



## Interview Questions

### ***More suggestions for questions that may come up at interview and how to prepare for them***

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## **Interview Questions**

Anticipating difficult questions at interview and having pre-prepared answers can significantly improve your performance and help you to stand out as a star candidate. Understanding the rationale of how to approach them will help you become more confident at dealing with any difficult questions. There is an almost infinite range of possible questions you might get asked. For our discussion we will divide them into three main categories:

- Role Related Questions
- Personal Questions
- Dangerous Questions

### **1. Role Related Questions**

Those which are role related give you the opportunity to answer in a way that enables you to sell your major strengths. Here are some examples of this category of question:

#### **What kind of experience do you have to benefit this particular job?**

This represents a golden opportunity to sell yourself but the interviewer will be looking for an individual who is a problem solver and can 'hit the ground running'. The answer to this lies in understanding the role when it is first described to you and taking the trouble to ask lots of questions about tasks involved. This opens the door for you to respond with suitable skills and experience showing you could accept the role with confidence. In effect they are really asking 'how much training and instruction are we going to have to give you before you are up to speed in this role?'

#### **What interests you most about this job?**

Answering this properly requires that you fully understand the job description, and by asking plenty of questions you should then be able to respond with some specific explanations that show your enthusiasm. Some good responses include: challenging, exciting, scope for learning and developing, departmental growth, teamwork etc.

#### **What are you looking for in your next job?**

You want a role where your skills and experience can be put to best use in contributing to the company. Answering this is all about understanding yourself and how this relates to the job description. Avoid an over emphasis on what you hope the organization can do for you.

#### **Why should we hire you?**

Be careful not to answer with a broad description. Keep it brief and to the point. Each point should be a direct link between your skills and experience and the demands of the role. A precise answer shows that you accurately understand the role and what you can bring to it.

## **2. Personal Questions**

Those which are personal give you the opportunity to answer in a way that enables you to provide focussed information about your skills and abilities. Here are some examples of this category of question:

### **Do you consider yourself a natural leader?**

This is not a great question as the natural answer to this is 'yes'. If an interview asks a closed question they should ask you to elaborate, be careful here as not all of us possess the confidence required to lead. You can substitute 'natural' with either 'competent' or 'conscientious', focusing more on leading by example with good organizational and interpersonal skills. Most professional jobs require an element of leadership that you should be taking the trouble to cultivate, whether it comes naturally or not.

### **Tell me about yourself**

This can be a frustratingly open question but it does give you an excellent opportunity to communicate your skills and experience. Aim to keep your answer professionally-orientated, specific to the characteristics that the interviewer may want to hear. Although your objective is to show you've got the perfect profile to fulfill the role, try to do so in a friendly manner so that you can show the interviewer that you have an agreeable personality.

### **What are your biggest accomplishments?**

Answers to this should always be job-related, impressive but also hinting that your best work is yet to come. Don't be hesitant or vague when answering this question. Show that you have a clear idea of your achievements to date.

### **3. Dangerous Questions**

These give you the opportunity to overcome direct objections that the interviewer may have with your application. If these are not addressed, you will effectively rule yourself out as a serious candidate. Here are some examples of this category of question:

#### **What did you dislike about your last job?**

Ideally you would answer 'there was nothing I disliked', although this may not be realistic. Hiring someone who fits easily into the existing complement of staff is very important; therefore steer clear of criticizing former colleagues or managers. Once again, if you pay attention to the company culture when they described the role to you, you can mention factors that would be likely to impress them.

#### **How long have you been looking for another position?**

If you are currently unemployed and have been looking for some time, try to minimize the 'time gap' by mentioning any other activities in which you have been involved, such as study or charity work. If your work is of a specialist nature and you've been determined to continue in that field, point this out provided that it isn't at odds with the demands of the new role. A resourceful answer here can certainly score you points, instead of putting you at a disadvantage.

#### **Why aren't you earning more at your this stage of your career?**

This is another implied negative, which can be turned into a positive by emphasizing your desire to gain solid experience instead of continually changing jobs for the sake of money. This question gives you scope to ask; "How much do you think I should be earning?" This could possibly lead to an offer.

#### **Why have you changed jobs so frequently?**

This is another question that can prove difficult. The best response can be to blame it on your need to gain experience and grow. Emphasize that the variety of jobs has been good experience and that you're now more mature and settled. Questions like this can be turned around, but be careful not to dwell too much on the subject, or over-justify yourself.

#### **Why were you made redundant?**

If you were made redundant as a result of a re-organization; then this is a legitimate excuse that most recruiters will understand - they have probably been involved with laying off people themselves at some time. Try to give acceptable reasons, such as downsizing or restructuring. Try to be brief and matter-of-fact, encouraging the interviewer to move on.

#### **Why were you fired?**

If, however, you were fired and cannot realistically pass it off as a redundancy, then it's advisable to be open and honest whilst minimizing the reason for your dismissal. Try to portray the incident as 'one of those unlucky things that happens to the best of us' and modestly explain how you've learnt from the experience and the steps you've taken since. The objective is to put the interviewer at ease in the hope that they won't place too much importance on a reference check. It is, however, a good idea to reconcile with your former employers and ask them to at least give you a fair reference.



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