



# **Most common interview questions**

## **MOST COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:**

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

- Prepare yourself an 'elevator pitch'. That is a brief (no more than two minutes) overview of who you are, what your background is and something personal about yourself (ie hobbies or interests outside of work) to give a balanced view.
- Be on guard against the interviewer who gives you free rein.
- Answer should relate to job opening.
- What can you do for your employer?

### **2. What do you know about our organisation?**

- Give your interviewer an indication that you have done some research. eg - I've looked at your website/talked with xxx who works in the organisation and have identified xxx (something relevant about the business) ...etc. They already know about their organisation, so no point in regurgitating the information verbatim to them.
- Also, state that you are keen to hear any other relevant and appropriate information that perhaps is not so readily available in the public domain.

### **3. What would you do for us? What can you do for us that someone else can't?**

- Relate past experiences which represent success in solving problems which may be similar to those of prospective employer.

### **4. Why should we hire you?**

- Capitalise on your strengths and your personal attributes that set you apart from others. Make sure these related to the organisation and/or the role. This is not the time to bring up any quirky personal traits!

### **5. What do you look for in a job?**

### **6. Please give me your definition (the position for which you are being interviewed).**

### **7. How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our firm?**

- Let them know that you appreciate there will a learning curve, but that you can point to examples from your previous roles where you have come up to speed quickly. Be prepared to give some examples if you are asked.

### **8. How long would you stay with us?**

- This is a touch question as you can appear too ambitious to take a chance on or in fact not ambitious enough if you are not looking beyond the immediate next step.
- A possible way around this would be to say - I imagine that whilst I am still challenged and we are both happy with the contribution I am making I will be committed to the role/organisation.

### **9. You may be over qualified or too experienced for the position we have to offer.**

- Emphasise interest in long-term association.
- Employer will get faster return on investment because you have more experience than required.

### **10. Are you or could you become a good supervisor/manager/leader?**

**11. What do you see as the most difficult task in being a supervisor/manager/leader?**

- Try to think of examples of where you have successfully led or managed others that shows your potential in this area. If you have had formal supervisory/management responsibilities, you may be able to call on examples of when you have had to show someone how to perform a new task, or you have led a project team, etc

**12. Why are you leaving your present job?**

- Give a "group" answer (ie. our office is closing, etc).
- Think about your reasons for leaving before your interview and stick to one response ...don't change answers during the interview! Remember your referees may be asked to recall your reasons for leaving as well, so be honest with this or you may get caught out.
- If it is simply for 'more challenge', expand on this. It could mean different things to different people.

**13. Describe what you feel to be an ideal working environment.**

- This is a place where you can bring in some of the "satisfiers" and "ideal job preferences" - but don't make it sound too sublime or impractical. Otherwise, they may conclude that you are not ready for the realities of the present company. Downplay the dissatisfiers.

**14. How would you evaluate your present firm?**

- If is an excellent company which has given me a lot of good experience and opportunities to perform.

**15. Have you helped increase sales? Profits? How?**

- This is your chance to describe in some detail a business accomplishment that is relevant to the proposed new job. Feel free to dwell on this.

**16. How much financial responsibility have you had to account for?**

- You can answer this in terms of your budget or head count or the size of the project or sales that you directed.

**19. Did you supervise people on your last job?**

- Be specific - and feel free to refer to those over which you had influence such as a task force or a matrix organisation.

**20. Do you like working with figures more than words?**

- Answer honestly

**21. What do your co-workers think of you?**

- Be as positive as you can, but remember to be honest, too. They can check your references easily.

**22. In your current or last position, what are or were your five most significant accomplishments? In your career so far?**

- Be prepared to talk confidently about your achievements. Make sure you are clear on the part you played in achieving the outcomes in case you are questioned on this.
- Emphasise the positive and don't carry on at length about the negatives.

**24. Why haven't you found a new position before now?**

- If you have taken time out to identify the next steps in your career, or you have travelled, gone back to studying for a short period of time, etc, it is fine to be honest about this. It shows balance and careful consideration of your future prospects.
- If you have been looking for work for a while, you could reply... 'I really want to make the right choice on my next role and have been careful not to accept the 'first thing that comes along'. This has taken both care and time.

**25. What do you think of your boss?**

- Describe the working relationship you had with them. ie how much day to day contact you had with them what they knew about your work, how you found them to work with. Stay factual and avoid negative personal remarks about them. They may be one of your referees, so make sure you describe your relationship accurately.

**26. Would you describe a few situations in which your work was criticised?**

- Be specific and brief; avoid getting emotional or defensive about it.

**27. If I spoke with your previous boss, what would he or she say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?**

- Be honest about this one, but do not emphasise the negative. Recount some of the good things you did for him/her.
- If a reference check was conducted with this person, would they say the same things???

**28. Can you work under pressure, deadlines etc.?**

- I can handle it. It is a way of life in the business world.
- Be prepared to give examples to back up this claim.

**29. Do you think you are better suited to staff work or line work?**

- I can handle either one, and my preference depends a lot on the specific job, the boss I would be working for, and the challenges in the position.

**30. In your present position, what problems have you identified that had previously been overlooked?**

- Give one or two examples, but remember to be humble about it.

**31. If you had your choice of jobs and companies where would you go?**

- Talk about the job at hand and what is attractive in the company that is interviewing you.

**32. Why aren't you earning more at your age?**

- Don't be defensive about this one. Explain that you are hoping to rectify the situation through this career change.

**33. What do you feel this position should pay?**

- You may want to answer this with a question, such as, "What is the typical salary range for similar jobs in your company?" If there is no range in the company, give the range that you had in mind. But qualify it by saying you hope to learn more about the job responsibilities and scope.

**34.How much do you expect if we offer this position to you?**

- The market value of the job may be the key answer. My understanding is that a job like the one you're describing may be in the range of \$ to \$.
- Always give a range that you would be prepared to negotiate within, depending on how closely the opportunity ticks all of your boxes for your next role. Be realistic as this could be a deal breaker if you overestimate and put yourself out of the running. Be prepared to trade things off to get what is really important to you (eg if they offer training, but are paying slightly less than you wanted at first, you might consider this).

**35.Any objectives to psychological testing?**

- These are not as scary as they sound.
- If they are inviting you to testing stage, then you are being seriously considered as a candidate.

**36.Why do you want to work for us?**

- Do some research before your interview, so that you know what appeals to you about the organisation, people, culture, products, etc, so that you can talk about where this a potential match from your perspective.

**37.What other types of jobs or companies are you considering?**

- Don't feel obliged to reveal details of your other negotiations. If you have other irons in the fire, refer to your campaign in a general way; but concentrate mainly on the job at hand.
- Sometimes having other things on the go, can put you into a more competitive situation if they are also keen on you. Be honest about this so you don't blow your chances.

**38.What was the last book you read? Movie you saw? Sporting event you attended?**

- Be honest. If possible, mention some of the things you read in order to keep yourself up to date in your professional field. However, it is okay to show balanced interests by your recreational reading as well.

**39.How would you describe your own personality?**

- Think about this in advance. Mention 2 or 3 of your useful traits.
- Choose realistic traits that would paint you in good light and be prepared to back them up with examples if asked.

**40.What are your goals?**

- Relate your answer to the company, rather than give a very broad, general answer. Keep your ambitions on a realistic track.

**43.What are your strong points?**

- Present at least three - preferably in a way that relates them to the potential job opening.

**44.What are your weak points?**

- Don't say you have none, give only one. Turn negative into a positive answer like, "I'm am sometimes impatient and do the work myself when we are late".

**45.How long would you expect to stay with our company?**

- As long as we both feel that there is a challenging work that I can do.

**46. What sort of relationship do you have with associates, both at the same level and above and below you?**

- This is a very important question, and you can well afford to take your time and answer it in steps.
- When talking about your relationships with subordinates, be prepared to state your philosophy of handling them, particularly when they have performance problems.
- With regard to bosses, indicate your keen interest in understanding your boss' expectations. You may also want to talk about how you would go about keeping your boss informed.

**47. What are some of your outside activities or recreations?**

- Hopefully, your answer can show that you lead a balanced life. But avoid throwing in so many outside activities that it casts some doubt on how much time you will have for the job. Remember, too, that your hobbies and recreations can be quite revealing to your own personality.

**48. Are you continuing your education?**

- If you are not actually attending or planning to attend formal classes, be ready to explain what sort of outside reading or attendance at professional seminars you undertake in order to keep yourself fresh in your chosen field.