



Common Interview Questions

Interview Preparation

Introduction

Below are a few examples of common interview questions. It is important in modern interviews to provide some positive examples from your own experience that are pertinent to your own experience to evidence your answers.

Strategy

The STAR technique provides you with a structure to help discipline your answers in this way. An example of this is provided below, based on being asked about how you handle change and pressured situations.

- › **S.** Situation – I was leading a project to integrate an internal business system with a customer, and they needed to bring the deadline forward by two weeks.
- › **T.** Task – Make sure that we could resource the necessary hours internally to deliver, whilst taking time to understand the significant impact on our own third-party suppliers - some could deliver to the new deadline, but others could not.
- › **A.** Achievement – I had built a strong relationship with the customer and utilised this. I took the time to understand what was driving the change in deadline and once this was understood, I realised that I could deliver the project to the client in phases - thus satisfying their needs, reducing our need for concentrated resource and keeping our suppliers happy. I developed a phased delivery plan and proposed this to the client.
- › **R.** Result - The client was happy with the new solution, accepted the phased schedule and we delivered the project on time to the new deliverables. The client was very satisfied, our working relationship continued, and we were engaged on a follow up project later in the year worth £1.5 million to the business.

Common Interview Questions

→ **Tell me about yourself.**

- Prepare for this question in advance and have a compelling story about your past experiences.
- Pull prominent skills from the job description.
- Be “SHE” (succinct, honest and engaging).

→ **What is your greatest strength?**

- Be authentic - don't make up strengths that you think the employer wants to hear.
- Tell a story about a work experience.
- Be sure the strengths you share are aligned to the role you want.

→ **What is your greatest weakness?**

- Employers are looking for self-awareness and personal accountability.
- It's good to be honest about what you're not great at.

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- Share what you are doing to actively improve on this weakness.
- **Why should we hire you?**
- Start with the three or four best reasons you've got.
 - Cite results, credentials, and other people's praise so you don't seem self-absorbed.
 - Be concise, and invite follow-up questions at the end.
- **Why do you want to work here?**
- Make it about them first.
 - Show you've done your research.
 - Use this as a key opportunity to outshine the competition.
 - Speak from the heart.
- **Tell me about a time you showed leadership.**
- Describe a situation where there was a lack of leadership.
 - Use the word "lead" to help describe the actions you took.
 - Give credit to your 'leadership skills' when explaining the positive results.
- **Tell me about a time you were successful on a team.**
- Describe a problem that arose with a team.
 - Outline your key actions with the team.
 - Explain the positive result based on the work you did.
 - Give credit to your teamwork skills.
- **What would your co-workers say about you?**
- Share something that relates to the job description and back it with an example.
 - Look to your recommendations and reviews for ideas.
 - Be confident and succinct. It's OK to shine!.
- **Why do you want to leave your current role?**
- Don't talk negatively about past roles or former bosses - employers don't want to work with people who complain.
 - Be gracious when things haven't worked out in the past.
 - Share some of the ways you're working on improving.
- **Describe your most challenging project.**
- Have a clear story with a specific challenge.
 - Describe the negative impact if you hadn't resolved the issue.
 - Discuss action steps you took and talk about the positive impact.
- **Tell me about something you've accomplished that you are proud of.**
- Describe the problem that existed before you took action.
 - Talk about how you took initiative to solve the problem.
 - Explain why you are proud of the outcome and what would have happened if you hadn't stepped in.
- **Can you explain your employment gap?**
- Expect that they will ask about the gap - prepare for it.
 - Answer honestly and strategically.
 - Be confident and succinct.
 - Shine a light on the good that came out of that time.

- **What are your salary expectations?**
 - Refer the question back to your Recruitment Consultant
 - Know the industry norms for similar jobs.
 - If pressed, talk about ranges, rather than exact numbers. Don't be tied down.
 - Make the case that you offer premium value.

- **What do you like to do outside of work?**
 - Share something that paints a favorable picture.
 - Keep it short and sweet.
 - Don't bore them with long stories.
 - Steer clear of the inappropriate zone

- **Tell me about a time you had to manage conflicting priorities.**
 - Talk about the most important priority and then share additional priorities and how they conflicted.
 - Describe the steps you took to get the top priority done.
 - Discuss the impact this had on the company or team.

- **Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**
 - Break the answer down in two to three year chunks.
 - Focus on what you can give, rather than what you can get.
 - Don't bring up a specific job title that you want to move into one day.
 - Make it specific to this particular company and position.

- **Describe your leadership style.**
 - Start by framing your basic style in a few words.
 - Give an example of your leadership style in action.
 - Show that you can adapt well to unexpected situations.

- **Tell me about a time you failed or made a mistake.**
 - Use an honest example that's believable.
 - Explain why it was a mistake.
 - Talk about what you've learned and any steps you've taken to show that you're "working on it".

- **Tell me about a time you worked with a difficult person.**
 - Describe how the person was 'difficult'.
 - Explain the negative potential impact this could have caused.
 - Talk about how you approached the situation.
 - Be sure to highlight the positive result your efforts created.

- **Tell me about a time you had to persuade someone.**
 - Pick an issue where your agenda is in the broader interest.
 - Show how your careful listening helped you reframe the controversy.
 - Explain how the other person's change of heart led to a better outcome for all.

- **Tell me about a time you disagreed with someone.**
 - Pick an example involving business practices - avoid personal quarrels.
 - Calmly explain both sides' point of view.

- Show how a compromise or a fuller understanding led to a good outcome.
- **Tell me about a time you created a goal and achieved it.**
- Pick an ambitious goal that's part of a bigger life journey.
 - Highlight obstacles and show how you overcame them.
 - Finish with an insight about the way your accomplishment has paid off.
- **Tell me about a time you surpassed people's expectations.**
- Describe a situation where you thought you weren't going to be successful.
 - Talk about what you did to compensate for a bad situation.
 - Talk about the outcomes of your successful efforts.
- **Tell me about a time you had to handle pressure.**
- Be clear about the project goal.
 - Establish that you're a strong person who doesn't get flustered easily.
 - Show your ingenious side, too, especially if your path to success involved redefining the task or enlisting colleagues.
- **Tell me about a time you had to learn something quickly.**
- Pick a vivid example and show why it was challenging.
 - Break down your learning and mastery into three or four distinct steps("First, I . . .").
 - Share a tangible result and speak about it with pride.

Prepare

- ❖ Come prepared with 3-5 thoughtful questions.
- ❖ Ask questions that show you're engaged, intelligent and interested.
- ❖ Avoid no-brainer questions or ones related to salary / benefits.