



# Common Questions Asked During an Interview

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## 1. What is your greatest strength?

**Answer this question with modesty. For Example:**

- When I'm working on a project, I don't want just to meet deadlines. Rather, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule.
- I have exceeded my sales goals every quarter and I've earned a bonus each year since I started with my current employer.
- My time management skills are excellent and I'm organized, efficient, and take pride in excelling at my work.
- I pride myself on my customer service skills and my ability to resolve what could be difficult situations.

## 2. What is your greatest weakness?

**Answer this question by stating your negatives as a positive. For Example:**

- When I'm working on a project, I don't want just to meet deadlines. Rather, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule.
- Being organized wasn't my strongest point, but I implemented a time management system that really helped my organization skills.
- I like to make sure that my work is perfect, so I tend to perhaps spend a little too much time checking it. However, I've come to a good balance by setting up a system to ensure everything is done correctly the first time.
- I used to wait until the last minute to set appointments for the coming week, but I realized that scheduling in advance makes much more sense.

## 3. How do you handle stress and pressure?

**Make this positive. For Example:**

- Stress is very important to me. With stress, I do the best possible job. The appropriate way to deal with stress is to make sure I have the correct balance between good stress and bad stress. I need good stress to stay motivated and productive.
- I react to situations, rather than to stress. That way, the situation is handled and doesn't become stressful.
- I actually work better under pressure and I've found that I enjoy working in a challenging environment.
- From a personal perspective, I manage stress by visiting the gym every evening. It's a great stress reducer.
- Prioritizing my responsibilities so I have a clear idea of what needs to be done when, has helped me effectively manage pressure on the job.

**4. Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it.**

This does not have to be a work situation. It can be a situation you overcame in your personal life. Give concrete examples of difficult situations that actually happened at work. Then discuss what you did to solve the problem. Keep your answers positive ("Even though it was difficult when Jane Doe quit without notice, we were able to rearrange the department workload to cover the position until a replacement was hired.") and **be specific**. Itemize what you did and how you did it.

**5. How do you evaluate success?**

Best answer: "I evaluate success in different ways. At work, it is meeting the goals set by my supervisors and my fellow workers. It is my understanding, from talking to other employees, that the ABC company is recognized for not only rewarding success, but giving employees opportunity to grow as well. After work, I enjoy playing softball, so success on the field is catching the winning pop-up."

**6. Why are you leaving or have left your job?**

**If you left voluntarily:**

- I found myself bored with the work and looking for more challenges. I am an excellent employee and I didn't want my unhappiness to have any impact on the job I was doing for my employer.
- There isn't room for growth with my current employer and I'm ready to move on to a new challenge.
- I'm looking for a bigger challenge and to grow my career and I couldn't job hunt part time while working. It didn't seem ethical to use my former employer's time.
- I was laid-off from my last position when our department was eliminated due to corporate restructuring.

**If you were fired or let go:**

- Being cut loose was a blessing in disguise. Now I have an opportunity to explore jobs that better suit my qualifications and interests. My research suggests that such an opportunity may be the one on your table. Would you like to hear more about my skills in working with new technology?
- My competencies were not the right match for my previous employer's needs but it looks like they'd be a good fit in your organization. In addition to marketing and advertising, would skills in promotion be valued here?
- Although circumstances caused me to leave my first job, I was very successful in school and got along well with both students and faculty. Perhaps I didn't fully understand my boss's expectations or why he released me so quickly before I had a chance to prove myself.
- The job wasn't working out so my boss and I agreed that it was time for me to move on to a position that would show a better return for both of us. So here I am, ready to work.

**7. Why do you want this job?**

**This is a great time to list your qualifications and how they will help the company.**

- This is not only a fine opportunity, but this company is a place where my qualifications can make a difference. As a finance executive well versed in the new stock options law, I see this position as made to order. It contains the challenge to keep me on my toes. That's the kind of job I like to anticipate every morning.
- I want this job because it seems tailored to my competencies, which include sales and marketing. As I said earlier, in a previous position I created an annual growth rate of 22 percent in a flat industry. Additionally, the team I would work with looks terrific.
- I well understand that this is a company on the way up. Your Web site says the launch of several new products is imminent. I want be a part of this business as it grows.

**8. Why should we hire you?**

The best way to respond is to give concrete examples of why your skills and accomplishments make you the best candidate for the job. Take a few moments to compare the job description with your abilities, as well as mentioning what you have accomplished in your other positions. Be positive and reiterate your interest in the company and the position.

**9. What are your goals for the future?**

**Always speak in terms of long-term with the company. DO NOT say you want to start a competing company!**

- My long-term goals involve growing with a company where I can continue to learn, take on additional responsibilities, and contribute as much of value as I can.
- I see myself as a top performing employee in a well-established organization, like this one. I plan on enhancing my skills and continuing my involvement in (related) professional associations.
- Once I gain additional experience, I would like to move on from a technical position to management.
- In the XYZ Corporation, what is a typical career path for someone with my skills and experiences?

**10. Tell me about yourself.**

Give your Unique Selling Proposition. Known as a personal branding or a value-added statement, the USP is a succinct, one-sentence description of who you are, your biggest strength and the major benefit that a company will derive from this strength. Here is an example of a Unique Selling Proposition: "I'm a seasoned Retail Manager strong in developing training programs and loss prevention techniques that have resulted in revenue savings of over \$2.3Million for (employer's name) during the past 11 years." Be specific, Be prepared, Be honest.

**Most importantly: DO NOT LIE!!!!!!!**