

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

There are many articles written about Job Interviews. Most of them are questions likely to be asked by employers, From a Human Resource point of view, there are numerous ways and techniques on how an interview is conducted. Unsuspecting candidates may not immediately notice that their responses may have an impact (or none at all) on their Behaviors, Problem Solving, Goals, or over-all Soft and *Hard* skills.



It is, therefore, recommended that new graduates (or those seeking for a new job) do a research on Job Interviews to prep them for their answers.

The danger, however, is applicants' responses may appear rehearsed rather than extemporaneous.

To assist applicants in preparation for job interview, we have listed some interview questions likely to be asked and suggested way of answering these questions:

1. **Why are you leaving your job / Why did you leave for job?**

Family: "I left my last position in order to spend more time with my family. Circumstances have changed and I'm more than ready for full-time employment again. "

Proximity: (a) "I live in _____ and my workplace is in _____. I was spending a considerable amount of time commuting. This is closer to home."

(b) "I have recently relocated / My family and I purchased a house near this area."

Matching Skills: "This position seemed like an excellent match for my skills and experience and I am not able to fully utilize them in my present job."

Stability: "I am seeking a position with a stable company with room for growth and opportunity for advancement."

2. **Describe your responsibilities. (previous job or school organization)**

The best way to respond is to describe your responsibilities in detail and to connect them to the job you are interviewing for. Try to tie your responsibilities in with those listed in the job description for the new position. That way, the employer will see that you have the qualifications necessary to do the job. Focus most on your responsibilities that are directly related to the new job's requirements.

Be honest. Don't over-sell your job, because you don't know who the hiring manager will be checking with when they check your references.

3. **What are your goals for the future?**

- “My long-term goals involve growing with a company where I can continue to learn, take on additional responsibilities, and contribute as much of value as I can. “
- “I see myself as a top performing employee in a well-established organization, like this one. I plan on enhancing my skills and continuing my involvement in (related) professional associations.”

4. What was it like working for your Supervisor (or Org. head – if you are now previously employed)

Focus on the positive traits of your previous supervisor and minimize any difficult situations. Discuss their strengths and how they helped you succeed in your positions.

NEVER ever “badmouth” a former boss when being interviewed.

Another technique is mentioning a trait that is *perceived* as negative and turn it around.

Ex. “My former boss is always expecting too much from us. This helped me be critical of my work and I make sure that my current output is better than the last.”

5. Are you willing to travel?

Just to get the job, most applicants will immediately say “yes”. Don’t be afraid to ask how much travel is involved. That way, you can weigh how much you would need to be on the road and make an educated decision as to whether the amount of travel required fits in with your lifestyle.

6. How will you achieve your goals?

- “I plan on gaining additional skills by taking related classes and continuing my involvement with a variety of professional associations.”
- “I noticed that XYZ company (the company you are interviewing with) provides in-house training for employees and I would certainly be interested in taking classes that would be relevant.”
- “I will continue my professional development by participating in conferences, attending seminars, and continuing my education.”

7. Give me an instance where you had to make a difficult decision.

Give concrete examples of difficult situations that actually happened at work (or in school). Then discuss what you did to solve the problem. Keep your answers positive (“Even though it was difficult when a colleague quit without notice, we were able to rearrange the department workload to cover the position until a replacement was hired.”) and be specific. Itemize what you did and how you did it.

8. What was your biggest accomplishment?

The best way to respond is to give an example of something you accomplished that is directly related to the job you are interviewing for. Review your resume and review the job posting. Find the best match and use that to show how what you accomplished will be beneficial to the company you are interviewing with.

9. What do you know about our company?

Start by researching the company online. Review the "About Us" section of the company web site. Google the company, read blogs that mention it, and check Discussion Boards and social networking sites.

If you're a college graduate check with the Career Office at your school to see if you can get a list of alumni who work for the company. That's an ideal way to get an insider's view of the employer, and to get information that might not be available elsewhere.

Use the information you have gathered to create a bulleted list of relevant information that you can easily remember during the interview. Taking the time to research will help you make a good impression with how much you know about the company.

10. What motivates you?

- "I was responsible for several projects where I directed development teams and implemented repeatable processes. The teams achieved 100% on-time delivery of software products. I was motivated both by the challenge of finishing the projects ahead of schedule and by managing the teams that achieved our goals."
- "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."
- "I have spent my career in sales, typically in commission-based positions, and compensation has always been a strong factor in motivating me to be the top salesperson at my prior employers."

11. How do you balance life and work?

"Being organized helps me balance my professional life and personal life. Consequently, I can be fully engaged while I'm at work."

12. What is your favorite book / movie?

The interviewer wants to know whether you read to stay current and if you will you fit into the company culture.

Best answer is, "I read different kinds of books. Among my favorites are _____. My favorite movie is _____"

HOW TO BE NOTICED *...by your Boss / Superior*

Have you ever wondered why there are a lot of fresh graduates who are quickly rising to the top while professionals who have had a few years experience fall behind?

Experts will say that it is not how many years you have been around that matters, it is **what you have accomplished** during those years.

So .. what do these new comers have, that experienced older workers don't have? Answer: BE NOTICED for the work that you do.

Easy enough? NOPE, it doesn't happen overnight – BUT, if you know how to go about it, you will definitely be appreciated, hence, NOTICED.

Here are some tips to help you prepare:

1. Be Eager (to learn)
When you come into the industry, LEARN. Once you learn your part of the job, work becomes monotonous. However, if you keep feeding yourselves with knowledge, it would be a lot easier for you to “learn the ropes” and more. Newcomers who rise up the ladder don't stop learning.
2. Be Flexible (to change)
Older workers are used to things the way there are, newcomers adapt to change well. Being flexible makes it easy for superiors to involve the newcomers.
3. Take Initiative
Don't wait until you are told. If there is something you can fix, make yourselves resourceful.
4. Be Vocal
Do not be afraid to speak to your superiors. If you do not agree with them, say so with reason. Don't feel shy to input your ideas
5. Be Open (to criticism)
Take “criticism” as your tool for success. Think about the feedback and use this to improve yourself and your future in the company.
6. Go the extra mile.
Do more than what is required ...within the given time.

and finally...

7. Maintain a pleasant **Attitude**
One of the doctrines of Human Resource is to “Hire for ATTITUDE, Train for success”. Attitude is everything. If you have the right attitude, you can be trained well. If your mind is “blocked”, no amount of training will help you succeed.