



## Candidates - Sample Interview Questions

Before attending an interview you should think of the questions you might be asked. By using some of the suggested answers below, we aim to show you how to confidently deal with any negative objections from the interviewer and use the situation to emphasize your strengths. Pre-preparing answers will significantly help to reduce the stress during the interview and help you do well.

### Typical Questions

#### **Why are you looking for a new job?**

If you want to leave your present job for negative reasons, be very careful in how you express this to an interviewer. Make it sound positive. Being negative or even rude about your current/previous employer or company will not work in your favour. Mention that you are looking for a new challenge, with more responsibility or a change of environment. It is advisable not to speak of remuneration in connection with your desire for a new job.

#### **What are your strengths and weaknesses?**

Here it is important to show that you have clearly identified your strengths and weaknesses. Your strengths should always be backed up with examples. Weaknesses should be turned into strengths. A weakness may be the lack of a certain skill in a particular field and you should express your desire to fill the gap. If you are impatient or lack analytical ability this can be turned around by mentioning the progress you've made in dealing with this and briefly giving an example that shows how much you have improved.

#### **Do you work well under pressure?**

Use the opportunity to give a comprehensive but brief answer focusing on several examples showing your ability to cope well under pressure.

#### **Why do you want to work for this company?**

Emphasise the positive reasons why you want to join the company, and avoid mentioning aspects such as more money or shorter hours.

#### **What kind of experience/skills can you bring to this job?**

This is a great chance for you 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 lies in understanding the role described to you and taking the trouble to ask lots of questions about tasks involved. Try to respond with examples of the suitable skills and experience you have, showing that you could accept the role with confidence.

#### **What is your greatest achievement in work to date?**

Identify the skills you used and the benefit it gave the company.

#### **What do you dislike about your present job?**

The interviewer is trying to find out whether the job in question involves tasks you dislike. Do not be too specific. Talk about the characteristic of your present company that are different from the company you're interviewed by. For example, if your company is large, you might say you are frustrated with slow decision-making. Or if it's small, you could say that there is a lack of

opportunities to progress in your career.

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

To answer this question properly you need to fully understand the job description. Make sure you ask plenty of questions, then you should be able to respond with some specific explanations that show your enthusiasm. Some good responses include: challenging, exciting, scope for learning and developing, teamwork etc. This question can also be used so that you can gather more information from the interviewer regarding the role and the company's expectations.

### **Why should I hire you?**

Keep it brief and to the point. Each point should demonstrate your relevant skills and experience which would make you an ideal candidate for the role. A precise answer shows that you understand the role and what you can bring to it.

## **Challenging Questions**

These questions are designed to test qualities, such as leadership, teamwork, ambition, resilience, flexibility, integrity. The interviewer also uses them to get to know you. If you don't have an opinion or answer, then don't give one and always answer honestly.

- How would your colleagues describe you?
- What are you looking for in a company?
- How do you feel about working long hours/weekends?
- Which part of this role is least attractive to you?
- Do you prefer to work alone or in a group? Why?
- Why should I give this job to you?
- Can you give an example of when you had to delegate authority and/or responsibility?
- What systems do you use to keep track of things that require your attention?

Have you ever had to discipline or correct a friend on the job? How did you handle it? [1](#)

## **Some Informative Answers**

### **Why do you want to leave your current job?**

Avoid stating any personal reasons, such as 'I didn't fit in with the company environment'. Instead consider using one or more of the following reasons such as looking for a more challenging role, location, career advancement and job security.

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

Emphasise that the variety of jobs has been good experience and that you are now more mature and settled. Questions like this can be turned around to portray a positive image, but be careful not to dwell too much on the subject or over justify yourself.

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

Hiring someone who easily fits into the existing team is very important to the interviewer so avoid criticising former colleagues. Mention things that would impress them, such as 'My former boss underestimated the importance of attention to detail'.

**How long would you stay at this company?**

If your CV reveals a tendency for you to move around, you could emphasise your desire to settle down with the right company, and that you feel this is it. Alternatively why not turn the question back them and ask "Will this company be able to offer me a long term future?"

**How long have you been looking for another job?**

If you are currently unemployed and have been looking for some time, try to minimise your gap in employment by mentioning other activities in which you may have been involved, such as studying or charity work. If you work in a specialist area and want to continue in this field, point this out.

**Where do you see yourself in five years time?**

Your answer will depend on the nature of the role and your career ambitions. Be careful not to sound too ambitious, the interviewer may be your future boss. The safest option is to express your desire to grow with the company.

**How do you handle criticism of your work?**

Try to portray an attitude that all criticism has a benefit, and provides a chance for improvement. Give an example of a poor idea that was criticised, rather than sub-standard work, which you had produced.

**Do you prefer to work alone or as part of a team?**

Team players are usually favoured, but it is best to show that you function well in both situations depending on the nature of the task.