

General Interview Question Support

Thinking about what questions you could be asked during the interview and preparing your response to them will go a long way to helping you come across more professional, prepared and a strong candidate. We have picked out some of the awkward questions that you may get asked at an interview, and provided some advice on why an employer will be asking these. When you are preparing an answer you should remember to always make it positive.

Why are you leaving your current position (or why did you leave your last position)?

The employer is looking for potential problems you have had in the past that you may bring with you. The best way to deal with this question is to always cite reasons such as career progression, quality of life, reward package, etc. and link these to positive aspects of the job you are being interviewed for. **NEVER** launch into a tirade about how much you hate or hated your previous company, what a total fool you thought your boss was and so on. Always be upbeat - it projects a more confident image.

What do you think you can offer this company?

The interviewer wants to know how you can solve their problem. By ensuring your CV is focused on matching you to the employer's needs, you will have accumulated all the material necessary to answer this question. You have the opportunity to differentiate yourself in two ways, firstly by emphasising your strengths and secondly by demonstrating that you have researched the employer's business prior to the interview. Give a balanced answer that highlights exactly how your strengths match the job requirements and show an awareness of what the company does.

Where do you hope to be in 5 years' time?

Someone thought up this question years ago and it has since become established as a 'standard' interview question. What the employer is hoping to establish is your degree of ambition for career progression. Always answer in general terms and definitely avoid staking a claim for the interviewer's job!

This question can also be a double-edged sword. The job may carry little prospect of progression in itself. If you are keen to progress, this may not be the appropriate role for you, so you should establish what opportunities there are - perhaps it is possible (and indeed expected) to progress into other roles.

Above all, ensure as part of your interview preparation that you have established what your own job requirements are, as well as those of the employer.

How mobile are you?

There can be a couple of reasons for asking this question. The job may involve a lot of travel. If so, it should have been made clear in the job advert or the details you received. If it wasn't, now is the time to establish the facts, and the expectations of the employer. If regular travel is a problem for you, say so - there's no point in getting the job and then being unhappy.

Another reason for asking this could be to assess your attitude to flexibility in working practices. Again, be honest about your own requirements and expectations. This is the time to make sure that everyone is happy with the proposed working arrangements - and to open negotiations on any areas that need to be discussed further.

What are your weaknesses?

This is **NOT** an attempt to catch you out but an employer is trying to force you to carry out a more critical self-assessment. Have you thought about any weaknesses you may have? If not, do so now before you have to assess these in an interview situation. Once you've done this, you can turn them into positive, work-related statements, such as, "I tend to work too long hours." Or "I am a perfectionist and need to make sure my work is 100% accurate." By doing this you can answer the question and portray yourself in a positive light.

Why should we employ you, rather than one of the other candidates?

This is a bit like a tiebreaker question! The interviewer wants to know what your unique quality is that makes you the best person for the job. This gives you a real chance to make the job yours. To prepare your answer, you need to know which is the most important requirement of the job. What aspect of the job is critical for success? How can you fulfil this requirement? Show an employer that you have the ability to do so and you will gain a real advantage over all other candidates.



A few final points to bear in mind when you are at an interview...

Don't be afraid to ask for clarification on any questions.

Remember that the cost to an employer of recruiting the wrong person can be very expensive. The employer is also under a lot of pressure to make the right decision and may be just as nervous as you are!

Try to relax and enjoy the interview. The more relaxed you are, the better you will perform on the day.

Before you finish the interview

One question to ask at the end of the interview would be if they have any reservations or concerns at the moment about you. This would allow the interviewer to maybe put across any concerns that may have arisen during the interview and gives you the opportunity to then overcome them there and then. This may be the difference between being offered the job or not

We hope that you find all of this helpful, however if you have any questions about anything at all or would like any further support, help or guidance then please do not hesitate to get in contact with one of our Recruitment Consultants at Kingsley Consulting on 01327 227320 who will be more than happy to help assist you in the very best way we can.