

Tip Sheet: INTERVIEWS – COMMON QUESTIONS

Common Interview Questions

Each question the interviewer asks you will have a purpose. Some may be very evident to you; others may make no sense at all. Most employers will ask very similar questions from field to field so, practice developing answers to these questions and be prepared to answer the questions as they relate to the job by framing your answer to include a demonstration of how you used that skill.

Common Questions:

- Tell me about yourself
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Why should we hire you?
- What experience do you have doing this job?
- What benefit would you be to my company?

These questions will establish how you are different from other candidates and how you will fit into the company if hired. Let the employer get a sense of you, the person in addition to you, the potential employee. It is a chance to mention something that just did not fit into the resume or cover letter that may be important to the employer.

- Why did you apply for this job?
- What do you know about our business?
- What do you know about our services/products?

The employer wants to know what you know about the company and the job – have you done your research? Reassure the employer by mentioning key points about the company (good reputation either inside or outside the company, new product line it is developing, etc.)

- What are your long-term/short term goals?
- Are you thinking of going back to school?
- You seem to be very overqualified for this position. Why would you want this job?

Hiring costs money. Reassure them that the investment in hiring you is not wasted and that you will be around as long as they require your services. Express your interest and motivation in being part of their team.

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- Can you give me an example that shows you have initiative?
- Do you work well under pressure?
- Can you give me an example of a time when you lead a team, solved a problem, had to deal with an angry customer, etc.)

Include examples of past work experience with demonstrated skills in your answer – your past performance will help them predict your future performance. An answer that includes volunteer work or appropriate education or training is also good. Ensure that the employer feels comfortable that you can do the job and give examples to show 'how' you work by telling them a story using the S-T-A-R formula to answer.

- What were your co-workers' opinions of you?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What was feedback that you received at your last job?

Show a letter of recommendation from your former employer, refer to feedback on performance evaluations and ask for recommendations on your LinkedIn profile to show the employer. Always emphasize the positive and do not mention the negative. The employer wants to know that you are suited to the job and will fit in with the other employees. What can you do to reassure him / her that you are suited and will fit in? This is not the time to make complaints or accusations about past companies or employees.

Practice, Practice, Practice

This will not make you perfect, however, it will prepare you for the interview by boosting your self-confidence.

