

Common Questions

1. Tell me a little something about yourself?

Remember a summary! Be sure to deliver your answer in chronological order of the events. This will help you stay focused (especially if the interviewer is interrupted during your answer), present your story in short order, keep the listener interested and hold his or her attention.

2. Why do you want to work for this company?

They want people who understand the company's goals, competitors and the industry at large. You should be prepared to engage in dialogue about how this company differentiates itself in the industry.

3. Why do you want this job? (Very different than the question above.)

Stay focused on the question regarding the job, your skills and what you can give back. Not just, "I" can learn, "I" can grow, etc.

4. Your previous work or related experience

5. Your newly acquired skills (Be specific and relevant to the position.)

6. Your computer skills

7. Greatest strengths

8. Biggest weakness

9. Why should I hire you?

If the interviewer begins the conversation by bluntly asking, "Why should I hire you?" Many job seekers become tongue-tied and make a poor impression when asked this question. Yet there's no better opportunity to establish your qualifications and sell yourself. Try being just as blunt as the interviewer when describing your most salient strengths and accomplishments. When responding, pull from your self-descriptive summary or Interview Cue Sheet. These tools have been designed to help summarize your message in chronological order.

10. Why should we hire you over the other candidates?

Don't fall for this trap! Let them know that you cannot compare yourself to the other candidates, and can only speak on behalf of yourself. Then tell them why. Again, draw from your self-descriptive summary or Interview Cue Sheet.

Common Questions (continued)

11. What type of wage are you looking for?

See if you can get the employer to share what they have paid in the past for this position. They will usually try to get you to say what you are looking for in terms of rate. This is a very common practice when discussing money.

You might try some of the following:

Ask the interviewer:

“Perhaps you could give me an idea of what the “base” pay has been in the past for this position?”

If they say:

“Well it depends upon your previous experience, etc.” And then ask you, “What is it you are looking for?”

Then say:

“Well, it is very difficult to put a dollar value on such a wonderful opportunity, maybe you could give me an idea of what you had in mind.”

If it is an internship or job with a company that is exactly the company you have always wanted to work for, you might have to start a bit lower than you imagined just to get your foot in the door. Still don't be afraid to discuss wages and benefits. After all, it is business, not personal.

Never say: “It doesn't matter what I will be paid. I really want the position anyway.”

These types of comments hurt you, more than help you. You may end up with very little to start, but don't let them know how wonderful “a little is.” This encourages them not to pay you more and/or offer you more later. If you are so happy, then they might think, “Oh, he's fine with his/her pay.” This is not to say that you must go over the top either. Upon leaving school you must remember that you are not a professional yet. Remember humility.

12. Be prepared to explain job-hopping and unaccountable time between jobs.

For example: You are an Audio Engineer who also wants to be a musical artist.

Unless the position requires specific musical talents, be careful when promoting them to the employer during the interview. Industry employers may become hesitant or uncomfortable with hiring you due to the following:

- You may leave the company for a musical career, thus a loss of time and money on training you and retraining of a new person.
- You may heckle the artist by promoting your personal work too much, which may make the artist feel uncomfortable.
- Conflicting scheduling problems due prioritizing your personal musical events and late night hours, thus resulting in poor work performance.

Tough Questions

General Questions:

1. Tell me about you!

Keep your answer to one or two minutes; don't ramble. Use your summary as a base to start.

2. What do you know about our company?

Do your homework before the interview! Spend some time online or at the library researching the company. Find out as much as you can, including products, size, philosophy, etc. Project an informed interest; let the interviewer tell you about the company.

3. Why do you want to work for us?

Don't talk about what you want; first, talk about their needs.

For example:

- a) you would like to be a part of a specific company project
- b) you would like to solve a company problem
- c) you can make a definite contribution to specific company goals.

4. What would you do for us? What can you do for us that someone else can't?

Relate past experiences that show you've had success in solving previous employer problem(s) that may be similar to those of the prospective employer.

5. What about the job offered do you find the most attractive? Least attractive?

List three or more attractive factors, and only one minor unattractive factor.

6. Why should we hire you?

Because of your knowledge, experience, abilities and skills.

7. What do you look for in a job?

An opportunity to use your skills, to perform and be recognized.

8. Please give me your definition of a...(the position for which you are being interviewed).

Keep it brief—give an action and result-oriented definition.

9. How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our firm?

Not long at all—you expect only a brief period of adjustment to the learning curve.

10. How long would you stay with us?

As long as we both feel I'm contributing, achieving, growing, etc.

Tough Questions (continued)

Experience & Management Questions:

1. You may be overqualified for the position we have to offer.

Strong companies need strong people. Growing, energetic companies are rarely unable to use its employees' talents. Emphasize your interest in a long-term association; pointing out that the employer will get a faster return on investment because you have more experience than required.

2. What is your management style?

(If you've never thought about this, it's time you did.) "Open-door management" is best. Emphasize on your ability to get the job done on time and how you're open to suggestions for improvement.

3. Are you a good manager? Give an example. Why do you feel you have top managerial potential?

Keep your answer achievement and task-oriented; emphasize management skills planning, organizing, interpersonal, etc.

4. What do you look for when you hire people?

Skills, initiative, and adaptability.

5. Did you ever fire anyone? If so, what were the reasons and how did you handle it?

Give a brief example of a time when you faced this, and stress that it worked out well.

6. What do you see as the most difficult task in being a manager?

Getting things planned and done on time within budget.

7. What do your subordinates think of you?

Be honest and positive (they can check your responses easily).

8. What is your biggest weakness as a manager?

Be honest and end on a positive note. For example: "I don't enjoy reprimanding people, so I try to begin with something positive first."

Tough Questions (continued)

Industry Trend Questions:

1. What important trends do you see in our industry?

Open to your own opinion. Do research to back-up your thoughts.

If You Are Leaving Your Job:

1. Why are you leaving your present job?

Refine your answer based on your comfort level and be honest. Give a “group” answer if possible; for example: “Our department was consolidated or eliminated.”

2. How do you feel about leaving all your benefits?

Concerned, but not panicked.

3. Describe what you feel to be an ideal working environment.

One in which people are treated as fairly as possible.

4. How would you evaluate your present firm?

It's an excellent company that afforded me many fine experiences.

Quantifying Your Experience & Accomplishments:

1. How have you helped increase sales? Profits?

Explain in some detail, citing figures and specific examples.

2. Have you helped reduce costs? How?

Describe in some detail with specifics.

3. How much money did you account for?

Give examples as to your responsibilities. Explain how the budget was determined, and your role in overseeing your department's portions.

4. How many people did you supervise on your last job?

Explain the structure of your department and your role as a manager.

5. Do you like working with figures more than words?

Be honest, but put a positive spin on your least favorite duties.

6. In your current or last position, what are or were your five most significant accomplishments?

Refer to the key accomplishments already identified on your resume.

Tough Questions (continued)

Job Search Questions:

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

Finding a job is easy; finding the right job is more difficult. Stress that you are being selective, and are looking for the right "fit."

2. Have you thought of leaving your present position before?

If so, what do you think held you there? Explain that your job is no longer challenging, and that you feel your talents can be best used elsewhere.

3. What do you think of your boss?

Be as positive as you can, even if you really don't believe it.

4. Would you describe a situation in which your work was criticized?

Be as positive as you can and emphasize what you learn from the situation.

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

Keep your answers related to this company's field, and don't give out specific company names.

Your Work Habits & Style:

1. If I spoke to your previous boss, what would they say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

Emphasize your skills, and don't be overly negative about your weaknesses; it's always safer to identify a lack of a skill as an area for improvement rather than a shortcoming.

2. Can you work under pressure, deadlines, etc.?

Yes, it's a way of life in business. Be sure to cite examples of your success.

3. How have you changed the nature of your job?

Explain that communication is important, and that you would first discuss the issues privately.

4. Do you prefer staff or line work? Why?

It depends on the job and its challenges.

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

Keep it brief and don't brag.

6. Do you feel you might be better off in a different size company? Different type of company?

It depends on the job—elaborate slightly.

7. How do you resolve conflict on team projects?

Explain that communication is important, and that you would first discuss the issues privately.

8. What was the most difficult decision you ever had to make?

Try to relate your responses to the prospective employment situation.

Tough Questions (continued)

Personality Questions:

1. Do you generally speak to people before they speak to you?

It depends on the circumstances.

2. What was the last book you read? Movie you saw? Sporting even you attended?

Talk about books, sports, or films to show that you have a balance in your life.

3. What is the toughest part of a job for you?

Be honest. Remember, not everyone can do everything.

4. Are you creative?

Yes. Give examples that relate to your current job.

5. How would you describe your personality?

Balance is a good word to use, but remember the type of company you are interviewing at. Some companies may want someone who is aggressive and a go-getter.

6. Are you a leader?

Absolutely! Cite specific examples using your current job as a reference point.

7. What are your future goals?

Avoid, "I would like the job you advertised. Instead, give long-range goals.

8. What are your strengths?

Present at least three and relate them to the company and job you are interviewing for.

9. What are your weaknesses?

Don't say that you don't have any. Try not to cite personal characteristics as weaknesses, but be ready to have one if the interviewer presses. Turn a negative into a positive answer; for example: "I sometimes intend on completing an assignment and get too deeply involved when we are late."

Tough Questions (continued)

Salary Questions:

1. How much are you looking for?

Answer with a question, for example; “What is the salary range for similar jobs in your company?” If the interviewer doesn’t answer, then give a range of what you understand you are worth in the marketplace. Check out Monster.com’s Salary Center (monster.salary.com), PayScale.com (www.payscale.com), Salary.com (www.salary.com), or the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov/data).

2. How much do you expect, if we offer this position to you?

Be careful; the market value of the job may be the key answer. For example: “My understanding is that a job like the one you’re describing may be in the range of \$____.”

3. What kind of salary are you worth?

Have a specific figure in mind; don’t be hesitant. Or you may say, “It is difficult to put a monetary value on such a wonderful opportunity. Perhaps you could give me an idea on the base pay.”

Your Career Goals:

1. If you could start your career again, what would you do differently?

Nothing. I am happy with my career path thus far, and have learned and grown so much.

2. What career options do you have at the moment?

“I see three areas of interest...” Relate those to the position and industry.

3. How would you describe the essence of success? According to your definition of success, how successful have you been so far?

Think carefully about your answer and relate it to your career accomplishments.

Example of Interview Summary

Personal history summary – “CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER”

Previous Experience or Related Work Experience

This can include session work here at school. Also, other semi-related experience that shows a strong work ethic, dependability and longevity.

Education

Specific skills: *Recording and Mixing, Digital and Analog formats, Pro Tools, DAW, DVD Authoring, Live Sound, Maintenance, Tape Calibration, Compositing, 3D Modeling, Designer, Illustrator, Final Cut Pro, After Effects, Photoshop, Maya, Cinema 4D, InDesign, Unreal Game Engine, Mudd Box, Z Brush, and Nuke., Deadlines and experience working with diverse groups of clients and styles of music.*

Character Traits

- Strong work ethic
- Honest
- Fortitude
- Trustworthy
- Integrity
- Responsible
- Dependable
- Loyal
- Reliable
- Strength
- Courage
- Moral fiber

Personality Traits

- I'm told I have a good sense of humor
- Good Attitude
- Happy person (by nature)
- Work well under pressure
- Calm demeanor
- Get along with people well
- Work well in teams or independently
- Take criticism well
- Take direction well
- Have a happy personal life