

## Resource Centre - Sample Interview Questions

### Sample Interview Questions and How to Handle Them

Here is a list of some of the main interview questions that you may be asked at an interview.

#### General Questions

**Q** Tell me about yourself / take me through your CV?

**A** Identify your main attributes. Describe your qualifications, career history and range of skills emphasising anything relevant to the job you are applying for?

**Q** What motivates you?

**A** Some suggestions could be career growth, opportunity to learn new skills, co-workers.

**Q** What have your achievements been to date?

**A** Select a work related achievement, be specific about what you achieved and what it meant to the company, ie. cost saving, kpi, achievements, reduction in absence etc. Quantify if possible.

**Q** What is your biggest failure?

**A** Choose one that you were later able to correct or something which didn't have a major impact on the business.

**Q** What are your strengths?

**A** No excuse for not being prepared for this one. List three or four main ones and give examples.

**Q** What was your greatest success and how did you achieve it?

**A** Pick an achievement which is related to the role you are applying for.

**Q** Why should we employ you?

**A** The answer to this question will be based on your previous experience and achievements which relate to the company. State that you feel there is a good fit between your experience and the job.

**Q** How long have you been looking for a new job?

**A** Be honest even if you have been looking for a long time highlight holidays that you have taken or voluntary work you have done.

**Q** Why do you want to leave your current role?

**A** State that you are looking for a new challenge, more responsibility, experience and a change of environment. Do not be negative about your previous employer and don't say it is for money.

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### **Q** Why have you applied for this particular role?

**A** The employer is looking to establish if you are right for the position, ie. that it fits with your long term goals. Make sure you have a good understanding of the company and why it is of interest to you.

### **Other Questions**

- Are you aggressive?
- Are you competitive?
- What motivates you?
- Give me an example of when you have had to force a change?
- When was the last time you disagreed with your boss?
- What are your career aspirations?
- How do you handle criticism?
- What interests do you have outside work?

### **Competency Questions**

Increasingly, employers are using 'competency-based' (also sometimes called 'behavioural' or 'situational') interviewing techniques to separate out the good candidates from those who are simply trying to bluff their way into the job without the right skills or experience. The theory behind competency-based interviewing is that past work behaviour is a good predictor of future job performance.

### **Q** What would you do if you had to deal with an angry employee?

**A** The answer is to empathise, understand as quickly as possible and obtain the persons trust. It is important to remember the difference between understanding and agreeing.

### **Q** Tell me about the culture of your last/current company?

**A** Demonstrate positive behaviour in a negative situation, accentuate the positives

### **Q** Give me an example of how you have adapted your own communicating style to deal with different people and situations?

**A** Give examples of how you can adapt your communication style, all jobs will benefit from the candidate being able to do this. Give examples of when you have had to be task driven, process driven, people driven and how you change your style accordingly. The interviewer is looking for non-adaptive communicators or for people who do not understand the need to adapt.

### **Q** How do you plan and organise your work?

**A** Demonstrate that you understand that it is important to think how best to do them before you start, that you can prioritise your work. This is a good opportunity to demonstrate that you don't fly by the seat of your pants.

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**Q** Give an example of a successful project you were part of?

**A** This is to demonstrate your team working abilities and that you value teamworking.

**Q** How do you handle stress?

**A** The ideal answer is that you handle it well because you organize and plan properly. Or that you can channel pressure positively by keeping a balanced approach.

**Q** How do you like to be managed?

**A** A good answer would be to demonstrate that you are adaptable to most management styles. That you help your boss get the best out of you by talking to them and developing a good understanding. Demonstrate that you work best when given the freedom and responsibility to take on work load. This answer indicates that you can manage upwards.

### Other Questions

- Tell me about a time when you had to work with someone you disliked.
- If I were to interview people who had reported to you, how would they describe your management style?
- Tell me about a time when you created an agreed purpose from a situation when parties originally differed in opinion?
- Tell me about something that really annoyed you?

### Questions that you may wish to ask

- Describe a typical day?
- What are you looking for in the person who will fill this job?
- What skills are most valuable in this job?
- What are the company's plans for growth?
- What areas will need the immediate attention of the person you hire?
- What training would I receive?