

# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The idea of answering a multitude of interview questions can make even the strongest of us feel like we need to throw-up! But with a little thought and preparation, the interview doesn't have to be so intimidating.

There are many questions that are common for interviewers to use. Reviewing questions, planning how you will answer them, and practicing your answers will help you be prepared for anything that you may be asked. Here is a short list of some of the most common questions.

## **1. Tell me about yourself.**

*This is not an invitation to tell your life story! What the interviewer is looking for is how your education, experience, and skills match the needs of the company and position. Give a brief description of your education and experience. Highlight the things that make you a good fit. Use your 60 second commercial. (see Acing Your Interview page) Don't forget to research the company, review the job posting or ad, and if possible the job description before going to the interview, so that you know how you fit!*

## **2. What do you consider is your greatest weakness?**

*This question is often used to gauge a candidate's self-awareness and ability to overcome barriers and challenges. Keep your answer positive. Avoid negative language. For example:*

*Negative language: "I'm not very organized"*

*Positive language: "Organization does not come naturally to me"*

*You also have to tell what you do to overcome or compensate for this weakness. Example: "Organization does not come naturally to me, but I've developed systems and strategies to help me stay organized and on top of tasks and responsibilities." Then briefly describe what the systems and strategies are and how you use them.*

## **3. Tell about a time you had a conflict with your supervisor or a co-worker.**

*Again, it's important to remain positive. NEVER use this as an opportunity to bash your supervisor, co-workers, or company. Give a brief description of the situation and the outcome, without violating confidentiality. Even if the outcome was not favorable to you, or you didn't handle it the best way possible, admit it, and put a positive spin on it by sharing what you learned from the situation and how you would handle it differently in the future.*

## **4. What is your greatest accomplishment?**

*Avoid using personal achievements, such as "my children". Keep your answer to this question focused on professional accomplishments. Appropriate answers include things like: obtaining a degree and/or specific occupational license, graduating with honors, a project or accomplishment at work, for a specific class, or a committee/volunteer activity.*

## **5. What are your short and long term goals? What steps have you taken to achieve them?**

*Again, keep your answers to these questions focused on professional, not personal goals. The purpose of the question is to allow the employer to evaluate your motivation to succeed, how you plan, and how you prepare to get from point A to point B.*

## 6. Why should I hire you?

*If you've done your research on the company and the position you will be a rock star when it comes to answering this question. You should be able to highlight your skills and experience that are most relevant to the position. Be enthusiastic! If there is something that you want the interview team to know about you that they haven't asked, tell them now. If you haven't already used your 60 second commercial now's a good time! (see Acing Your Interview page)*

Be prepared for behavioral questions. These questions allow a potential employer to evaluate how you react in various situations or environments. Here are a few examples of behavioral type questions:

1. Do you prefer to work with a team or individually?
2. How do you minimize stress in your life?
3. Give an example of a time when you used good judgment and logic to solve a problem.
4. Tell me about a situation in which you have had to adjust to changes over which you had no control. How did you handle it?
5. Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
6. Describe a situation that required you to do a number of things at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?

Situational questions are also popular and are usually tailored to the position. They often begin with phrases such as

“How do you handle...”

“What would you do if...”

“Describe a situation where you had to...”

To prepare for these types of questions think about the work you will be doing, what kinds of situations or challenges may arise, and how you will handle them.

Some employers like to include brainteasers when interviewing candidates. These usually have no right or wrong answer, but allow the interviewer to judge a candidate's creativity, problem solving/analytical skills, or use of logic. Examples of brainteaser questions include:

“Why is there fuzz on a tennis ball?”

“If you could be a superhero, which one would you be? Why?”

“How many times do the hands on a clock overlap?”

The questions included on these two pages are only a small sample of what you may be asked. For more examples of possible interview questions visit these websites.

<http://recruitloop.com/blog/behavioural-interview-questions/>

<http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/interview-questions/100-potential-interview-questions/article.aspx>

[http://www.clark.edu/student\\_services/employment/documents/behavior\\_based\\_questions.pdf](http://www.clark.edu/student_services/employment/documents/behavior_based_questions.pdf)

<http://careercenter.depaul.edu/resumes/sampleinterview.aspx>

<http://www.glassdoor.com/blog/top-25-oddball-interview-questions-2010/>