

KKR

"Private equity at the largest scale"

FOUNDED 1976, New York	AUM ~\$638B across strategies (end-2024)	KNOWN FOR LBO pioneer, large-cap buyout, diversified alts	NOTABLE RJR Nabisco — invented the modern LBO
FORMAT Technical → LBO case study → Superday	CASE STUDY Full LBO model — expect to present it	TECHNICAL DEPTH LBO mechanics, value creation, returns analysis	JUDGMENT Investment thesis and risk thinking probed

WHO THEY ARE

KKR was founded in 1976 by Kohlberg, Kravis, and Roberts, three Bear Stearns partners who invented the leveraged buyout and created modern private equity. The firm's 1988 RJR Nabisco acquisition (\$25B) remained the largest LBO for nearly 20 years and is still taught in every MBA corporate finance course. Today KKR manages over \$500B across PE, credit, real assets, and infrastructure with 23 global offices. The PE franchise is the core business and remains consistently strong across market cycles, but KKR has built significant parallel businesses in growth equity, infrastructure, and credit that operate at scale.

WHY PEOPLE WANT TO WORK HERE

KKR carries the brand weight that only Blackstone rivals in PE; the name alone opens doors with corporates, banks, and institutions globally. The deal quality is exceptional by design: KKR competes on the largest, most structurally complex buyouts in the market, requiring sophisticated capital structure work and global execution that draws the most ambitious finance professionals. The firm's diversified platform creates real career optionality absent at single-asset-class competitors. For candidates uncertain which PE sub-asset-class fits best, KKR's breadth across growth equity, infrastructure, and credit allows you to discover your fit before specializing.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

KKR's PE process is intensive: resume screen, first-round technical interviews, take-home or timed LBO case study, then Superday with senior partners. The case study is central: you build a complete, professionally formatted LBO model and present investment thesis, risks, and return analysis under real time pressure. Technical interviews drill LBO mechanics hard: entry multiples, debt sizing, operating assumptions, exit scenarios, return sensitivities, and value creation levers like EBITDA margin improvement and multiple expansion. Behavioral questions probe investment judgment: how you assess competitive position, identify make-or-break success factors, and think through downside risk.

WHAT THEY'RE REALLY EVALUATING

KKR filters explicitly for three things: modeling precision under pressure, investment judgment, and the intellectual profile of a future investor. Your LBO model must be clean, logically structured, and error-free; conceptual mistakes are disqualifying. Beyond the model, KKR assesses whether you think like an investor: can you form views on business competitive position, identify the 2-3 factors that determine deal success, and articulate downside scenarios and failure modes. Cultural fit matters; KKR values collaborative, intellectually rigorous candidates over aggressive individuals. Thoughtful, curious, team-oriented profiles outperform those projecting pure individual ambition.

STANDOUT QUESTIONS

1. Walk me through how you would build an LBO model from scratch. What are the key components and what assumptions matter most?
2. A company has \$500M of EBITDA, 20% margins, and moderate growth. You're buying it at 12x. How do you think about the return profile at different exit multiples and leverage levels?
3. What makes a business a good LBO candidate? Walk me through the characteristics you'd look for.
4. Tell me about a company or industry you've been following that you think would be an interesting KKR investment. What's the thesis?
5. What are the main levers of value creation in a PE investment? How do you think about which ones to prioritize?
6. Walk me through a deal KKR has done that you find interesting. What do you think drove the investment thesis?

INSIDER TIPS

- Build LBO models until they are second nature. KKR's case study is a rigorous test. You need to build a complete model quickly, cleanly, and accurately. Practice timed LBO builds from scratch. Resources like 'Breaking Into Wall Street' and 'Macabacus' have templates. Use them until the structure is automatic.
- Know the value creation framework cold. Returns in PE come from three places: EBITDA growth, multiple expansion, and debt paydown. Be ready to quantify each component's contribution in a deal and discuss which levers are most controllable and most impactful.
- Have a specific investment thesis ready. KKR interviewers will ask you to pitch a company or industry. Don't wing this. Prepare a researched thesis with a clear view on why the business is attractive, what the entry multiple implies, and what could go wrong.
- Research KKR's actual portfolio and recent deals. Know two or three KKR portfolio companies, what the investment thesis was, and how the business has performed. This signals interest and investor orientation, not just a desire to work in PE.