

The 50 Interview Questions Most Difficult



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The 50 Most Difficult Questions

Before any interview, ensure you have thought about and rehearsed answers to questions such as the following:

1. Tell me about yourself.

Be on guard against the interviewer who gives you free rein.

Don't spend **too** much time answering: avoid too much detail, don't ramble (2 min).

You may like to add some interesting personal information that you're comfortable disclosing about yourself. See if you can end your answer by talking about what led you to apply for the job at hand (ie, it is a good match with your skills, experience or is in your area of interest.)

2. What do you know about our organisation?

Discuss products, services, revenues, problems, people and history. Tailor your answer to the job you are going for, eg, for a sales job, focus on the organisation's products and services.

3. What would you do for us? What can you do for us that someone else can't?

Relate past experiences which represent success in solving problems which may be similar to those of the prospective employer. Basically, this is a chance to "sell" yourself - focus on your strengths or achievements.

4. Why should we hire you?

Capitalise on your strengths and your personal attributes that set you apart from others.

5. What do you look for in a job?

6. Please give me your definition of....(the position for which you are being interviewed).

7. How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our firm?

8. How long would you stay with us?

9. You may be over qualified or too experienced for the position we have to offer.

Possible answers:

- Emphasise interest in long-term association.
- Employer will get faster return on investment because you have **more** experience than required.
Focus on something about the organisation/industry/job that is of particular interest to you.

10. Are you, or could you become, a good supervisor? Give an example. Why do you feel you have management potential?

11. Did you ever fire anyone? If so, what were the reasons and how did you handle it?

If you have not had the experience, prepare a response which details how you would go about it.

12. What do you see as the most difficult task in being a supervisor?

13. Why are you leaving your present job?

Give a "group" answer (ie. Due to a national restructuring, our whole office is closing, etc).

Stick to one response ... don't change answers during the interview! This is critical, and your facilitator will spend time helping you develop a good response.

14. How do you feel about leaving all your benefits?

Concerned, but confident that you will make it up when you are established in your new organisation.

15. Describe what you feel to be an ideal working environment.

This is a place where you can bring in some of your values and "ideal job preferences" - but don't make it sound too sublime or impractical. Otherwise, they may conclude that you are not ready for the realities of the present organisation. Down play the dissatisfiers.

16. How would you evaluate your present firm?

If you don't have many good things to say about your current or most recent place of employment, focus on the experience and skills you have gained.

17. Have you helped increase sales? Profits? How?

This is your chance to describe in some detail a business achievement that is relevant to the proposed new job. Feel free to dwell on this.

18. How much financial responsibility have you had to account for?

You can answer this in terms of your budget or head count or the size of the project or sales that you directed.

19. Did you supervise people on your last job?

Be specific - and feel free to refer to those over which you had influence such as a task force or a matrix organisation.

20. Do you like working with figures more than words?

Answer honestly.

21. What do your co-workers think of you?

Be as positive as you can, but remember to be honest too. They can check your references easily.

22. In your current or last position, what features did you like the most? Least?

Be careful on this one. Emphasise the positive and don't carry on at length about the negatives.

23. In your current or last position, what are or were your five most significant achievements? In your career so far?

Be ready to describe three or four of them in detail. Where possible, try to relate to the nature of the new challenges you might be facing.

24. Why haven't you found a new position before now?

Finding just any job is not too difficult, but **finding the right job** takes care and time.

25. What do you think of your boss?

Be as positive as you can, and avoid getting in too deep. This is a loaded question, because most bosses shy away from a contentious or difficult subordinate.

26. Would you describe a few situations in which your work was criticised?

Be specific and brief, avoid getting emotional or defensive about it. Either focus on something relatively minor or talk about something that happened in the past that you have corrected, and the steps you took to correct the situation.

27. If I spoke with your previous boss, what would she or he say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

Be honest about this one, but do not emphasise the negative. Your old supervisor will probably want to give you a good send-off. Recount some of the good things you did for him/her.

28. Can you work under pressure, deadlines, etc?

I can handle it. It is a way of life in the business world.

29. Describe a typical day in your current job.

Have an answer to this one clear in your mind before you get to the interview.

30. In your present position, what problems have you identified that had previously been overlooked?

Keep your answer brief and don't brag unduly.

31. If you had your choice of jobs and companies where would you go?

Talk about the job at hand and what is attractive in the organisation that is interviewing you.

32. What has been the most difficult situation you have had to deal with in your job, and how did you handle it?

33. What do you feel this position should pay?

You may want to answer this with a question, such as, "What is the typical salary range for similar jobs in your company?" or say something like (as long as it is true) "I'm quite open to negotiation at this point, but do you have a budget in mind for this position?". This approach may not work, so you **MUST** have done your research beforehand to determine what might be a fair salary. If there is no range in the company, give the range that you had in mind. But qualify it by saying you hope to learn more about the job responsibilities and scope.

34. How much do you expect if we offer this position to you?

Be careful. The market value of the job may be the key answer. "My understanding is that a job like the one you're describing may be in the range of \$ 0 to \$ 0"

35. Any objections to psychological test?

If an employer asks you this, it means you are being seriously considered as a candidate.

36. Why do you want to work for us?

You would like to be part of an organisation project.

You would like to solve an organizational problem.

You like what you've heard about the organisation, its policies, goals, management, etc.

37. What other types of jobs or companies are you considering?

Don't feel obliged to reveal details of your other negotiations. If you have other irons in the fire, refer to your campaign in a general way; but concentrate mainly on the job at hand.

38. What was the last book you read? Movie you saw? Sporting event you attended? Etc.

Be honest. If possible, mention some of the things you read in order to keep yourself up-to-date in your professional field. However, it is okay to show balanced interests by your recreational reading as well.

39. Are you creative?

Be prepared to give a couple of examples.

40. How would you describe your own personality?

Mention two or three of your relevant traits. Ensure that you are familiar with the strengths of your TAPT profile from your Exercise Booklet.

41. What role do you tend to take on in a team situation?

Give examples.

42. What are your goals?

Relate your answer to the organisation, rather than give a very broad, general answer. Keep your ambitions on a realistic track.

43. What are your strong points?

Present at least three - preferably in a way that relates them to the potential job opening.

44. What are your weak points?

Don't say you have none, give only one moderate weakness that could equally be considered a strength. For example, turn a negative into a positive answer like, "I am sometimes impatient and do the work myself when we are late". Another approach is to choose something that was a weakness in the past and describe how you went about correcting that weakness.

45. How long would you expect to stay with our company?

As long as I continue to contribute well.

As long as we both feel that there is challenging work that I can do.

46. What would you expect to be earning, say, five years from now?

You can hedge a bit on this one while stating that: 1) you would expect to progress with your new company; and 2) your salary would keep up with this progress as well as inflation.

47. What sort of relationship do you have with associates, both at the same level and above and below you?

This is a very important question, and you can well afford to take your time and answer it in steps.

When talking about your relationships with subordinates, be prepared to state your philosophy of handling them, particularly when they have performance problems.

With regard to bosses, indicate your keen interest in understanding your boss's expectations. You may also want to talk about how you would go about keeping your boss informed.

48. What are some of your outside activities or recreations?

Hopefully, your answer can show that you lead a balanced life. But avoid throwing in so many outside activities that it casts some doubt on how much time you will have for the job. Remember, too, that your hobbies and recreations can be quite revealing as to your own personality.

49. Are you continuing your education?

If you are not actually attending or planning to attend formal classes, be ready to explain what sort of outside reading or attendance at professional seminars you undertake in order to keep yourself fresh in your chosen field.

50. Did you bring a resume?

Yes.

We hope this information has been helpful to you.

Please feel free to contact us for any further assistance we can provide on 07 4659 7111.

Upload your resume and find more resources at www.abbertons.com.au