

8 Tips for the “Typical Interview Questions”

In an interview with the Hiring Manager you will likely be faced with some “typical” interview questions.

Here are some classic interview questions and some tips on how to frame your answers.

“Tell me about yourself.”

TIP:

Rehearse a 1-2 minute tell-me-about-yourself answer that is a high level overview of your experience and mentions some of the skills and knowledge/experience you have that is relevant to the role you are applying to.

You may want to mention some recent relevant achievements, attributes (competencies) or accomplishments.

“Why are you interested in this job?”

TIP:

This question allows you to express your interest in the job and show your enthusiasm. It also gives you an opportunity to show you have done your research.

In your answer touch on 3 main areas:

- An aspect of the job that you are excited about
- How the job matches your previous experience and ties into your career goals.
- If it is an area that has always interested you – mention that – and be prepared to answer what it is that interests you about the dept. or work environment

“What is an area you can improve?”

TIP:

Managers ask this questions because they want to know 2 things – are you aware of a weakness, and if so, what have you done to overcome or improve it.

- It’s best not to answer with a cliché like “I push myself too hard.” Be honest and answer with a skill you have worked on to improve, the interviewer is interested in knowing what you have done to improve the weakness.
- Or you can answer by identify an area that you would like to gain more experience. In this case the best example is one where you are already taking steps to develop in this area.
- Mention the strategies you used for improving your weakness, for example: tools for time management, courses to improve certain skills, extra job functions to gain specific experience.
- *Stay away from personality traits like bad temper or lack of motivation as your weakness. You should focus on areas where you can improve work related skills not behavioural or personality traits.*

"How did you handle a difficult situation at work like a difficult Manager or a problem/challenge within your department?"

TIP:

With this question the interviewer wants to know how you adapted to a difficult situation and how you maintained your performance and your optimism in the circumstance.

In your response you should include: A solution or adaptation or insight that helped you to be successful during this time. What did you learn about yourself from this situation, and how have you applied that knowledge from this experience?

"What is important to you in a job?"

Is it being a people manager or problem solver? Working on challenging projects? Knowing that you satisfy customer needs? Try to incorporate what it is that rewards & motivates you and how it links to the job providing you with an opportunity to use your skills, to perform, to contribute, to be recognized for that.

"Give an example of how you reacted when things didn't go your way or when your work was criticized?"

TIP:

Be positive. State the situation objectively – don't dwell on the negative. Stress what you learned from the situation.

"What do you think it takes to be successful in this job?"

TIP:

In order to answer this you need to know about the job and its key responsibilities & functions.

Research the mandate and the department, know the competencies, choose 3 key things from those that you think are success drivers and talk about those specifically.

"How did you prepare for this interview?"

OR – *"How much research and time have you spent to learn about this dept/job for this interview?"*

TIP:

You want to impress the interviewer with your research efforts and interest here. How much initiative can you show? Did you do a job shadow or information interview? Did you do research on the company? These are important things to mention in your response.

"What are your short and long term goals?"

TIP:

Does this job fit with your career development plan? Be careful with this one- you want to show how this job fits with your past experience and where you want to end up – but you don't want to leave the impression that this job is just a stepping stone to get to it.

If you don't have a specific goal or dream job mapped out for your future – be prepared to discuss the general area you want to work in – or the components of a job and its responsibilities that you find rewarding.