

Job Interview Questions to be Aware of and How to Navigate Them



Interview techniques today are becoming more and more complex. It's very rare that hiring managers ask job applicants only the A, B, C questions anymore. Of course, there's still going to be the stock questions about your experience, challenges, and successes. However, the interviews of today are more complex and involved.

If you're finding yourself in a position where it's time for a career change or new opportunity, understanding the dynamics of the modern interview process, and how to handle them, is essential if you want to give yourself the best chance of advancing through the process. Below are some of the most common trick questions you'll face, and the best strategies for navigating them.

Tell Me About Yourself

This is one of those open-ended questions you're bound to hear in almost every interview. And, there are million ways you can answer it. The reality is, you're probably not sure how to go about "telling someone about yourself."

On the surface, this question probably seems like a friendly invitation. Don't be fooled, however. The question is designed specifically to catch you off guard.

When someone asks you this question in a job interview, what they really want to know is what you can do for them. In other words, how can your skills and

experience be of benefit to the company?

The pitfall of most people when they answer this question is that they ramble on about all the neat things they've done and accomplished since birth. This is the worst thing you can do.

Instead, highlight some specific skills and real-life experiences that connect with the company and job you're applying for. The more you can show the interviewer how you can be of help and benefit, the better off you'll be.

What is Your Biggest Weakness?

Even though this question also seems straightforward, it's anything but. When an interviewer asks you about your biggest weakness, what they really want to know is how self-aware you are..

While a job interview is a place where you're trying to present the best version of yourself, interviewers are keen to know about your ability to identify your shortcomings and your willingness to admit them. You can show your willingness to learn or adapt by expressing a willingness to work on those weaknesses to turn them into a strength. Sure, you want to appear confident in your job interview. However, the last thing you want to do is come across as arrogant.

Tell Me About Your Favorite Boss

Everyone has bosses they've liked more than others throughout their careers. Yet again, this question seems pretty direct, and you might even be excited to answer it. However, before you go off rambling about the chill boss at your last job that let you skip out early on Fridays, take a moment to think a little deeper.

When you answer this question, you should highlight your favorite boss' professional strengths. Were they an expert communicator? Did they empower the people around them to do their jobs? What did you learn from them? These are the kinds of characteristics you want to talk about.

Your work isn't done though. The next question you're going to face is, "tell me about your least favorite boss."

Your immediate reaction to this question might be trash the boss that you just couldn't stand. This is absolutely the last thing you should do. Just like the previous question, you should stay away from personal attacks and highlight some things you thought that the boss you didn't care for, could have done better.

When you answer both of these questions, what you're really doing is telling your prospective employer what you will and won't tolerate in the workplace. You're providing critical insight into your ethics, values and work style, and your preference on how to be managed.

Here's Our Policy X... What do You Think About That?

Here again, it's easy to jump straight in and offer your opinion. Think before you speak though. What makes this question so tricky, is that it's riddled with incomplete information.

The best strategy for answering this question is actually by asking questions in return. Before you give an answer, you want to have know as much information as you can. You might start by asking what led to the policy being structured the way it is? What problem is it designed to address?

The majority of people completely miss this question in job interviews. If you're able to ask questions and provide a reasoned answer based on the information you've compiled, the interviewer will see that you're level-headed and have the ability to think critically.

Job interviews are a nervous experience for everyone. No matter how many times you've been through them, you're still going to get butterflies in your stomach and have sweaty palms. If you remember to think of a job interview as a conversation, and keep your eyes and ears open for those trick questions that seem simple on the surface, you'll have a leg up on the competition. Responding thoughtfully and intelligibly just might be what makes all the difference.

Common Mistakes to Avoid During a Job Interview



You're out of practice. You were in your most recent role as a manager or team lead for a number of years. You conducted plenty of interviews and saw a wide spectrum of performances. Now, for whatever reason, you're sitting on the opposite side of the desk as the interviewee. You're probably thinking that you've got it down based on all your experience. Did it ever occur to you that it might be a good idea to brush up a little just in case? It's true. Even the most seasoned job applicants make mistakes.

If you're on the hunt for a new job, keep in mind some of the common interview mistakes below.

Not Starting on Time

This one seems obvious. You always give yourself plenty of time when showing up to an interview. Finding your way through an unfamiliar building, getting through security, filling out paperwork - there's a lot to get done before the interview even starts.

But, being on time mentally is just as important as showing up physically. You're going to be nervous in the first moments of the interview. Your mind will be racing and your palms a little sweaty.

That's only natural. The key is to be sharp from the second the interview starts. Make it a point to actively listen to the questions being asked and wait until the interviewer has finished asking the question before jumping in with your answer.

Take your time giving thoughtful answers and speak slowly. Even though most interviewees settle down eventually, it's to your advantage to be fully present from the start.

Talking Too Much About Yourself

It seems a little counterintuitive but, talking about yourself too much in an interview is a mistake. Sure, the interview is your chance to prove you're the right candidate for the job. But put yourself in the shoes of the interviewer. They're focused on finding the person that's going to benefit their company the most. In your answers, talk about projects you worked on as part of a team, and what your contribution to the team was. This shows what you can do as an individual, and that you can act as part of a team.

Instead of solely highlighting your previous experience and making it known that you're gritty and up for the challenge, ask about the company. What are their priorities, goals and objectives? What about their culture do people love? Are there any gaps that need to be filled? When you ask poignant questions, you convey to the interviewer that your primary concern is adding as much value as you can.

Body Language

This one seems obvious but, it's a mistake that too many interviewees make. Most communication is non-verbal. The interviewer is going to be watching how you comport yourself. Do you shake hands firmly when you walk in the door? Do you make eye contact? Or are your eyes darting every which way? Do you slouch in your chair? Or does your posture let the person across the desk know that you're fully engaged? Do you tend to fidget or have happy feet? And what about your tone of voice? Is it low and lethargic? Or is it upbeat and excited? Even though these nuances seem trivial, they go a long way in creating a first impression and in letting the interviewer know who you are.

Not Being Specific Enough

When you're in the process of trying to find a new job, it's easy to fall into the mindset that you'll take any job over your last position. When this happens,

there's a tendency to get into the habit of talking about your qualifications. That's not enough in an interview. You need to highlight how your qualifications are fit specifically for the job you're applying for, and what you were able to accomplish for your employers. When you do this successfully, you convey that you really want this job, what you might be able to accomplish for them, and set yourself apart from the competition.

Not Preparing for a Phone Interview

You might think that a phone interview is easier than a live interview. It's actually the opposite. In a live setting, you're able to read and give off non-verbal cues. All of that communication is lost when you talk on the phone. As a result, what you say becomes all the more important. If you have a phone interview scheduled, take the extra time to practice with a colleague or someone with phone interview experience. Also make sure your phone is fully charged and you are in a location that gets good reception. You'll be glad you did.

Being on the job hunt can be stressful. Between the unknowns, customizing resumes, and waiting to see if you landed a job or even an interview, there's a lot to juggle. Not to mention the stress of interviewing itself. The good news is, if you take the time to prepare, and are aware of some common mistakes to avoid, your chances of being successful increase exponentially.