



Sample Interview Questions

Most interviewers will start with some general open questions. These are designed to put you at your ease and to elicit some basic information that can be included in later questions.

Q. Tell me about your career up to now or tell me about yourself

A. A likely opening - but beware, this isn't simply the list of jobs from your CV. The interviewer wants to know how you view yourself, your previous employers and your aspirations. Outline your career - be positive - and if you feel you haven't achieved what you could - explain why.

Q. What are your key achievements?

A. Don't simply list past triumphs. Use examples from recent work achievements and explain the benefits to your present company. "From identifying our target market for a new product we successfully launched a new brand into the market and hit a 6 week deadline".

Q. What's the best part of your current job?

A. This is a gift of a question. Be positive about an element of your current job that ties in to the requirements of the job you want. Push your own abilities - and explain how you want to achieve more of the same.

Q. If you like your current job, why are you leaving?

A. You've just said why you like your job. But be warned - don't "slag-off" your current role as you are in essence criticising yourself. Perhaps you could outline an area in your organisation that limits you. Perhaps the company is too small to offer you prospects. Or it could be that it's too large and so decisions never get made. Make sure your answer doesn't insult your prospective employer!

Q. How do you view your current employer?

A. Be constructive and brief. You've achieved what you can and want new challenges, a better environment or more responsibility. Comments about, people, salary or products/services should be avoided.

Q. What made you choose to apply for this job?

A. Here you need to show how the job suits you and your skills today - and how it coincides with your long-term goals. This is where your research will pay dividends as you show how your knowledge of the prospective employer ties in with your attitude and approach.

Q. What's been your toughest challenge - and how did you meet it?

A. You need to show two things here. First what do you consider to be a challenge? And second, what you are like at problem solving. Try and select a tough work scenario that you have been given. Outline it quickly and concisely; and then outline what you did to solve the problem.

Q. Describe yourself?

A. This question could come early in the interview or be used to stop the rhythm of your answers. Be prepared with some key points about your character - and some work examples of how your character shines through in everyday life.

Q. What are your strengths?

A. You will get this question. Prepare three or four attributes - perhaps your people skills, your attention to details, or your approach; and have work examples ready to show what you mean.

Q. What is your greatest weakness?

A. And this is a certainty too. Be honest. You have weaknesses. But choose your weakness well. Try selecting a virtue that relates to the role – for example diplomacy or attention to detail – and explain how you know you are sometimes too diplomatic or can get too close to the detail. Then explain that you recognise the weakness and how you stop it becoming an issue.

Other questions to consider:

- What type of people do you work well with?
- How have you coped when you've had to work with someone you disagreed with?
- What happened when you last disagreed with your boss?
- We have a very different culture here - how do you think you will fit in?
- What are your priorities for a new employer?
- What's a good example of a pressurised situation for you?
- How do you react if someone criticises your work? Give an example.
- Have you ever felt angry at work? If so, how did you manage that anger?
- What is your view of this industry?
- What is the context of your current job? How does it fit with your current employers goals?
- Have you ever experienced a conflict of interest at work? If so, what did you do?
- Failures - we've all had them - what's your worst failure at work?
- How would you rather work? Alone or in a group? Why?
- Long hours - do they bother you?
- How do rate your own achievements day-to-day?
- All business change. How have previous changes affected you?
- You say you're self-motivated. Would you give examples?
- Are you a self-starter? Give me examples to demonstrate this?
- What value will you add to our business?