

GREAT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Employee selection is serious business for employers. What can one learn in an interview, really?

Employers constantly seek effective ways to evaluate a job candidate's suitability. As a job candidate, how would you respond to the following interview questions?



- What do you expect from your employer and coworkers? What can your employer and coworkers expect from you?
- If I am your boss and my tendency to micromanage your work is driving you crazy, how will you get me off your back and help me learn to let go?
- If you could buy any skill what would it be?
- What question were you afraid I would ask and didn't?
- Have you ever not followed instructions because you thought they were kind of stupid?
- In today's business world, most owners are old-school or baby-boomers. What makes you think you can connect or communicate with our management team?
- If you saw somebody stealing something, either an employee or a customer, how would you handle this situation?
- If a customer yelled at you for something that is not "your job," what would you do?

PREPARING FOR THE BEHAVIOR BASED INTERVIEW

What is Behavioral Interviewing?

Behavioral interviewing is based on the premise that a person's recent, relevant past performance is the best predictor of future performance. Instead of asking how you would behave in a particular situation, a behavioral interviewer will ask how you *did* behave by providing a specific example.

How do I Answer a Behavioral Question?

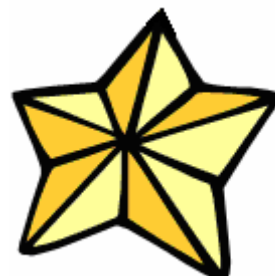
When answering a behavior based question, use the star technique to illustrate how you handled a specific situation.

Situation—Begin with the situation; how the event presented itself.

Task—Describe the goal or task you hoped to achieve.

Action—What actions did you take to reach your goal?

Result—Did you meet your results and did the results meet your expectations? Illustrate the point you intended to make in answering the question.



INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Before

1. **Research:** Employers are interested in candidates who ask intelligent questions and are able to engage in conversation based on what they know about the organization. Learn as much as you can in advance—know the company’s products and services, profit margin, management, culture, dress code, and anything else you can think of.
2. **Practice:** Practice interviews with a career counselor, friends, and family members—or by yourself in front of a mirror. Employers prize communication skills in job candidates, and the interview is your opportunity to showcase your verbal skills.
3. **Be Prompt and Prepared:** Arrive 10 minutes early. Bring extra copies of your resume, your list of references, a pen and paper, your list of questions for the interviewer, and samples of your work, if applicable. If, for any reason, you cannot make the interview, notify the employer as far in advance as possible. Don’t be a no-show. The HR/recruiting field is smaller than you think, especially in specialized fields.

During

1. **Act Professionally:** Dress appropriately—make sure your clothing is pressed, your shoes are polished, and you are well groomed. Give a firm handshake. First impressions count!
2. **Converse:** Don’t have the interview turn into an interrogation. Answer the interviewer’s questions thoroughly but ask questions throughout the

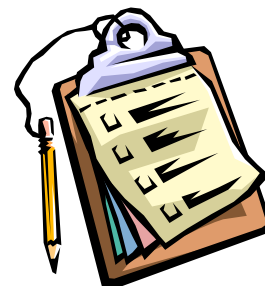
process. Remember, the purpose of the interview is for each of you to learn about the other.

3. **Be Enthusiastic:** A positive attitude goes a long way. Let the interviewer know you are a go-getter and are excited about the possibility of working for the company.

After

1. **Follow-up:** Send a thank-you note to the interviewer(s) within 48 hours. The note can be typed, handwritten, or e-mailed, depending on the organization’s culture. Keep the note brief, but reiterate your interest in the position.
2. **Review the Interview:** Immediately following the interview, jot down key components about it. Record the name(s) and title(s) of anyone you met. Note what the next agreed-upon step will be. List details you want to remember about the job/company. Finally, assess your own performance in ways to improve it if necessary.
3. **Evaluate:** Determine if the job is right for you. Did the job description match your interests, values, and abilities? Did you like the management style? Did this seem like a good place to work? Ultimately, a good fit will lead to a more successful and fulfilling career for you.

Source: Tanya Misner Letourneau. “Secrets to Interview Success” *Job Choices for Business & Liberal Arts Students*. 2007:48-51.



INTERVIEW TYPES AND TIPS

Screening Interview: Conducted by an HR person to determine if you meet the minimum qualifications for a job

Tip: Emphasize succinctly and directly that you possess the desired skills/abilities for the position.

One-on-One Interview: Usually conducted on site by the hiring supervisor.

Tip: In addition to selling your key strengths, ask what problems the supervisor currently is facing and then suggest strategies that he or she could implement to resolve the issues.

Panel Interview: Conducted by three or more people representing different departments in the company.

Tip: Remember to direct your answers to the person who asks the question, but maintain eye contact with the other members of the group as well. Be sure to send thank you notes to all participants.

Peer Group Interview: Conducted by your potential co-workers.

Tip: Focus on being agreeable and approachable rather than someone with all the answers.

Luncheon Interview: Conducted to assess how well you handle yourself in social situations.

Tip: Select light, healthy, and easy things to eat. Steer clear of spaghetti and other potentially messy food that are not easy to eat gracefully. Do NOT order alcohol even if others do.

Second Interview: Second interviews are similar to first interview except they are usually longer (1 to 2 days) and involve more people. You may have a combination of individual, panel, and peer group interviews throughout the process.

Tip: Switch your focus from emphasizing your specific strengths to selling yourself as a well-balanced package. Listen carefully to determine any underlying concerns and attempt to dispel them. Prove that you've researched the company and emphasize that you will work as a dedicated member of the organization.

Video Interview: Video interviews allow the candidate and recruiter to see and interact with one another without the expense of travel.

Tip: Be prepared for a slight time delay in receiving the sound and image. Make sure to hesitate slightly before speaking to ensure that the transmission has been fully completed.

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Top Ten Reasons for Rejection

- Lack of Career Planning: purposes and goals ill-defined
- Lack of knowledge of field of specialization; not well qualified.
- Inability to express yourself clearly.
- Insufficient evidence of prior achievement.
- Little interest, energy or enthusiasm expressed; indifferent.
- Overbearing, aggressive or conceited behaviors.
- Unwillingness to start at entry level.
- Make excuses, be evasive or hedge on unfavorable factors in record.
- Lack confidence or poise; fail to make eye contact.
- Poor personal appearance.