

Successful Interviewing Part Two

“Being prepared for the “killer” questions will boost your confidence and your success rate”



The Tough Interview Questions - the most commonly asked interview questions - and your responses to them can make or break your chances for landing the job offer.

The “Tell me about yourself”
Icebreaker. Most interviewers still ask a form of this question - be ready!!
You must compose a well thought-out marketing statement about yourself and your skills, that is appropriate for the position you are interviewing for.

Here’s how:
Compose a concise, accurate description in a 3-part format.

Part 1
This is a one-sentence summary of your career history. For example: I am a five-year veteran of ladies apparel store management, with substantial experience in staff hiring, training and development”.

You get the picture - your whole career needs to be encapsulated into one dynamic sentence that outlines the most important aspects of your career.

Part Two

This is one to two sentence summary of a single accomplishment that you are most proud of, that will also capture the interviewer’s attention. It should be of interest to the interviewer and be easily explained or illustrated, AND clearly highlights your bottom line impact to a company.

When done correctly, this builds intrigue about the accomplishment, so that the interviewer will inquire further, giving you the opportunity to discuss your successes further.
For example: “Recently, I was responsible for recruiting and preparing 10 new part-time sales associates for a new store opening. I set up a career fair in the local high school, and interviewed 30 applicants and hired the team within 4 days”.

If you are well prepared, you will be more confident, and will make a significantly

Part Three

This needs to be a one-sentence summary of what you hope to do next in your career. It is difficult to do because it needs to specifically address what you want to do AND it needs to match the position that the interviewer is interviewing you for. For example: “For the next step in my career, I would like to expand my human resource abilities in a more senior capacity”.

You'll need to develop a new part three for each interview that you attend. Sometimes it is wise to be more specific than at other times... your recruiter can counsel you on that aspect.

If you take the time to prepare this statement, you will impress the interviewer right from the start, and immeasurably improve your chances of serious consideration. Worth a little bit of thought - right????

Be prepared to answer these questions as well.

Make sure that your answers contain specific personal examples, try to rehearse both long and short answers to these questions:

- 1 What are your short and long term goals; how are you preparing to achieve them?** *This question is aimed at finding out what kind of person you are. Keep in mind that your goals must be achievable, and you should be prepared to explain how you plan to achieve those goals. Have several short-term (within next 2 years) and several long-term (2-5 years) goals to present.*
- 2 What do you see yourself doing five years from now?** *This question is to see if you can set achievable goals for yourself, and whether the position and organization fit with your long-term plans.*
- 3 Why are you considering making a job change?** *Are you just "fishing" to see what's out there, are you trying to get away from a bad boss, or do you need some fresh challenges?*
- 4 Describe your greatest strengths and weaknesses.** *Try to highlight you most positive attributes (I.E. skill, reliability, enthusiasm). Make sure that the examples illustrate your positive qualities and how they apply to work. Do not describe any weaknesses that may be essential to performing effectively on the job, and avoid making negative comments. Talk about things that you have improved and the steps you took to do so.*
- 5 How would you describe yourself?** *The interviewer is asking you to profile yourself to see if you fit with the company, and also to get a sense of your self-image and how it compares to his/her perception of you. Be factual and use the opportunity to sell yourself without being arrogant.*
- 6 What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in this position?** *The interviewer is asking you to help them make their decision for them. If you hesitate or think of only one or two reasons, then they will think that your qualifications are not sufficient or obvious enough.*
- 7 What two or three professional accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction, and why?** *This question is to find out what kind of professional accomplishments give you a sense of pride. Pick several accomplishments, and explain why they satisfied you and how they related to your job performance.*
- 8 How well do you work under pressure? Give me an example.** *This question indicates that you job will involve some stress and deadlines, so reassure the interviewer by giving examples of paid or unpaid activities that involved pressures/deadlines. Stress how capable you are in rising to the occasion.*
- 9 What have you learned from your mistakes?** *This question is designed to see if you recognize that you have made mistakes and then how you resolved the problem. Be honest - this is a test of your credibility and integrity. Use examples of real mistakes that you have made - stress how what you learned led to better job performance.*
- 10 What kind of company are you looking to work for?** *The interviewer wants to know that you are being targeted in your job search, and have set some criteria to examine a potential employer against (I.E. good reputation, advancement potential, excellent products, friendly work environment, etc.)*
- 11 What is the most significant contribution that you made at your most recent place of employment?** *Tell a story about an accomplishment that added value to the company, demonstrating skills that show initiative or resilience. Relate the outcome of your work.*
- 12 If I were to talk to your former employers an co-workers, what would they say about you?** *Have an open letter of recommendation from your last employer which you can summarize and show to the interviewer. Alternatively, list the positive things that they would say about you.*
- 13 Describe your ideal job.** *The interviewer wants to see how close a fit their is between your ideal job and the job you are applying for, to determine if you will be happy. In general terms describe a job quite similar to the one you are applying for. Also describe the ideal company you would like to work for.*

14 What did you enjoy most/least about your last position? *This is to determine what gives you the most/least job satisfaction and whether the current position will offer the same elements. Try to pick something that you know will be present in the position for which you are applying. Give examples of how your job performance improved because of the presence of these elements.*

15 Have you ever quit a job? Why? *Be honest - people quit jobs everyday for legitimate reasons. Regardless of the reason, present it in a professional manner. Do not badmouth your past employer or the situation. Simply explain why you left that position. This will show your maturity and integrity.*

16 Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own? *This question is to find out if you can work independently if the position so requires. Use examples of how you have worked independently in the past, but also worked under supervision. Show your flexibility.*

17 Which do you prefer, large or small companies? Why? *The interviewer wants to know if you will fit in with the company. Answer accordingly but be sure to give concrete reasons why you prefer a large or small firm.*

18 How do you feel about working overtime? Travel? Possibility of relocation? *Be honest. If these questions are asked, chances are the position will involve them. Ask the interviewer for more details and be honest in your response.*

19 Do you have any hobbies? Tell me about them. *The interviewer is trying to determine what kind of person you are outside of work. This is the time to talk about any volunteer work you do, any teams you may participate on, etc.*

20 Define success. Define failure. *This is a very personal question. The interviewer wants to know how you personally judge success and failure. You may want to address this as an individual success/failure versus corporate success/failure.*

Interview review questions

Ask yourself these questions after every interview you attend. By analyzing your perceptions of what happened, in addition to the feedback that you'll receive from your recruiter, you will be better equipped to improve your skills for the next meeting.

- 1 *How adequate was my preparation for the interview: company background study, resume, answers, questions?*
- 2 *How effective was I at the beginning of the interview?*
- 3 *How comfortable did I feel during the interview?*
- 4 *How appropriate was my attire?*
- 5 *Which questions did I handle well? Poorly?*
- 6 *Which opportunities to sell myself did I miss?*
- 7 *How thorough were my answers?*
- 8 *How well did I adapt my questions to the position and the organization?*
- 9 *How effective was I in showing interest in the position and the organization?*
- 10 *Did I obtain enough information on the position and the company to determine if I want to remain interested?*

Be sure to *call your recruiter as soon as possible after the interview* for a de-briefing and counseling. Also send a brief note to the interviewer thanking them for their time, and stress your interest in the position. Your recruiter will keep you abreast of the process and ensure that your candidacy is kept top of mind with the interviewer.



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