



INTERVIEW ANSWERS

Many interview questions can be answered with a similar response. When preparing for an interview, study the related questions and prepare an answer that you could use for any of the related questions. During the interview, if you must repeat an answer, just state...“like I mentioned before”...or...“as I was saying previously”. It is best to always relate information to a job, volunteer work, or training related experiences. Personal information (your age, marital status, family etc.) is not relevant at an interview.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO YOUR STRENGTHS

- Tell me about yourself
- What qualities do you have to do this job?
- Why do you think you qualified for this position?
- Tell me about your strengths
- Tell me about your job experience that makes you suited to our opening
- What do you feel are the most valuable skills you will bring to the position?

Relate all your information to the job you are applying for. Discuss specific experience and training that you have that relates to the job. Mention the job experiences you have that make you the right person for the job. Identify 3 to 5 strengths/skills (ie: organized, punctual, dependable etc.) That you have and use these words to describe yourself and the type of work you do.

Good Examples:

- I have five years experience in dry walling, framing and finishing work.
- I am familiar with air nailers, air ratchets, band saws. Grinders, routers and planners.
- I am always very punctual as I arrived at work on time every day in my last job.
- My employers could always depend on me to finish the projects on time and correctly.
- I am also a fast learner.

Bad Examples:

- I don't really know what to say. What do you want to know about me?
- I am good at doing everything and love to travel
- I have three kids, 2 dogs, and a cat
- I am punctual, dependable, hardworking, motivated and an honest individual. (You are just spouting off words if you don't give specific work examples.)
- I really want this job because I'm broke and on welfare (you are asking the employer to meet your needs - you should meeting theirs).

QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE COMPANY

- Why do you want to work here?
- Why did you choose this company?
- Why did you apply for this job?
- What do you know about our company?
- What interests you about our products/service?
- What have you done to prepare for this interview?

Talk about the opportunity the job would give you to use your specific skills and the chance to work as part of a team. If the company concentrates on making quality products mention that this is your focus as well. Tell them what you have to offer that matches the job opening. State what you know about the company from the research you've done.

Good Example: I know that Slim's Manufacturing is only 3 years old and growing rapidly. I also know that you are looking for workers with experience in framing and finishing work who are familiar with a wide range of tools such as me. I have experience in finishing, framing, and operating drill presses. I am always very punctual as I arrived at work on time every day in my last job. My employers could always depend on me to finish the projects on time and correctly.

Other Good Examples: Opportunity to learn and grow, challenging work environment, reliable products, reputation for providing above average customer service.

Bad Examples:

- I really need a job. (Of course you need a job. Why else would you be there)
- You are a large growing company with an excellent reputation. (Have some facts to back this up if you state it. The employers hear this all the time and this does not give them a reason to hire you.)
- I know that you pay \$7 per hour and offer benefits after 3 months

QUESTIONS RELATED TO YOUR WEAKNESSES

- What are your major weaknesses?
- What are your work related limitations?
- What do people criticize about you?
- If I asked your boss in what area you could most improve, what do you feel he would choose?
- What would you most like to improve about yourself and why?
- What steps have you taken during the last year to improve yourself?

Mention a weakness that is insignificant and does not relate to the job you are applying for. Select areas where you have already experienced improvement, demonstrating your willingness and motivation to improve. Pick weaknesses that, if viewed differently, may also be seen as strengths (ie: being "too detailed" could also be seen as "thorough" or "accurate") Do not bring up weaknesses which would cause the employer to question your behavior or performance on the job. Do not claim to be flawless.

Good Examples

- My biggest weakness is that I get nervous when I speak in front of large groups of people. But, I'm working on this limitation and am involved in a volunteer organization (the Boy Scouts) where I am required to talk to the group of young people on a regular basis. Because I am familiar with the topics I don't feel as threatened speaking in public and am gaining confidence.

- My biggest weakness is that I am shy when I don't know people very well but as I get to know them better I lose my shyness.
- The area I would most like to improve is my writing skills. Although this has certainly not been an area of major concern, it is an area in which I would like to improve. I am spending more time reading which will help me better formulate my sentence structure and help in my spelling.
- Although I know my English is satisfactory, I am constantly looking for ways to improve. I am currently taking classes that will strengthen my communication skills.
- I believe that my associates would say that sometimes I talk too fast and they find it hard to follow my conversation. I am aware of this weakness and make an effort watch my speed when talking and if I catch myself going too fast, I slow down.
- I am always willing to help my fellow employees whenever asked. However, because I can't say no, sometimes, I find that I may get behind in my own work while I am helping my co workers. I am aware of this issue and try to be more assertive about getting my own work done and yet am still able to help my co-workers when necessary.
- I have a tendency to be overly detailed, but I am very thorough and can be totally relied upon to get things done with a high degree of accuracy.
- I suppose I could be a little less task oriented so sometimes I get so focused on my work that I believe others are working as rapidly as I am, only to find that they are not nearly as far along. This has never caused a major problem, but I do need to be more aware of the other employees.
- It is extremely important for me to meet deadlines while at the same time maintain high standards. I have to make myself be patient when I see that this is not happening. Sometimes this is beyond my control, but I have to accept this and continue to aim for top quality work done on time.
- I'm so enthusiastic that I want to do 100 things at once, so I have to make a list of priorities and plan an exact schedule. I find this works best for me.

Bad Examples

- My biggest weakness is sleeping in and getting to places late
- I don't really have any weaknesses. Saying you don't have any weaknesses makes you look arrogant

QUESTIONS RELATED TO YOUR FUTURE PLANS

- What are your short term goals - say five years?
- What are your ambitions for the future?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- What are your career plans?
- What are your long range goals?

Discuss your desire to learn more about the company and the job to advance yourself in the company. Mention your willingness to participate in training opportunities. State that you see yourself working in a specific field using the skills you have and then list those skills. Don't express career interests which are totally unrelated to the job you are applying for.

Good Examples:

- I plan to learn as much as possible about the different machines and the production line to make myself a more valuable employee. I hope to be in a supervisory position in a number of years using my skills in finishing, framing and dry walling.
- I would like to continue over the long term to make ongoing contributions to the organization's success while growing professionally.

Bad Examples:

- I hope to be married again and own some land
- I hope to be out of debt
- I haven't really thought about it. Where would someone in this position be in 5 years?

QUESTIONS RELATED TO YOUR LAST JOB

1) Why did you leave your last job?

Be positive and avoid saying anything that would give your potential employer a reason not to hire you. A good answer could also be to list the tasks on your old job that you will be doing on your new possible job and how good you were at doing the, don't criticize a former employer because your potential employer believes that the way you talk about your former employer is the way you will talk about him/her when you get a chance. Do not say anything damaging that would cause an employer to shy away from you.

Good Example:

- I gained a great deal of experience in using different tools and working as part of a team so it was very disappointing when a lack of business caused the company to lay off workers.

Bad Examples

- I got bored and needed to move on
- My supervisor was always on my case - you know, giving me a hard time

Reasons for leaving a job:

- The company went out of business
- Our department was moved to another province
- There was new ownership with a change of staff
- The company down sized due to merger/economy
- There was a company reorganization and my job description changed
- It was seasonal work
- The hours were reduced
- The contract ended
- There was a change in government/municipal/company policy
- To look after the business
- The re-assess my career

2) What did you like the most about last job? What did you least in your last job?

List the duties that you performed that are relevant to the job you are applying for. Don't say anything negative.

Good Example:

- I learned how to use various tools and work as part of a team. I really liked all aspects of my last job.

Bad Examples:

- Just that it was a steady job. Otherwise, it stunk!
- I was really bored - to the MAX
- I liked that I got weekends off and we didn't have to be on time.

3) What was your last employer's opinion of you? What would your last employer say about you? What areas has your boss suggested for improvement? If asked, what would your previous boss cite as your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

Indicate if you had a good relationship with your employer and mention some of the employer's qualities that you admire. If you have a good written reference or performance evaluations, quote it and have it available. Mention positive aspects that the employer had mentioned and would probably say about you.

If you left on bad terms, stay away from a reference to negative aspects. Mention positive aspects that your past employer would likely agree were true such as you punctuality, quality of work and ability to deal with the public and co-workers.

Good Examples:

- My previous employer was very pleased with my performance and felt that I could always be counted on to get the job done. He was impressed with my skills and motivation to give him top quality work.

- My previous employer was very pleased with my performance; however, he might say that I have a tendency to be overly detailed. But, he would also probably tell you that I am very thorough and can be totally relied up on to get things done with a high degree of accuracy.

Bad Example:

- My boss and I didn't get along so he has nothing good to say about me. I was fired from my last job.

4) How often were you absent from work in your last job?

If you had an excellent attendance record, say so. Show enthusiasm and liking for the field you worked in. If you had poor attendance and it was due to something that was dealt with, briefly explain the situation to the interviewer. Indicate that you are committed to having a reliable work record. Mention positive references and previous good work or school records.

Good Example:

- I've had an excellent attendance record. I take pride in my work and know that my contribution is needed and appreciated.

Bad Example:

- I was sick a lot and didn't show up to work

5) What do you think of your previous boss? What is your relationship with your former employer?

Be as positive as you can and avoid anything negative. This is a loaded question because most bosses shy away from a contentious or difficult employee.

Good Example:

- “We continue to keep touch” is a nice way to start, if that is the truth. “We have spoken occasionally since I left as he/she is one of my references. He/she mentioned that if a job opportunity arises in their company, they would be interest in hiring me”. Use this statement only if it's true.

Bad Example:

- He was a real jerk, if you know what I mean. Someone who thinks he knows everything. No one liked him and I was happy when I didn't have to see him.