

Practice Interview Questions

When interviewing for a new job you will be asked a variety of questions. Although there is no way to prepare for all questions an employer may ask you, you can prepare by thinking about responses to the following questions. The overall theme is being able to confidently provide examples of how you have handled specific situations. Have a friend ask you the practice questions for maximum preparation.

General Questions

When answering these general questions, make sure to be honest, but not brutally honest. In other words, if you left your last job because you hated your boss, you may not want to give the impression that you leave a job every time you have a disagreement with a superior. If you currently don't have professional responses to these questions now is the time to think about them and be prepared.

- Why did you leave your last job?
- Why did you apply for this position?
- What are your career goals over the next year? 5 years? 10 years?
- How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort? Describe a situation in which you did so.

Specific Questions

The most important and telling questions employers will ask are those that explain your specific experiences. These are much harder to prepare for. The questions below are examples of questions employers ask to better understand your unique experiences and skills to find out how you handle yourself as it relates to communicating with others, having flexibility in times of change and working without supervision, just to name a few. Practice answering the questions in each category to prepare for a stellar interview.

Analytical Problem Solving

Employers want to know if you are able to use a systematic approach in solving problems through analysis of problem and evaluation of alternate solutions.

- Tell me about a time when you were systematic in identifying potential problems at work.
- Give me an example of a time when you came up with several solutions to a single problem. Did you use tools such as research, technology, and brainstorming?
- Describe a situation when you had to use mathematics to solve a complex problem.

Commitment to Task

Employers want to know if you are able to start and persist with specific courses of action.

- Give an example of any specific time in which you found it necessary to work long hours on a job.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to provide your own motivation to produce even though you were working alone. How did you motivate yourself?

Creativity

Employers want to know if you are able to think outside of the box and create new things.

- Describe a situation in which you had to create something from scratch.
- Creative persons seem to offer fresh insights frequently. Give me an example when one of your insights was well received by others.
- Just about anybody can give a routine, standard answer to common problems; however, the payoff is often in the development of the unique solutions to common problems. Give me an example of one of your unique and novel problem solutions.

Interaction

Employers want to know if you are able to effectively communicate with others.

- Being skillful in dealing with other people on the job is an important factor in being productive. Describe a time when you were successful in dealing with another because you built a trusting relationship.
- The word "communication" means different thing to different people at different times. Tell me what this word means to you by giving me an example of a time when you had to be amiable and friendly as a communicator.

Motivating Others

Employers want to know if you are able to create positive energy (motivation) in both individuals and groups.

- Give me an example of a time when your positive attitude caused others to be motivated or energized.
- Give me an example of something you did which helped build enthusiasm in others.

Negotiation/ Persuasion (Especially for Sales Positions)

Employers want to know if you are able to negotiate and create win/win solutions.

- What is your "philosophy" on Sales? What makes a person "successful" in sales?
- You've probably had an occasion where you realized your initial approach wasn't working and you had to try a different method. What did you do?
- Describe one of your toughest negotiation experiences. How did you deal with it? Why do you think it happened?

Spoken Communication

Employers want to know if you are able to clearly present information, influence or persuade others through oral presentation in positive or negative circumstances, and listen well.

- Tell me about a time when you had to give someone an explanation or instruction to accomplish a specific task? What was the result?
- What types of experiences have you had in talking with customers? Tell me about a time when you had to communicate under difficult circumstances.
- Careful listening and effective communication go hand in hand. Tell me about a time when your ability to listen helped you communicate better.

Tolerance

Employers want to know if you are able to withhold actions or speech in the absence of important information, deal with unresolved situations, frequent changes, delays or unexpected events.

- People differ in their preference for jobs, which have well laid out tasks and responsibilities or ones in which work changes frequently, tell me about a time when you were successful in dealing with an unstructured work environment.
- What has been your experience in working with conflicting, delayed or ambiguous information? What did you do to make the most of the situation?

Miscellaneous

- Time management has become a necessary factor in personal productivity. Give me an example of any time management skill you have learned and applied at work.
- You have been given a project that requires you to interact with different levels within the company. How do you do this? What levels are you most comfortable with?
- We cannot do everything ourselves. Give me an example of a time when you dealt with this reality by creating a special team effort at work.