

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Lots of people go into interviews thinking that they can just 'wing it' - after all, there are so many potential questions that an interviewer can ask it's almost impossible to predict, right? Wrong! This couldn't be further from the truth.

Certainly some questions are always going to be a surprise but most questions, including difficult questions, can be prepared for. We tackle some toughies for you, here...

### So, tell us about yourself

Often an interview opener – this is a question and trips most people up. It's mainly used as an ice-breaker to get the conversation flowing but don't make the mistake of rambling. Instead, take your CV with you and pick out some career highlights. If this is your first job then explain how life experiences have made you suitable for the position. Do NOT spend more than 5 minutes talking!

### Why do you want THIS job?

This can be a tricky one. You need to be honest but not TOO honest if the reason is your boss is a nightmare and you hate your colleagues. Instead, talk about the positives of the job ad – what made it jump out at you and think 'yeah, I'd be good at that!' This is your chance to explain!

### What did you dislike about your last job?

Again, avoid negativity. Moan about past employers and you'll quickly be shown the door. Instead, talk about the frustrations of your last role that THIS job could fix and always ALWAYS start with a positive. E.g. 'I have really enjoyed my current job and I've learnt a lot and grown as a person. However, I disliked that there was no opportunity for promotion and I know that I'm ready to take the next step with my career.'

### How do you respond to criticism?

Don't say: 'I do NOT like people criticising me!'  
DO say: 'I welcome constructive criticism as it helps me to learn and get better at my job. Nobody is perfect but I always make sure that if I make a mistake, it's the first and last time'.

### What are you most proud of in your working life?

This can be a puzzler! Go to the interview prepared with a few examples of your successes and, if possible, use examples to back it up. E.g. 'I worked really hard to set up a new filing system and won a prize for innovation at our Employee Awards. The new system had saved the admin team 10 hours a week in wasted resource.'

### What are your weaknesses?

This one almost ALWAYS comes up! Don't ever give a negative – stropky, always late, violent are all no-nos! Also try to avoid the obvious 'I'm a perfectionist' as it's a common answer. Stand out from the crowd and expand on your answer, turning a negative into a positive e.g. 'I sometimes take mistakes too much to heart. However, I make sure I learn from them and never make the mistake again'.

### How would you sell me this paperclip?

If the job you're interviewing for is about selling, this question is predictable. If you are up for a role that needs you to think on your feet, be ready to sell something (go quickly for the benefits and how owning the paperclip can improve life for the buyer) or argue a case.

### How do you respond to stress and pressure?

An employer wants to know what you will actually be like in a busy place and how reliable and calm you will be when things go wrong. Give examples of times when you have met difficult deadlines or handled tricky people.

### Why you?

This is often a closing question and gives you the chance to stand out... Talk about your experience and skills but also about YOU as

a person – your attitude and interests and why you're uniquely suited to the job. Sell, sell, sell!