

Interview Questions & Answers

1. Tell me about yourself.

- Your interviewer is not looking for a 10-minute answer here. Instead, offer a razor sharp sentence or two that sets the stage for further discussion and sets you apart from your competitors.
- Give them "your synopsis about you" answer, specifically your *Unique Selling Proposition*. Known as a personal branding or a value-added statement, the *USP* is a concise, one-sentence description of who you are your biggest strength and the major benefit that a company will derive from this strength.

2. What interests you about this job and what attributes can you bring to the company?

- Describe the qualifications listed in the job posting and then connect them to your skills and experience. That way, the employer will see that you know about the job you're interviewing for (not everyone does) and that you have the qualifications necessary to do the job.
- For example, if you were interviewing for a Human Resources Manager job where you would be responsible for recruiting, orientation, and training, you will want to discuss how you were responsible for these functions in your past positions, and why you are interested in continuing to develop your expertise in Human Resources management.

3. What can you do for this company?

- First of all, be sure to have researched the company prior to the interview, so you are familiar with the company's mission. Respond by giving examples why your education, skills, accomplishments, and experience will make you an asset for the employer.
- Take a few moments to compare your goals with objectives of the company and the position, as well as mentioning what you have accomplished in your other jobs. Be positive and reiterate your interest in the company, as well as the job.

4. What is your greatest weakness?

- When you're asked what your greatest weakness is, try to turn a negative into a positive. For example, a sense of urgency to get projects completed or wanting to triple-check every item in a spreadsheet can be turned into a strength i.e. you are a candidate who will make sure that the project is done on time and your work will be close to perfect.
- *"I like to make sure that my work is perfect, so I tend to perhaps spend a little too much time checking it. However, I've come to a good balance by setting up a system to ensure everything is done correctly the first time."*

5. What is your greatest strength?

- The best way to respond is to describe the skills and experience that directly correlate with the job you are applying for.
- *"When I'm working on a project, I don't want just to meet deadlines. Rather, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule."*
- *"My time management skills are excellent and I'm organized, efficient, and take pride in excelling at my work."*
- *"I pride myself on my customer service skills and my ability to resolve what could be difficult situations."*

6. Why are you leaving/left your current/past job?

- *If you were fired from your job, use these answers to respond:*
 - My competencies were not the right match for my previous employer's needs but it looks like they'd be a good fit in your organization.
 - The job wasn't working out so my boss and I agreed that it was time for me to move on to a position that would show a better return for both of us. So here I am, ready to work.
- *If you left of your own accord, review these suggestions on how best to answer and tailor your response to meet your particular situation.*
 - I found myself bored with the work and looking for more challenges. I am an excellent employee and I didn't want my unhappiness to have any impact on the job I was doing for my employer.
 - There isn't room for growth with my current employer and I'm ready to move on to a new challenge.
 - I'm looking for a bigger challenge and to grow my career and I couldn't job hunt part time while working. It didn't seem ethical to use my former employer's time.
 - I am interested in a new challenge and an opportunity to use my technical skills and experience in a different capacity than I have in the past.
 - I am interested in a job with more responsibility, and I am very ready for a new challenge.

NOTE: Be direct and focus your interview answer on the future, especially if your leaving wasn't under the best of circumstances. **NEVER badmouth your current or past employers.**

7. How do you handle stress and pressure?

- I react to situations, rather than to stress. That way, the situation is handled and doesn't become stressful.
- I actually work better under pressure and I've found that I enjoy working in a challenging environment.

- From a personal perspective, I manage stress by visiting the gym every evening. It's a great stress reducer.
- Prioritizing my responsibilities so I have a clear idea of what needs to be done when, has helped me effectively manage pressure on the job.

8. Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it.

- These are behavioural interview questions designed to discover how you handled certain situations. The logic behind these types of questions is that how you behaved in the past is a predictor of what you will do in the future.
- Give concrete examples of difficult situations that actually happened at work. Then discuss what you did to solve the problem. Keep your answers positive *"Even though it was difficult when Jane Doe quit without notice, we were able to rearrange the department workload to cover the position until a replacement was hired."* Itemize what you did and how you did it.
- The best way to prepare for questions where you will need to recall events and actions is to refresh your memory and consider some special situations you have dealt with or projects you have worked on. You can use them to help frame responses. Prepare stories that illustrate times when you have successfully solved a difficult situation.

9. What motivates you?

- I've always been motivated by the desire to do a good job at whatever position I'm in. I want to excel and to be successful in my job, both for my own personal satisfaction and for my employer.
- I have always wanted to ensure that my company's clients get the best customer service I can provide. I've always felt that it's important, both to me personally, and for the company and the clients, to provide a positive customer experience.

Note: There isn't a right or wrong answer to interview questions about what motivates you. The interviewer is trying to understand the key to your being successful in the job he or she is interviewing for, and wants to make sure it's a good fit. Consider, in advance of interviewing, what actually does motivate you and come up with some specific examples to share during the interview.

10. What are your salary expectations?

- Before you start talking pay (and salary negotiations) with a prospective employer, you need to find out how much the job (and you) are worth. You will need to take the time to research salaries, so, you are prepared to get what you're worth and a job offer that's realistic and reasonable.
- Once you know what you *should* be earning, start by being very patient. When interviewing for a new position, do your best not to bring up compensation until the employer makes you an offer. If you're asked what your salary requirements are, say that

they are open based upon the position and the overall compensation package. Or tell the employer you'd like to know more about the responsibilities and the challenges of the job prior to discussing salary. Another option is to give the employer a salary range based upon the salary research you've done up front. Once you've received the offer you don't need to accept (or reject) it right away. A simple "I need to think it over" can get you an increase in the original offer.

11. Why should we hire you?

- The best way to respond is to give concrete examples of why your skills and accomplishments make you the best candidate for the job. Take a few moments to compare the job description with your abilities, as well as mentioning what you have accomplished in your other positions. Be positive and reiterate your interest in the company and the position.