

Sample questions you may be asked in an interview

You may be asked a range for questions in an interview from very basic and easy to answer to questions that are designed to really test you. To assist you prepare for an interview ask a family member or friend to ask some of the following questions and then think about how you responded after you have done this.

About you;

- Tell me a little bit about yourself?
- What was your favourite job to date?
- What is your ideal job?
- What kind of salary are you currently earning?
- What are your salary expectations?
- How do you react to criticism?
- If you could start your career over, what would you do differently?
- How do your peers describe you?
- How do the staff who have reported to you describe you?
- Why do you think you have management potential?
- Why do you think you want to work in a company of this size?
- How do you handle conflict situations?

About your last job;

- Why did you leave your last job?
- Why are you looking for a new job?
- What did you most like about your last job?
- What did you least like about your last job?
- What did you think about your last boss?
- What were the best things about your previous employer?
- What were the things you least admired in your last employer?
- Name two specific things you learnt in your last job?
- Name one thing you would like to have improved about your own performance in your last job?

About accomplishments;

- What were your three main accomplishments in your last job? (Or career to date?)
- What do others consider you are good at?
- Name an accomplishment that you achieved as part of a team, and what was your role in achievement?
- Describe your creative streak
- Are you a good leader? Why?
- What size budget are you used to administering?

About Education;

- What subjects did you most enjoy at school (or university?). Why?
- What subjects did you least enjoy at school (or university?). Why?
- When you look back what do you feel you got out of your education?
- In what way do you intend continuing your education or training from now?
- How do you feel about taking additional training course?

Sample questions you may be asked in an interview (continued)

Attitude and Job approach;

- What are your views on what makes a good employee?
- What are your views on what makes a good employer?
- What do you look for in a job? Why?
- What do you expect to be doing in 5 years (or maybe 10 or 15)
- What attracts you about this position?
- What attracts you about this particular employer?
- What things would you prefer not to have to do in your next job?
- How do you ensure your communication in your roles remains acceptable?
- What do you do to get ahead in your job?
- What is your philosophy on management?
- If you were recruiting someone for this job what sorts of strengths would you be looking for?
- How do you rate your skills (or those strengths answered above)?
- Have you been part of a company that has undergone major change? How did it affect you? Did you have to change your own role and how quickly did you adapt?
- What do you consider to be your weaknesses?
- What could you do to improve on any weaknesses you have?

Previous job responsibilities;

- Tell me about your responsibilities at XXX company (and then at each previous employer)

Some harder questions;

- We are all guilty of upsetting people at times. Tell me about an incident when you did? How did you try and correct the situation?
- Describe the toughest problem you had to face in the last 12 months. How did you handle it? What would you do differently if you had the chance?
- What specifically have you done to set an example to your staff (or your peers)
- What was the toughest decision you had to make in your present (or last role). Were there any alternatives?

Other general questions;

- Why are you changing jobs? – Be positive
- What did you like most about your last job? – Looking for thoughtful answer
- What improvement would you have made to last job? – Shows creativity
- What is the most interesting job or project you have had so far? – to see if you like a challenge
- Describe the best person you have worked with – sees what qualities you admire
- What kinds of people annoy you? Shows traits you are unlikely to have
- Describe how you have handled work emergencies – will you put in the effort
- How would you like the company to help you if you join us – looking for confidence but someone who knows they don't know everything

How to answer the above questions

Specific techniques for answering questions;

- Listen and observe the interviewers reactions and style
- Answer all questions briefly and positively, avoid yes / no answers. Be articulate, avoid long pauses, do not mumble your words or talk unclearly
- Concentrate on giving a valid answer, try to avoid the interviewer prompting you
- Be reassuring and make sure you are honest with your responses at all times. If you don't know an answer or are unable to respond say so
- Talk in a manner similar to the way the interviewer does, if they are very serious and professional then follow their lead, if they are very casual then you should adopt something similar while avoiding the loss of your own professionalism
- Keep cool, don't be provoked. Some times interviewers will want to see how you handle pressure especially for certain jobs
- Never criticise your past employers or anyone you worked with. If need be, comment on factual matters only and what you may have personally done differently
- Focus your answers on the type of roles you are applying for, and match your responses to those you expect they may wish to hear without making it too obvious

When you are answering questions about your achievements use the SARB technique;

- **S** Situation or Background to the achievement or problem to solve
- **A** Action you personally took to resolve the problem
- **R** Results and Outcomes
- **B** Benefits to the company, or person involved

The most frequently overlooked comment is in respect of the benefit, yet this is what illustrates the success of your actions. Employers look for success and things you have done which will differentiate you to others who may be applying for the same position

Final tips;

- Respond with interest to everything raised
- Make sure all your answers are relevant to the employers needs and demonstrates you will be a valuable acquisition to the company
- It is up to you to convince the employer or employment agency that you are the one that should be employed. Clearly demonstrate your skills and plan to be better than any other candidate they will be meeting
- Ask intelligent questions and present yourself in the best way you can from first meeting until you have left the building
- If you are struggling with a question, pause and think about the question, if necessary ask for clarification, ask for more information, ask if your answer was what they were looking for