

THE 4 BEST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO PRACTICE

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Not every job interview will be the same or follow a standard format. That said, there are some interview questions that frequently pop up. Here are the four most frequently asked interview questions, along with some tips to help you answer them.

1) WHY DO YOU WANT THIS JOB?

This question is bound to come up in your interview, either directly or indirectly. A common misconception that most candidates have is to tell the interviewer why they have applied for the job such as: salary, location, training, benefits and personal development. Candidates should really see this question as opportunities to not only explain why they want the job, but to also highlight why they have the appropriate attributes and skills required to do the job.

Four examples of ways to answer the question:

- **WHAT IS IT THAT YOU LIKE ABOUT THE COMPANY? (CULTURE, BELIEFS, VALUES, MISSION):** I think ABC Company is a great company; I admire how their values revolve around nurturing success and I was impressed to learn about the culture-fit policy they have in place when recruiting candidates. That's the sort of company I'd like to be in, one that not only focuses on the customer but also cares about the employees they hire.
- **DESCRIBE THE CHALLENGES OF THE ROLE TO EMPHASIZE THAT YOU'RE AWARE OF THEM:** I recognize that this industry has typically experienced high staff turnover and I know that you're looking for someone who wants to progress and develop their career long-term within the company.
- **TELL THEM WHAT MAKES YOU TICK, HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR RECENT CAREER AND WHAT CHALLENGES IN PARTICULAR YOU HAVE ENJOYED OVERCOMING:** I am a people person and in my previous job working at a retail shop I really enjoyed talking to customers, helping them find things and offering advice when needed.
- **THINK ABOUT REASONS WHY THE COMPANY MIGHT NOT WANT TO HIRE YOU AND COUNTER THEIR ARGUMENTS:** I know I haven't had a career in technical sales before, but I do have transferable skills from my experience working as an engineer which I think would be beneficial for and applicable to this role.

2) WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE/TEN YEARS?

This question is often asked as a way to find out more about your career goals and ambitions. It is always important to remember that you are being interviewed for a specific role that needs to be filled today. The employer also wants to make sure that the fit is mutual; can this company provide you with your long-term plans? A flat organization may not provide you with the mobility and development that a massive tier-1 company can. Some employers use this question as a trap to gauge how realistic you are. If a candidate is going to throw out a lofty career title in 10 years, they had better be prepared to explain how they intend achieve this, and what they are currently doing in

terms of personal development to get there. (I.e. If you plan to be a CEO in 10 years, then hopefully you have completed your MBA, have a senior level accounting designation to your name, you're actively networking with C-level executives to gain mentorship, and you're currently reading every book by a CEO that you can get your hands on.)

- **BE AMBITIOUS BUT REMAIN REALISTIC:** It's good to be ambitious when it comes to your career, but be careful not to be too eager when talking about your career progression in an interview scenario. Responding to this question in a humorous manner by saying something like 'in your chair' may seem like a good tongue-in-cheek answer but to some interviewers this may come across as arrogant.
- **FOCUS ON YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Focus on your professional development and try to remain realistic in terms of how quickly you plan to progress through the ranks. Don't expect to be promoted in under 12 months; this rarely ever happens. Besides, you will sound like a 'flight risk' if you don't sound keen about the position you are interviewing for.
- **BE SPECIFIC BUT FLEXIBLE:** Try to steer clear from making your answer sound too vague. The interviewer wants to know how you see their role fitting in with your overall career plan and your response should encompass how the position is important to you as part of your long-term career strategy.
- **SELL YOURSELF:** Although this question may seem like it is probing your career goals and ambitions it is also a good opportunity to emphasize what you can bring to the role. Your potential employer will want to hear how you can make a marked difference to their company, help to secure and add to its reputation as a leader within its industry and contribute to the company's overall growth and success.

3) WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES?

This question is one of the most aggravating interview questions you can get. You can guarantee that it will come up during an interview, and it goes without saying that candidates are not going to reveal their biggest flaws in the middle of a job interview! So why does it come up so often? Well interviewers like to ask the question because it can be tricky to respond to and candidate's answers can often be very telling when they are put on the spot. The client wants to see if you'll admit that you are not perfect. Rather than you humbly acknowledge that you have further personal growth to attain. Some mistakes that you should try and avoid are:

- **TRYING TO MAKE A POSITIVE SOUND LIKE A NEGATIVE:** When do working too hard, caring too much about your work or being a perfectionist class as weaknesses? They don't and if you try to turn a positive trait into a weakness the interviewer will see right through your tactics and are likely to follow the question by asking you to go into more detail about how the weakness has negatively affected you. The key is to be sincere, don't select a weakness that sounds good. Instead choose a weakness that is minor and can be fixed through work and motivation i.e. speaking in front of large groups.
- **NEVER REVEAL A DEBILITATING WEAKNESS:** Another mistake is to be too forthright and confess to a weakness that would hinder your ability to perform in the role you're applying for. Don't let your

honesty become your weakness! If you were applying for a sales role, it wouldn't be wise to state that your weakness is that you're a "shy person".

4) WHAT SORT OF SALARY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

This is a question that often throws people off-guard when it's asked in an interview scenario because most people don't feel comfortable talking about money. It's often felt that if you state a figure that is too low, then you may miss out financially; whereas if you disclose a figure that is too high you may miss out on the offer of a job. The good news is that you don't actually have to state a specific figure if you don't feel confident in doing so. Instead you can provide a broad salary range. Four tips to bear in mind when answering this question include:

- **DO SOME RESEARCH AND BE PREPARED:** If you know that this question is likely to come up during the interview, then make sure you are prepared by researching the average salary rates for the role and rehearsing your answer before the interview. You may find some good salary info at (www.glassdoor.ca). Then you can acknowledge your awareness of the industry standard by putting forward an average range.
- **BE COMFORTABLE IN YOUR ANSWER:** However you decide to respond to this question, the key is to do so in a respectful, diplomatic and confident manner. Bear in mind that your biggest tool for negotiating your salary will be in your ability to show your potential employer that you have the skills and abilities needed to do the job.
- **DON'T BE TOO SPECIFIC OR RIGID:** When you are being asked about your salary expectations the best way to respond is to be broad and to remain realistic with your expectations. Never describe your salary demands as what you actually need but rather as what the job is worth. Use your current salary as a guideline (including any bonuses, annual raises) and research the average market rates for the role.

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