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Introduction

INTERVIEWS ARE TOUGH.

Everyone is nervous on interviews, but with a little practice and guidance from this ebook, you will be able to confidently answer the most difficult interview questions and land the job. In general, be upbeat and positive. Never be negative.

Rehearse your answers and time them. Never talk for more than 2 minutes straight.

Don't try to memorize answers word for word. Use the answers shown here as a guide only, and don't be afraid to include your own thoughts and words. To help you remember key concepts, jot down and review a few key words for each answer. Rehearse your answers frequently, and they will come to you naturally in an interview.

Find out what an employer wants most in his or her ideal candidate, then show how you meet those qualifications. In other words, you must match your abilities, with the needs of the employer. You must sell what the buyer is buying. To do that, before you know what to emphasize in your answers, you must find out what the buyer is buying and what he is looking for. You will see how to bring this off skillfully as you read the first two questions of this ebook. But regardless of how you accomplish it, you must remember this strategy above all: before blurting out your qualifications, you must get some idea of what the employer wants most. Once you know what he /she wants, you can then present your qualifications as the perfect "key" that fits the "lock" of that position.

Other important interview strategies:

- •Turn weaknesses into strengths (You'll see how to do this in this eBook.)
- •Think before you answer. A pause to collect your thoughts is a hallmark of a thoughtful person.
- Put a positive spin on events and situations you would normally regard as negative. The best salespeople, as well as the best liked interview candidates, come off as being naturally optimistic, "can do" people
- · Be honest

Good luck.

-The JobNetwork Team





"TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF"

While this might seem like a simple question to answer with people you've just met, it can be nerve-wracking at a job interview. 80% of all interviews begin with this "innocent" question. What is too much or too little information? During the interview process, first impressions are important and can make the difference in whether you get the job or not. A few handy tips can help you sail through this important interview question to be prepared when the time comes.

1. Include All Relevant Information.

Answer in an inclusive way, but include all the information necessary to give the hiring manager an idea of what you're about. An ideal response should compel the recruiter to ask you more questions and include parts of your past, present, and future. An interesting response can encourage a recruiter to explore your application further. Whether applying for sales jobs or other types of jobs, the interview process is the same.

2. Answer. Don't Ramble.

The recruiter isn't interested in hearing a dissertation on your past life. Keep information to what is most relevant, and focus on the job description. Try to keep your response under one minute—that's time enough to respond and will show the recruiter your answer is well thought out and articulate. It might be a good idea to write out a response to this question in advance, time it until it is short enough, and practice beforehand.

3. Think About the Job.

Hiring the wrong person for the job can reflect badly on the recruiter, so he or she wants to find the best qualified person. Getting an interviewee to talk is the best way to go about that, but rambling on about inconsequential things can be a turn-off. Give the recruiter a chance to ask questions and don't think it is a race to the finish. Be concise and to the point.



4. Begin With Your Education.

If you are qualified for the educational requirements for the job, begin your statement with your education—what and when you studied. If you don't meet the educational requirements but have experience that shows you can do the job, then start there. Whatever you do, don't lie about your education. That can perhaps land you a job but can also cost you the job when the employer finds out. In addition, remember to not get too detailed. There will be plenty of other questions to answer, and you can fill in later.

5. Present Your Selling Points.

No, the recruiter doesn't need to know that you worked in a snack shop during high school or that you have four children and a house full of pets. Going through all the jobs you've ever held, even though these jobs are not relevant to this one, is a mistake (as you will be able to tell when the recruiter's eyes start to glaze over). Keep your focus relevant to the job application and highlight the skills and expertise you have acquired from at least two other jobs that make you a great candidate for the job.

6. Hit the Finish Line.

Conclude the answer to this question with why you think your qualifications are a great fit for the job. If you are employed at the time of the interview, include how much you would like this opportunity because it offers a challenge and excitement. Don't say that your current job, boss, or environment is a problem for you. Statements of discontent about a current job may make the recruiter think you could be a difficult person or are job shopping until you find the one that suits you and will take whatever you can get in the meantime.





"WHY SHOULD I HIRE YOU?"

In an interview, few questions can throw off a candidate's poise like the simple, "Why should I hire you?" After all, it seems redundant. What have you been talking about this entire time, if not the reasons why the company should hire you?! But while it may seem like a filler question, it's one you should definitely pay close attention to answering.

The question isn't a trap designed to trip you up and take you down. It's a legitimate question that asks you to demonstrate why this job, specifically, is a great fit for you. Take a deep breath if you need to, and make sure you keep up the same tone you've been using throughout the interview.

BEST ANSWER:

By now you can see how critical it is to apply the overall strategy of uncovering the employer's needs before you answer questions. If you know the employer's greatest needs and desires, this question will give you a big leg up over other candidates because you will give him better reasons for hiring you than anyone else is likely to...reasons tied directly to his needs.

Whether your interviewer asks you this question explicitly or not, this is the most important question of your interview because he must answer this question favorably in his own mind before you will be hired. So help him out! Walk through each of the position's requirements as you understand them, and follow each with a reason why you meet that requirement so well.





Example: "As I understand your needs, you are first and foremost looking for someone who can manage the sales and marketing of your book publishing division. As you've said you need someone with a strong background in trade book sales. This is where I've spent almost all of my career, so I've chalked up 18 years of experience exactly in this area. I believe that I know the right contacts, methods, principles, and successful management techniques as well as any person can in our industry."

"You also need someone who can expand your book distribution channels. In my prior post, my innovative promotional ideas doubled, then tripled, the number of outlets selling our books. I'm confident I can do the same for you."

"You need someone to give a new shot in the arm to your mail order sales, someone who knows how to sell in space and direct mail media. Here, too, I believe I have exactly the experience you need. In the last five years, I've increased our mail order book sales from \$600,000 to \$2,800,000, and now we're the country's second leading marketer of scientific and medical books by mail." Etc., etc., etc.,

Every one of these selling "couplets" (his need matched by your qualifications) is a touchdown that runs up your score. It is your best opportunity to outsell your competition.



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?



"WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?"

When you're sitting in an interview, there's a good chance that most of your mental real estate lately has been going toward this day. So when the interviewer asks you where you see yourself in five years, it can be a bit of a jolt to suddenly think about the long term. Knowing the reasoning behind it and doing some prep ahead of time, you can be ready to handle this one like a pro on interview day.

1. Understand why you're being asked.

Five years is a long time away from now. We'll have a different president, and maybe hoverboards will finally be a reality. (We can dream, right?) The interviewer isn't asking you to predict fashion trends or whatever social media scene will replace Instagramming your food. Rather, he or she is trying to do two things: 1) gauge your commitment to this job; and/or 2) see what kind of ambitions you hold dear to your heart. So while thinking about society's future might be fun, focus your thoughts on your professional development.

2. Don't exaggerate, even to yourself.

"Running this place" is not an answer that will get you in the door. Think about where you realistically see yourself. Are you mid-management now, and see yourself higher up that ladder? Are you just starting out, but you'd like to be managing others in five years? Those are realistic goals. Assuming you'll be the next CEO is, well, not. (Unless you're interviewing right now to be the CEO, in which case this is a totally valid response.) Well before interview day, think about what you want out of this job, and what it would mean for your future.

3. Emphasize the experience angle over the job title.

In my experience, job titles are too much of a moving target, even within a company. Positions are created, changed, and reimagined all the time. Rather than strain to figure out what your business cards will say, talk about what you hope to have achieved in the meantime. "I see myself as having deep expertise in this field, and this position is the way to do that." Or "I would like to be taking the lead on projects, and become a great manager like the ones I've had along the way."

4. Don't be brutally candid.

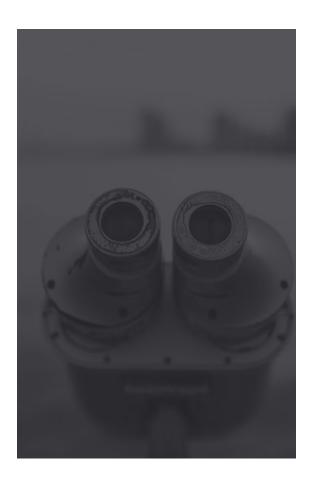
If you're interviewing for a receptionist position with a financial company when you're really hoping to become an assistant at a music company, this is not the time to come clean and advertise that fact. The interviewer is spending a lot of time and energy on this hiring process, and him or her knowing that you're only doing this as a Plan B is not going to get you any bonus points. So while you should never lie to answer this question, and say that all you've ever wanted is to be answering phones at BankCorp in five years, you can talk around that. Emphasize the skills you'd like to gain in this position, and talk about how you're looking forward to growing roots and developing as a professional.

5. Emphasize your commitment for the long haul.

Again, the interviewer is looking to confirm that you're not a flight risk or someone who will give half-hearted effort to this job. While you talk about your goals for the next five years, make sure you emphasize how this position and this company will help you achieve that—and perhaps more importantly, emphasize what you bring that will help the company move forward in that time as well.

Example: "I am definitely interested in making a long-term commitment to my next position. Judging by what you've told me about this position, it's exactly what I'm looking for and what I am very well qualified to do. In terms of my future career path, I'm confident that if I do my work with excellence, opportunities will inevitable open up for me. It's always been that way in my career, and I'm confident I'll have similar opportunities here."

You don't need a crystal ball to answer this question—just some forward-looking talking points that show you're the right person for this company, for the right reasons.





Question #4





"WHAT'S YOUR PERFECT DAY?"

Recently, it came out that Facebook's head recruiter's favorite interview question to ask is more like a personal essay question. "On your very best day at work—the day you come home and think you have the best job in the world—what did you do that day?" Now that this is making the viral rounds, don't be surprised to hear it in your non-Facebook interviews as well. Here are some tips for breaking the question down and being ready to pounce on it.

Understand what the question is probing.

This is a test to see what you value and prioritize in your work life. Your perfect workday is what you want to achieve—just on a more micro level than the ol' "Where do you see yourself in five years?" question.

Tailor your answer to this job.

This isn't the place to debut your fantasy career as a tennis pro. If the job you're interviewing for includes managing a team, talk about how the day includes productive meetings with your squad (leadership skills). If you'll be in a marketing role, talk about how the day would include a breakthrough by using a new form of digital media (tech-savvy skills and being results oriented). This question is a great way to wave your passion points in with the skills you want to emphasize in the interview.

Don't spin an epic story.

Keep it brief, 2-3 points. Hint: if you start including characters with backstory, you've gone too far. Never forget that you're in a job interview, not a casual conversation.

Be authentic.

If you're passionate about an aspect of your career, here is an excellent chance to gush about it. The interviewer is trying to gauge your personal relationship to your job, and this question is an opportunity to show how connected and committed you can be. As interview questions go, this one is actually a pretty useful one to consider for your general career goals. Long before you step into any interview, you should know what makes you tick, professionally. And being able to focus in on that in an interview will make you a stronger, more confident candidate.

"THE SALARY QUESTION" HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU WANT?



"THE SALARY QUESTION"

There's a bunch of things you're not really supposed to talk about in interviews. Politics, religion, that weird growth you noticed on your arm this morning. Ideally, we could add salary to that list as well.

The job application process has a number of separate stages: applying, interviewing, job offer, then salary negotiation and acceptance. Most employers stick to this, and let the money talk wait until things are further along. But if they jump the gun and ask you up front for a) your current salary or b) desired salary, what do you do?

Never bring up salary first

It can be tempting to wrap up a great interview with, "So what would my salary be?" The interview is about selling yourself, and packaging yourself, so keep the emphasis on your awesomeness as a candidate. Putting a dollar figure on that awesomeness comes later, after they decide they want to hire you, so it's best not to appear too eager. Also, it shifts the focus away from your skills and qualifications, and puts a price tag square on your forehead. And the interviewer just might not be the appropriate person to discuss salary in the first place. Many companies keep the financial negotiation part limited to HR, while your interview might be with someone who has little control over that aspect.

Don't feel obligated to talk numbers.

If they ask you what you expect the salary to be for this position, it's okay to defer by saying, "I'm sure the company offers a fair range, and I look forward to discussing that in the future." Answering the question directly can be risky: go too high, and they may stop considering you. Go too low, and you may get low-balled on the salary after you get a job offer, if they know they can get away with a lesser amount.

Keep things vague.

If the interviewer asks you what your current salary is, you can estimate a range, and bump it up slightly to include any benefits you might have. Don't lie—if you tack on \$10K to what you're currently making, the true numbers will likely come up later, making you look look both foolish and shifty.

Don't bust out your W-2 from last year.

Even if you're asked about your current salary, it's not really appropriate for anyone to ask you for specific documentation at that point.

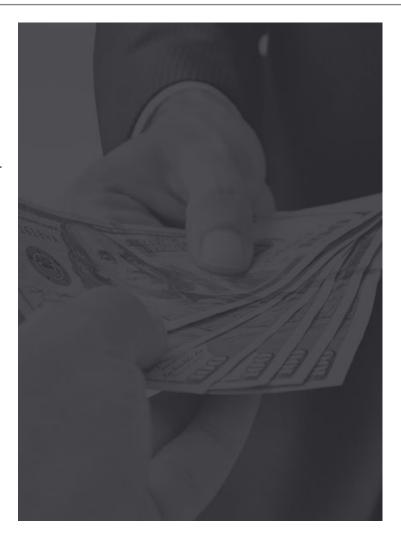
Shift focus away from money as quickly as possible.

Emphasize that while the salary is obviously an important part of any job, you're more concerned about opportunity and growth. You can say that right now, you're more interested in talking about how you'd fit in with this position.

Some research up front, and have a number in mind.

Even though there shouldn't be extensive talk about the salary at this point, you should already have a good idea of the range, whether it's from the initial job description or some basic research about the job title or company. That way, if the subject does come up and you name a number because you feel put on the spot, you're working with reasonable figures.

In an interview, the focus should be on you, not on the financial bottom line. But if it does come up, being prepared to deflect it and move on like the smooth operator that you are will help you get through an awkward moment.





Question #6

CANICONTACT YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER?



"CAN I CONTACT YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER?"

If anyone asks where you were today, you were at a dentist's appointment. Right? The vague "appointment," always in the middle of the day, is a classic tactic for interviewing for new jobs while you're still at your current one. You just put up your "out of office" message and hope no one notices that you're awfully dressed up for a Wednesday. However, your slick cover story could be blown if the interviewing company contacts your current one. There's a chance he or she might ask you the dreaded question: "Hey, do you mind if I contact your current employer?"

The person interviewing you merely wants to get a sense of what you're like as a current employee. He or she knows it's awkward, but it's a valid question. After all, your current boss might know you're interviewing for a variety of reasons (like your job is ending due to a layoff, your job is temporary, etc.)—so it certainly can't hurt to ask.

Don't panic, and assume that everyone will soon know about your secret interview.

It's definitely okay to say that you'd like to keep your job search under wraps for now. Have some current colleagues in mind that you could include as a reference. If you have a trusted coworker who has a clear sense of your abilities as an employee, but who can also be trusted with a secret (and who has been told ahead of time that you're on the hunt), then offer them as an alternative reference. That way, you can say to the interviewer that you're not comfortable if she talks to your current boss yet, but that you have another reference at your current company whom she could talk to in the meantime.

Be up-front that you're not comfortable offering up your current boss as a reference at this time. Emphasize that your available references are well aware of your abilities as an employee, and let the interviewer know that they're happy to talk to him or her in the meantime.

After you say that you're not comfortable with the interviewer talking with your current manager, make sure they know that it's not a final "no." Let him or her know that when the timing is right, you'd be open to them contacting your current company. If all goes well, you can sneak back into your office with a spring in your step, and secure in the knowledge that your secret is safe for now.





"WHY HAVE YOU HAD SO MANY JOBS?"

You're sitting in the interview, and things are going fine, when the hiring manager looks up from your resume, eyebrow raised, and asks the question you've been dreading: "You've had an awful lot of jobs, haven't you? Can you walk me through that?"

Understand why this is a potential red flag

You probably had reasons for every job switch on your resume. The interviewer doesn't know that—all he or she knows is what's printed in black and white on that fancy cream-colored stock. He or she doesn't know if you've been fired from every position you've ever held, or if you're a serial quitter when a shinier new opportunity comes along. Before they can hire you, they need to get a solid sense of your employment history to help determine whether you're a good bet for this company. If you look like a flight risk, the company might not be willing to make that investment in you.

Don't assume this makes you look bad by default

The fact that the interviewer is calling attention to your, uh, varied history is not meant to make you feel ashamed, like some kind of job floozy. If you're asked to clarify (or even just given an opening to do so), take a deep breath and make sure you have an elevator pitch-style explanation.

Make sure you have context for all of it

A shoulder shrug or a long, awkward pause is the least helpful response you can give here. Be prepared to talk about why you have a variety of jobs listed over a short(ish) amount of time.

DON'T make stuff up

If you're asked about the jobs you've listed on your resume, be honest. You don't have to give every gory detail about why you left a particular job, but if you stick to the broad outlines you should be okay. For example: I was let go due to a company restructuring at XYZ Corp, and it wasn't until I landed at the Elite Agency the following year that I felt like I was back on track, professionally.

"WHY HAVE YOU HAD SO MANY JOBS?"

It's okay to admit that you left jobs in the past because they weren't a great fit for your professional goals, but be sure to reiterate that you see this current opportunity as having long-term potential.

DO consider revising your resume to edit out some job change details

Do you really need every single one of your jobs on there? If you have entries on your resume that lasted less than a year, think about whether that job really adds relevance to your history. If you're not using anyone from that job as a reference and it wasn't a major cornerstone of your relevant experience, then consider dropping it.

For example, this block of your resume... Edgy.com Marketing Coordinator, March 2010 – February 2012

Whirlwind Inc. Marketing Coordinator, Narch 2010 – February 2012

Whateling Coordinator, February 2012 – November 2012

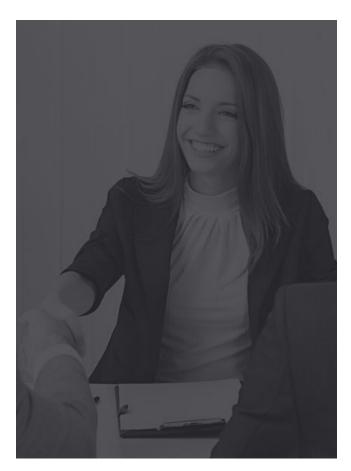
MakeAMatch.com Social Media Director, November 2012 – June 2014

...could be narrowed down to this:

Edgy.com Marketing Coordinator, 2010 – 2012 MakeAMatch.com Social Media Director, 2012 – 2014

This way, you've smoothed over an interim job that looks like an odd blip, without leaving a gap. This can also avoid awkward explanations about why you left that middle job so soon.

If this question comes up in your interview, take heart—it's not necessarily a deal breaker. It's a conversational opening to give context and explain how those jobs turned you into the stellar candidate you are today.







"AREN'T YOU OVERQUALIFIED FOR THIS POSITION?"

The employer may be concerned that you'll grow dissatisfied and leave. As with any objection, don't view this as a sign of imminent defeat. It's an invitation to teach the interviewer a new way to think about this situation, seeing advantages instead of drawbacks.

Example Answers:

- "I also believe that there could be very positive benefits for both of us in this match."
- "Because of my unusually strong experience in ______, I could start to contribute right away, perhaps much faster than someone who'd have to be brought along more slowly."
- "There's also the value of all the training and years of experience that other companies have invested tens of thousands of dollars to give me. You'd be getting all the value of that without having to pay an extra dime for it. With someone who has yet to acquire that experience, he'd have to gain it on your nickel."
- "I could also help you in many things they don't teach at the Harvard Business School. For example...(how to hire, train, motivate, etc.) When it comes to knowing how to work well with people and getting the most out of them, there's just no substitute for what you learn over many years of front-line experience. Your company would gain all this, too."
- "From my side, there are strong benefits, as well. Right now, I am unemployed. I want to work, very much, and the position you have here is exactly what I love to do and am best at. I'll be happy doing this work and that's what matters most to me, a lot more that money or title."
- "Most important, I'm looking to make a long term commitment in my career now. I've had enough of job-hunting and want a permanent spot at this point in my career. I also know that if I perform this job with excellence, other opportunities cannot help but open up for me right here. In time, I'll find many other ways to help this company and in so doing, help myself. I really am looking to make a long-term commitment."

NOTE: The main concern behind the "overqualified" question is that you will leave your new employer as soon as something better comes your way. Anything you can say to demonstrate the sincerity of your commitment to the employer and reassure him that you're looking to stay for the long-term will help you overcome this objection.

WHY ARE YOU LEAVING (OR DID YOU LEAVE) THIS POSITION?



"WHY ARE YOU LEAVING (OR DID YOU LEAVE) THIS POSITION?"

Never badmouth your previous industry, company, board, boss, staff, employees or customers. This rule is inviolable: never be negative. Any mud you hurl will only soil your suit. Especially avoid words like "personality clash", "didn't get along", or others which cast a shadow on your competence, integrity, or temperament.

BEST ANSWER:

If you have a job presently

If you're not yet 100% committed to leaving your present post, don't be afraid to say so. Since you have a job, you are in a stronger position than someone who does not. But don't be coy either. State honestly what you'd be hoping to find in a new spot. Of course, as stated often before, your answer will be all the stronger if you have already uncovered what this position is all about and you match your desires to it.

If you do not presently have a job

Never lie about having been fired. It's unethical – and too easily checked. But do try to deflect the reason from you personally. If your firing was the result of a takeover, merger, division wide layoff, etc., so much the better. But you should also do something totally unnatural that will demonstrate consummate professionalism. Even if it hurts, describe your own firing – candidly, succinctly and without a trace of bitterness – from the company's point-of-view, indicating that you could understand why it happened and you might have made the same decision yourself.

Your stature will rise immensely and, most important of all, you will show you are healed from the wounds inflicted by the firing. You will enhance your image as first-class management material and stand head and shoulders above the legions of firing victims who, at the slightest provocation, zip open their shirts to expose their battle scars and decry the unfairness of it all.

For all prior positions

Make sure you've prepared a brief reason for leaving. Best reasons: more money, opportunity, responsibility or growth.



Question #10

WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU MAKE IF YOU CAME ON BOARD?

the jobnetwork

"WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU MAKE IF YOU CAME ON BOARD?"

Watch out! This question can derail your candidacy faster than a bomb on the tracks – and just as you are about to be hired. No matter how bright you are, you cannot know the right actions to take in a position before you settle in and get to know the operation's strengths, weaknesses key people, financial condition, methods of operation, etc. If you lunge at this temptingly baited question, you will probably be seen as someone who shoots from the hip.

Moreover, no matter how comfortable you may feel with your interviewer, you are still an outsider. No one, including your interviewer, likes to think that a know-it-all outsider is going to come in, turn the place upside down and with sweeping, grand gestures, promptly demonstrate what jerks everybody's been for years.

You, of course, will want to take a good hard look at everything the company is doing before making any recommendations.

Example Answers:

"Well, I wouldn't be a very good doctor if I gave my diagnosis before the examination. Should you hire me, as I hope you will, I'd want to take a good hard look at everything you're doing and understand why it's being done that way. I'd like to have in-depth meetings with you and the other key people to get a deeper grasp of what you feel you're doing right and what could be improved."

"From what you've told me so far, the areas of greatest concern to you are..." (name them. Then do two things. First, ask if these are in fact his major concerns. If so then reaffirm how your experience in meeting similar needs elsewhere might prove very helpful).



About The Job Network

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UPDATE JOB TITLE & LOCATION

Tell us your desired job tiTle and location to receive the highest quality matches



ADJUST FREQUENCY

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