

# BUILDING YOUR CAREER — INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVELY ANSWERING 8 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**As with anything, preparation is the key to interview success. Before your job interview, spend time reviewing possible interview questions and rehearsing your answers. As you practice, think about the purpose behind each question. What kind of information is the interviewer trying to obtain? How might the question allow you to show your qualifications and interest in the position? Practice over and over until you believe your answers are good and you feel comfortable in your delivery.**

## COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND TIPS

Below are some commonly asked interview questions as well as tips for effective answers.

### TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.

This is the number one statement by interviewers, and while it may seem simple, its broadness may make it difficult to answer. With this query, keep in mind that the interviewer is interested in learning about you professionally, not personally. Pick a few key points about yourself to emphasize such as your work experience, job skills and career goals. Conclude by expressing your interest in the position and the company. A thoughtful and well-delivered answer will help direct the conversation and allow you to elaborate on your skills and qualifications.

### WHY SHOULD WE HIRE YOU?

This question offers a great chance to really sell yourself. Briefly and succinctly outline your strengths and qualifications, describing how each relates to the job position. Be careful not to answer this question too generically. Nearly everyone says they are hardworking and motivated. Discuss what distinguishes you from your peers. Set yourself apart with qualities that are unique to you.

### WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK HERE?

This question is the interviewer's way of seeing if you've done your homework. Before a job interview, you should always make sure you know about the company, its direction and industry. If you've done your research, this question gives you the opportunity to show initiative and demonstrate how your experience and qualifications match the company's needs.

### WHAT ARE YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESSES?

The key to answering this question is being honest about a weakness but demonstrating how you have turned it into a strength. For example, if you had a problem with organization in the past, demonstrate the steps you took to more effectively keep yourself on track. This will show that you

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have the ability to recognize aspects of yourself    yourself better.  
that need improvement and the initiative to make

## **WHY DID YOU LEAVE YOUR LAST JOB?**

Even if your last job ended badly, be careful about being negative in answering this question. Be diplomatic and professional. If you do point out negative aspects of your last job, find some positives to mention as well. Complaining endlessly will not say much for your attitude.

## **DESCRIBE A PROBLEM SITUATION AND HOW YOU RESOLVED IT?**

As a recent high school or college graduate with little job experience, it may be difficult to think of an appropriate response to this question. The interviewer wants to know if you can think critically and develop solutions, regardless of what kind of issues you faced. Even if your problem was not having enough time to study, describe steps you took to prioritize your schedule. This will demonstrate that you are responsible and can think through situations on your own.

## **WHAT IS AN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF WHICH YOU ARE MOST PROUD?**

The key to answering this question successfully is to be specific and select an accomplishment that relates to the position. Even if your greatest accomplishment is being on a championship high school basketball team, opt for a more professionally relevant accomplishment. Think of the qualities the company is looking for and develop an example that demonstrates how you can meet the company's needs.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR SALARY EXPECTATIONS?**

This is one of the hardest questions to answer, particularly if you are a recent graduate with little work experience. Before going to your interview, research the salary range in your field to get an idea of what you should be making. Note that ranges may differ according to geographic location. Steer clear of discussing salary specifics before receiving a job offer. Let the interviewer know you will be open to discussing fair compensation when the time comes. If pressed for a more specific answer, always give a range, rather than a specific number.

## **ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OF SOME OF THE MOST COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ARE:**

- Why are you interested in this position?
- Are you willing to travel if needed?
- What kind of people do you find difficult to work with?
- Are you willing to work overtime if needed?
- Why did you choose this area of work?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What did you like most or least in your recent job?
- How do you work under pressure?  
Give an example.
- When are you available to start?
- What are your short and long-range goals?
- Assuming you could do anything you wanted, what would it be?
- Do you have plans for college or continued study?
- What failures have you experienced?  
What have you learned from your mistakes?

