



COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: EXAMPLES AND ANSWERS

Your Options consultant will assist in interview coaching and preparation, but in the meantime here are some of the more common and at times trickier interview questions and our suggestions on how to turn them to your advantage.

Why do you believe you are suitable for the role?

This is your chance to sell yourself. In a succinct fashion summarise the relevant experience and skills you possess that match the criteria of the role and then end on a strong and positive note by highlighting your personal strengths and characteristics that you believe make you the ideal person for the job.

Example answer:

From my understanding of the role I believe that my high volume accounts receivable skills, obtained in a large corporate environment and my advanced excel ability meet the skill requirements of the role however it is my hardworking ethic, attention to detail, strong team orientation and focused approach that makes me ideal for your role.



Why did you leave your last role?

Always try to put a positive spin on this one. Do not criticise your previous manager, be honest but tactful in your response, and make sure that you put your answer in context of what you are trying to achieve in your career as well as what they are looking for. Be careful about the message that your responses can send - consistently leaving roles for "a challenge" may suggest that you get bored easily; leaving for more money can be seen to be the wrong motivation and leaving because of a personal conflict (even if justified) can reflect badly on you. If you were made redundant - always explain the full circumstances to ensure this doesn't reflect poorly.

Example answer:

I had been with the company for 4.5 years and progressed as far as I could within the existing structure during that time. It was time to seek a new challenge and I am ideally seeking exposure to a different industry and more analytical work. Your role seems to match my career goal perfectly in this regard.

Why do you want to work here?

It is critical that your response to this type of question convinces them that you have a genuine interest and passion for the role, business and industry, so make sure that your response has substance. This is where having researched the company and the role well will pay off. You need to demonstrate that this is not just another interview - but that this is your ideal role.

Example answer:

Your company has a reputation for being an industry leader and your corporate culture and environment is team orientated, innovative and encourages staff development all of which align with my own values. The role itself offers the exciting opportunity to work closely with senior management, in a successful team environment on a variety of key projects which is exactly what I am looking for.



What are your strengths?

You can guarantee that most interviews will include this type of question - so you need to be confident in listing your key strengths. Again try and highlight those that are particularly relevant to the role that you are being considered for. It can be useful to seek some feedback from peers, past managers, even close friends to give you some insight into what your key strengths and respond by quoting them.

Example answer:

My previous managers really valued my knowledge in the area of systems and used me as a technical resource in this area. My peers often commented that I had excellent negotiation skills and an ability to develop strong relationships with even our most difficult customers. Personally I would say that my strengths are my ability to see both sides of a situation and come up with a solution that meets everyone's needs.

What are your weaknesses?

A classic interview question - this is one that with preparation can be turned into a positive. Highlight those things that can be taken as both a strength and a weakness and discuss how you believe you are working to overcome these weaknesses. Try to gauge whether they have identified any weaknesses and attempt to put their mind at rest. Always consider this question to be asking "what areas to you believe you can improve in."

Example answer:

I am very detail focused and whilst in some situations this is most certainly a strength that my past employers have valued it can at times be a weakness when there are other priorities. I am very aware of this however and try to strike a good balance. You may perceive my lack of SAP exposure to be a potential weakness however I can assure you that I very good at picking up new systems quickly as demonstrated when I took on the role at ABC Ltd.



What are your greatest achievements?

Be clear in your head before the interview about what your top 5 greatest achievements are from an employment perspective and be ready to promote yourself in this manner. If relevant there may one or two personal achievements you wish to highlight that demonstrate important personal qualities. Try and think of things that are outside the scope of the normal day to day responsibilities of your past roles.

Example answer:

Mention any process or systems improvements you made in past roles, important milestones you achieved, savings you may have made the business, promotions you have received and positive feedback that you received from peers. On a personal level studies that you completed or sporting related achievements - which demonstrate persistence and commitment for example as well as a healthy work/life balance - are examples of achievements worth highlighting.

What are your long term career goals?

Give a sense of goal setting, direction, and motivation and beware not to sound unrealistic in your expectations or do yourself out of the role by over pitching yourself and not aligning yourself with the scope of the role for which you are being considered. Try to talk about experiences and career goals you wish to add to your resume rather than just job titles you are aiming for.

Example answer:

I am motivated by learning opportunities and for me the main goal over the next 3 years is to gain more commercial and project based experience. This, along with completing my studies will add to my skill level and should the opportunity arise I would like to progress to the next level and take on a broader business role.





What salary are you looking for?

Be honest about what you are currently on and justify tactfully what you are now looking for. Make sure that your response is consistent with what you communicated to your Options consultant also - because if there are discrepancies it can reflect poorly on yourself.

Example answer:

I have not had a review for more than 12 months as there has been a freeze across our business and I have recently completed my CPA qualification. From my understanding of market salaries, I believe these factors combined with my overall level of experience warrants an increase to \$\$.

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