking for from us?**

Unparalleled support and true partnership.

- **What motivated you and when did you decide to become an instructor?**

To be honest, I was not passionate from Day 1. Most of them are not. But I was given opportunities and freedom to experience the difference I could make with the younger children. Hearing lots of student stories and having first-hand experience of the same and doing well in managing 7A-2A sections gave me confidence that I can be a good instructor.

The first turning point was really when we had a student named Lakinsa joining Berwick South in my section. She was autistic and attending special needs school where she was taught only to count numbers up to 30. When she joined Kumon, we took extreme steps to get her comfortable and she being a perfectionist, every new learning focus was a challenge. Within a year and half, she got the award for the BEST STUDENT OF THE YEAR and managed to reach up to D 150 while in Grade 2. This was the biggest turning point for me to start believing the method. I can never forget her parent's reaction when she got the award.

The second turning point was when Asha made me the Floor Manager and I initially thought it was a demotion because it did not involve direct teaching of the students. She came up with the role because of how the venue was and it is impossible for her to have an oversight of both the rooms at the same time and 7A-2A was growing at that time. I never understood the depth of the role initially. She kept introducing challenges in small steps followed by continuous training and goal setting. She handed over the section completely during COVID and that brought out my true potential. It was not only me, the accountability of all staff increased and all of us worked for the trust she showed in us. But in my case she let me explore all other areas when I expressed my interest to become an instructor.

Personal

- Tell me a bit about yourself

I have been working in Kumon for the past 4 years and I have done various roles during these 4 years and now I am specialising in 7A-2A where I work with Pre-kinder to Grade 1 students. I am currently the floor manager for this section and parent communication, staff recruitment and student management are part of my responsibilities. I roughly handle 160 subjects in my section across the two centres. My background is Bachelor's in Commerce from Monash University with a double major in Management studies and Accounting.

- Why Kumon

I chose to be a Kumon instructor because of the limitless potential Kumon provides and because I have had a tremendous experience of working with Kumon for the past 4 years. I have a passion for working with children and I believe Kumon is the right platform for me where I can make an impact on a child's learning.

- Growth Mindset

I strongly believe knowledge, skill and abilities can be developed by continuous learning and implementation. It is not only for me, I am also positive that it can be developed with my staff and the children by nurturing a growth mindset of focusing on the process and not on the performance.

- Strength and weakness

Strength- My strengths include an ability to work effectively as part of a team, being supportive of other team members, being able to focus on the task in hand, carrying out my work competently and diligently and I am a person who is enthusiastic and motivated about each task. **Being highly reliable, trustworthy and transparent are salient values as a team member. Having empathy towards people, result oriented and organization are my strengths as a manager.**

Weakness- I come up with very creative and innovative ideas but when among a large group of people who have greater seniority, I tend to be resistant to speak up and share my ideas. I am currently working on this, I have been taking part in business coaching programs where I work with women in business, majority are senior to me and this platform has helped me overcome this weakness.

- Support from family and friends

My whole family is very supportive and happy that I will be taking up Kumon. It is a dream come true for all of us and we are fully committed. My dad is currently working part-time and will be able to help me admin activities and my brother is currently working in Higher level Maths at Narre Warren and Clyde North and he will be able to assist in the class as well. I will also be looking at my mentor's support for strategic planning and overcoming any challenges.

LEADERSHIP

- Vision

I believe Kumon teaches beyond just Maths and English. Kumon is a way of life, it teaches children how to build the right attitude, discipline and time management from day 1, these skills are highly important and are necessary for one to thrive in the outside world. My vision is that each child who comes to class regardless of their age should be able to make a positive impact on their learning experience.

- Values

Being highly reliable, trustworthy and transparent are my salient values as a team member. Having empathy towards people, result oriented and organization are my strengths as a manager.

- Facing challenges / Parent communication

Recently in Kumon, we had a parent who was unhappy with their child's performance as he had not reached his KIS. I offered to speak to the parents and took time to listen to their concerns thoroughly. Once they had completed listing their concerns, I used the levels guide from the Kumon parent orientation manual to explain where the child was at and what level he had to be to reach KIS. I went through with the parents the reasons behind why it was important to meaningfully complete the levels and not rush. I also provided them with specific strategies which they could implement at home to help the child reach his KIS faster. Two months down the line, the child was able to reach KIS and the parents called and really appreciated the outcome and the earlier conversation we had.

- Innovation

Narrate the incident where you were able to give solution for Team performance based on your Kumon experience during your cadetship

- Resilient to Changes-

"Changes are the only thing that is constant" -

This is the motto by which we run the organization. If the focus is on continuous improvement, changes are inevitable. We are also encouraged to come up with ideas for everyday problems and misses. Changes can be messy and it may not work all the time, irrespective we do as there is no growth or transformation without changes.

Covid time online CLASSES, called each parent and did a quick orientation to Zoom classes.

Recent Change - Example

Even with the recent lockdown in February, the staff came up with the schedule in a day, communicated to the parents and we ensured the children did attend the class in ZOOM. When I came up with the schedule, I realized that we will not have enough staff and we quickly did staff training in the morning, we had students for that session so that the staff can first-hand experience in my presence. The staff were also confident and able to perform only because we are all used to changes.

Adaptability / Willingness to explore / Best practices

I believe that a Kumon instructor should be an all-rounder where given any student from any level, one should be able to meaningfully instruct. From the beginning of my career, I have been on rotation and have worked in different sections from EF to BCD and now in 7A-A. I believe that this has made me very flexible and resilient to changes. Now although I have been extensively working in 7A-A for the past 2 years, I can instruct a child in other levels as well. **Working at different levels made me see the connection across and motivated me to build the attitude of the children from 7A itself.**

- Risk taking

Kumon floor manager (never done leadership role before, Asha assured that it will be a phased change)
CALCULATED RISK

- **People management** (Covid time online CLASSES, called each parent. Section leaders started first, then we learnt about breakout rooms)

- **Rewards and recognition**

- **Delegation and Escalation**

At our Kumon, we have an open culture where there is a healthy space where one can make mistakes and learn from it. Asha always tells us that it is ok to make mistakes, but we should ensure that the same mistake doesn't happen again. If something goes wrong with any child, we are encouraged at all times to be transparent to other team members and leaders as well as the parents. At no point we are penalised, we have an open culture where we are very supportive of everyone and are willing to learn from each other's mistakes.

- Honesty

At Kumon Narre Warren and Clyde North, honesty is core to culture. Each and every team member is given the space and freedom to openly speak and address issues or mistakes that they experienced or made. For example, once we had a child whose folder was filled with incorrect levels (BI instead of BII). When this was discovered, we were encouraged to voluntarily disclose this information to the parents and honestly explain what had happened and we then took relative measures to fast-forward the child meaningfully.

-Time management

A time when I showed great time management ability is when I was at university, along with my studies I was doing my cadetship at Doga for 2 days and Kumon for 3 days. I was also continuing my hobby of dance and music. I was able to manage all these aspects of my life meaningfully. I used many tools to help me manage my time, such as to-do lists, regularly updating my schedules. I believe I am equipped with great time management skills which I have developed incrementally over time.

- Prioritization

I am very well aware of my capacity and I know exactly how much time I can allocate to each aspect of my life and I ensure that I follow it strictly to avoid any clashes. For example, when I have an assignment or a work commitment coming up, I adjust accordingly to ensure I can complete all the tasks smoothly.

- Working under pressure

While I typically like to plan out my work in stages and complete it piece by piece, I can also achieve high-quality work results under tight deadlines. Once, at Doga, an employee left days before the imminent deadline of completing reports for an Audit. I was asked to assume responsibility for it. Although I was a cadet, I created a task outline and delegated work to my team members, and we all completed the reports with a day to spare. In fact, I believe that I can thrive when working under tight deadlines.

- Managing stress

I believe that with effective planning and good organisational skills one can overcome stress and manage stress easily. During the COVID lockdown period, we had to quickly make the transition to online classes, and it was a very stressful process, but we were able to phase out the transition into stages. Initially, only the team leaders were running the online classes and once we had settled and managed the initial phases of student and parent management then we worked on training junior staff with online classes and took them on board. Although the outcome which is transitioning Kumon classes to an online platform seemed very difficult, we were able to successfully manage the stress by planning effectively.

Skills

- Communication
- Writing / Speaking
- Planning
- Organization

Business acumen

- Generating Sales
- Profit and loss

Covered as part of measuring profit by Student

% of Sales allocated to Wages and Rent also needs to be continuously monitored to improve profitability

- Kumon KPI's

Kumon centres performance are measured on the % of students reaching KIS within the first year, Retention rate at 3/6/9 months/ 1,2 and 3 year,

Awards are based on Centre growth, Number of Program completers and KIS rates

- Finance

- Marketing

- People

Expand more on how you manage the team. Right from interview to induction to training , setting performance goals and addressing performance issues

- Process

- Systems

KSIS / Stock ordering is the only Kumon provided systems.

We use Time Station for employees work time records management and MYOB for accounting and processing payslips

- 3 months / 6 months / 1 year plan for Kumon

Students estimate based on BS experience

3 months - 50 Subjects

6 Months - 100 Subjects

1 year - 150 subjects

2 years - 200 subjects

Tasks to complete:

1. Learn about free trial

Free trial is usually conducted in the months as advertised by Kumon Head Office, usually in May and August. The existing students can trial the second subject and new students can try for two weeks. This is an important marketing event to boost the numbers and spread the brand awareness amongst the community. People may not enrol immediately, but having given a wonderful experience, it is going to stay in the back of their mind and make it easy to take a decision when there is a need.

The processes remain as close to the actual enrolment to have the same experience. The only difference is that a smaller achievable goal is set for FT students so that it can be meaningfully conveyed and achieved as informed. The parents still need to provide enrolment and Parent agreement forms but no direct debit form to register for the free trial.

2. Write a business plan

Have a look at BS plan to know the components to be addressed.

3. Create a cash projection and develop financial goals (3 months, 6 months and 1 year)

The profit by the student covers almost all the important expense heads. You might involve an accountant for the professional services once you grow. Except that all is covered.

You can also refer to the cash projection provided during the information session as a baseline.