

HINTS & TIPS SHEET VOL:4

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

AND HOW TO ANSWER THEM



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Interviews are exciting because you are on the first step to your new career! On the other hand, they can be daunting because of the series of unknown questions you will be asked. We have put together the most commonly asked interview questions, and how best to answer them!

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

This is a deliberately broad and open question to see your response. However, the interviewer is not asking you for your life story. Pick two – three relevant professional attributes to describe in detail, and keep it concise and relevant. Think of it as a pitch, talk a bit about your current role, some background as to how you got there and then why you want and would be a good fit for the role you are interviewing for.

WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB?

The temptation to have a rant about your current employer / role will be high here, but don't be negative. You may want to explore new challenges / locations, or promotion opportunities. Focus on the positive reasons for getting a new job, mentioning the opportunities your potential new employer can offer you can show your research and encompass why you want to work there.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WORKING FOR US?

Align your interests with the company and their goals. Make your answer company specific, review the company's values, and think about how these intersect with your personal ones.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS? TEN YEARS?

Ambition and practicality is needed in this answer. Interviewers are asking if you see a future with the company, and if your goals are something that they can facilitate. In an entry level interview, you may see yourself leading a small team in five years time; for management roles you might aim to be department head in ten.

WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS / WEAKNESSES?

This is a common question, and tailoring your answer to the job description is a good idea. Give several clear personal and professional strengths, and talk about both hard and soft skills. Be specific and avoid cliches. When discussing your weaknesses, focus on how you think working for the new company can help you improve.

Interviewers are looking for employees who are self aware and willing to progress, so think of a weakness that is not insurmountable, and explain the actions you are taking to overcome it. Obviously avoid choosing a weakness that would be disadvantageous for the job you are interviewing for.

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WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

Don't just say "money". Try and think of an attribute relevant to the role, for example that you are motivated by the people around you if you will be working in a team, or that you enjoy being targeted so you can see your achievements clearly.

TELL ME ABOUT AN ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF

This is an opportunity to be positive about what you have achieved – choose something that is relevant to the role you are applying for. Interviewers like quantifiable answers "I improved productivity by x amount" or "I increased website traffic by x much".



TELL ME ABOUT A TIME YOU MADE A MISTAKE

This is a chance to show what you have learned, and how you dealt with a difficult situation. Mistakes are an opportunity to turn a negative into a positive, so concentrate on how you reacted to the error and made an effort to put things right.

WHY WAS THERE A GAP IN YOUR EMPLOYMENT?

If this applies to you, make sure you have an answer prepared. You may feel uncomfortable, but in most cases employers will be more understanding than you expect. Read our How to Explain a Gap in your CV guide for more details on how to field this question.

WHAT ARE YOUR SALARY REQUIREMENTS?

Most job descriptions will have given you an idea of the salary range, and our recruiters will have discussed salary with you before any interviews take place. It can be tempting to undersell yourself here, but instead suggest a fair salary and benefits package. You can research salaries on Glassdoor beforehand to give you an idea of what the industry standard is.

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR ME?

This is pretty much a guaranteed interview question, so have some questions prepared. Asking well thought-out questions about the company and the role can help make a great impression. Prepare several questions to show you are interested in learning more about the company, and that you have a thorough understanding of the role.

What's a typical day like for the person in this role?

What's your favourite thing about working for the company?

What are the next steps in the hiring process?

If you have any questions about the research you did on the company, now is the time to ask them. Be interested and engaged, this will make a lasting, positive impression of how much you want the job.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Practise your answer beforehand, rehearse your response. It will help to say the words out loud. Even if the interviewer doesn't ask a specific question, parts of what you have prepared will be able to be used in other answers.

NOT SURE WHERE TO START?

If you are looking for a new role and are unsure where to start, give us a call. Our recruiters all look after different roles, so if you will be able to speak to a specialist in your industry. We can look over your CV and give you helpful tips and suggestions, and we may even have a role suitable for you. Sometimes we know about new vacancies that will be coming on in the future that are not advertised on our website yet, so it is always worth getting in touch.



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