

Top Ten Interviewing Questions

Q: So tell me about yourself?

Remember, **the interview is about you and you are the expert**. Set the stage for success by focusing on your most marketable skills and strengths. Deliver your commercial with natural sincerity and enthusiasm. **Keep responses relatively brief** (about two minutes or less) and **job-related**.

Q: What are your strengths?

Support your strengths with **specific examples**, and focus on how you saved time and money or improved sales and service, i.e., *Last November I was voted Employee of the Month for outstanding customer service at XYZ Company.*

Q: What are your weaknesses?

Avoid appearing defensive. **Identify a common weakness and turn it into a strength**, i.e., *Sometimes I become impatient when there are delays out of my control...but I think wanting to complete the job on time is also a strength.*

Q: What has prepared you for this job?

Focus on your education, training and work experience. Provide examples of how you have successfully managed similar tasks in the past. *Note: Research the company in advance to find out as much as you can about the position. Request a job description and if possible, visit the company before interviewing.*

Q: How well do you work under pressure?

Assure the interviewer you can handle multiple assignments, and keep your cool. Share an example of how you have managed a stressful situation in the past by being well-organized and having a positive attitude.

Q: Do you like being a team player?

Absolutely, teamwork is essential for success. Market your people-skills in term of how you communicate effectively with an increasingly diverse population. Give a specific example of how your writing, speaking or listening skills contributed to the success of a program or project in the last year.

Q: How would others describe you?

This question can be tricky, so prepare by focusing on your key employment traits. Honesty, dependability, and positive attitude are highly valued today. Remember to put your best foot forward and project a credible image.

Q: What do you want to do in five years?

Respond with a **plan that outlines steady progress and increasing responsibility**, i.e. Everything is changing so rapidly in this field...but my plan is to continue learning and gaining experience so that one day I can move on to the next level.

Q: Why do you want this job?

Position yourself as a team-player who can be counted on to do a professional job. **Match your education, training and experience to the position.** Offer compelling reasons as to why *they can't afford not to hire you!*

Q: Do you have any questions?

YES! Show your interest, **enthusiasm** and confidence by asking- among other things- about a typical workday, priority projects and on-the-job training. *And always let the interviewer raise the issue of salary and benefits first.*

ANSWERS TO TOUGH INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS- “THE NEXT STEP”

The following is a list of possible interview questions with a brief discussion of the philosophy of how you should answer them. You must study ALL of them and determine how you will answer them. Then, write your responses and practice them.

*Rule of thumb: Employers **need proof that what the applicant is telling them is the truth, therefore, avoid answering with an “I can statement” such as I am reliable. Instead use an “I can prove statement” like: “I’m reliable. I’ve only missed one day of work in the past year.”** This statement backs up your claim.

Q: Tell me about yourself?

- Write out at least four responses about yourself. Remember: don’t mention any family or personal information.

Sample Responses:

- I am an experienced bookkeeper, but I would also consider other types of related work.
- I am knowledgeable in account payables, receivables, tax preparation and inventory.
- Finally, I am proficient in Lotus, Excel and Access.

Q: Why do you want to leave your current company? (Choose 1 response)

- **Security-** I know my company’s stability was in question and I am looking for....
 - a guaranteed wage scale

or

 - a company that will stay in business
- **Challenge-** I needed to grow professionally. (state what you want from your next job)
- **Location-** I wanted to work in (name of city). (be ready to explain how the change in location will help you be more productive)
- **Advancement-** I have the talent, but the company did not have the opportunity (discuss the talents you have and how you think you can use them in their company)
- **Lay-off/Reduction in force-** A lay-off was required to keep the company alive.

Q: Why did you choose this field? (Choose 1 response)

- **Family and friends-** *you know people who do this type of work and like it. Their information enticed you into it.*
- **Education-** *My education prepared me for this type of work.*
- **Self-Assessment-** *I've taken the time to evaluate myself and I truly enjoy this type of work.*
- **Research-** *I researched the field to find out more about it and liked what I found!*
- **Aptitude Testing-** *I undertook vocational testing and scored very high in this area.*
- **Counseling-** *I had the good fortune to discuss my career with a counselor.*
- **Emotional-** *I am motivated to do this type of work*

Q. Why should I hire you? (Choose 1 or 2)

- I am interested in helping the company make more profit.
- I am willing to work harder so I can be more productive
- I am quality oriented and I know your company is too.
- I work how to increase the company's visibility.
- I have solid history of being reliable.
- My attendance record is excellent.
- I am willing to work overtime.
- I have proven successes from my prior work experience
- My transferable skills match the demands of this position.
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- My transferable skills match the demands of this position.
- My personality fits this position.
- I have a long term interest in this field.
- I can bring a history of success from life, work, and education.
- My education has prepared me for this type of work.
- I am motivated to work in this field.
- I can bring strong leadership skills to this position.
- My energy level is much higher than most people.
- I have a lot of determination to succeed and work hard.
- I pride myself in doing good work.
- I am willing to take on added responsibility.
- I can work with minimal supervision.
- I am loyal to companies willing to invest in me.
- I am willing to accept instruction from others.

- I am willing to give people help when they need it.
- I am reliable. You can count on me when you can't count on anyone else!

Q: Why do you have so many jobs? (Why do you job hop?) (Choose 1)

- I wanted my job satisfaction factors met (be ready to discuss what they are to the employer)
- My immaturity and youth overrode my common sense.
- I needed survival jobs during times in my life. I am truly committed to work for one company now.
- I had to take care of family needs instead of focusing on my career goals.
- I had to fulfill personal commitments that limited my career options at the time in my life.
- I wanted to experiment in different fields/jobs before settling on a career.
- I had the opportunity to travel.
- My former occupations were not conducive to employment.

Q: What are your future plans? (Choose at least one) My future plans are ...

- To stay with the company as long as you want me and be productive.
- To learn new skills to make me more valuable as an employee.
- To use my current skills to perform quality work.
- Learn how to do the job well, before I try for other positions.
- Help the company to make more money so I can guarantee myself steady work.
- To enroll in vocational classes so that I can do my job better.
- Plan to read up on the field so that I can work smarter.
- I want to learn so much about the job that I will be able to teach others how to do it!

Q: Why did you not work during a part of your life? (Job Gap question)

- I waited too long to be called back form a lay-off.
- I was unable to find work in a field that I liked.
- The economy took a downturn in my line of work.
- I had to stay in a certain location (mention for whatever reason)
- I made a personal commitment, which took priority over work.
- I decided to finish or continue part of my education.
- I took time to research the type of work I wanted.
- I felt staying home to raise a family was more important, but I am excited to re-enter the workforce!
- I stayed home to take of a sick/older family member.
- I wanted to do volunteer work before hitting the labor market.
- I was self-employed and did not work for anyone but myself.
- I wanted to find a career that really challenged me and know this is it!!

Q: What are your strengths? (Choose 3 and memorize them)

- I am timely. I'll be on time for the job and complete my work on time too!
- I have a near perfect attendance record.
- I have strong communications skills.
- I am bilingual; I am fluent in English and Spanish.
- I have strong interpersonal skills. I like working with others.
- I am motivated to perform good work and ask questions.
- I have a solid knowledge of the job's demands.
- I have confidence in my ability to do this type of work.
- I have a high energy level and am willing to use it.
- I am patient. I can give instructions to people needing help.
- I am willing to accept instructions from others.
- I am reliable. You can count on me to get things done.
- I follow rules and company procedures.
- I am budget conscious; I am always looking for ways to save money.
- I have good listening skills.
- I take pride in doing quality work.
- I am loyal and dedicated to my employer.
- I have history of achievements.
- I try to think things through and solve problems.
- I can learn things quickly.
- I can work with minimal supervision.
- I am an efficient worker and I don't waste time.

Q: Why do you want to work for us?

- After researching the company, you realized they employ people with your skills, abilities, and educational background.
- The company (say the name of the company) has an excellent community reputation.
- They're seen as leaders in the field.
- The company provides a valuable service or product.
- The company has a good reputation for advancement.
- The personality of the company matches your own.