



# Ace the Interview





## How to get God's Best!

- Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but **only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.** Ephesians 4:29
- **Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** Ephesians 4:31-32
- **But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.** Matthew 6:33
- **And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.** Matthew 21:22
- **Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done.** Philippians 4:6

# Employer Reviews Your Resume

Content

Formatting

**X Rejected: Lack of Experience**

**X Rejected: Typos**

**X Rejected: Unexplained Gaps**

Job qualifications

**>> Called for an Interview**





## Job Seeker

- Phone interview
  - Articulate
  - Pleasant
  - Accurate
  - Energy/Passion



## Research the Company

1. Google search
2. Company website
  - a) What does company do?
  - b) Notice how people are dressed in pictures
  - c) Read News/Press Release section of website
3. Search online for credible sources of information other than company website
4. Check LinkedIn for contacts at company
5. If possible, visit retail location



## Preparing for the Interview

- Who will be at the interview?
- Where will you do it?
- Review qualifications for the job
- What questions will I ask.....



## Interview Questions

- **Credential verification questions**
- **Experience verification questions**
- **Situational/Opinion questions**
- **Dumb questions**
- **Math questions**
- **Case questions**
- **Behavioral questions**
- **Competency questions**



# Day of Interview

## Personal Grooming:

1. Hair clean & trimmed
2. Groomed hands and nails
3. Fresh breath, clean teeth
4. No fragrance, cologne, or smoke scent
5. Limit facial hair & piercings
6. Trim wild mini-hair (eyebrows, ear hair, nose hair)
7. Light, natural make-up





## Day of the Interview Preparation

Remember to: Smile!

Turn off Phone

Punctual

No gum

Strong eye contact

Proper posture

Firm handshake

Keys & change minimal

Positive Attitude

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## Day of the Interview

- \* Bring notebook with 5 resumes & paper for notes.
- \* Never talk negatively about a former boss or employer.
- \* Do not ramble; communicate with a point.
- \* Show that you can impact the bottom line & make good decisions.
- \* Ask for their concerns or reservations about your qualifications.
- \* Knowing their concerns, link your achievements to address them.



## The Interview – typical agenda

- Work History
- Probing Questions
- Company Overview
- Describe the position
- Ask if the candidate has questions about the position
- Wrap up



# Answering Interview Questions

**S/T– Situation or Task** – *Give a summary of the situation or task.*

Be sure to mention when and where the example happened

**A – Actions** – *After describing the situation/task, describe the actions / steps you took.*

Be specific and descriptive, but yet be concise. Try to avoid being overly verbose.

**R – Results** – *After covering the Situation/Task and Actions, describe the results of your*

*efforts. Try to quantify your results (i.e. I closed that loan for \$xxx. Not only did I retain that customer, but I received 3 additional referrals from that client.)*



## Tough question No. 1: "Tell me about yourself."

This is usually the opening question in an interview and it's the perfect moment for you to toot your own horn -- not to tell your life history. Your answer should be a quick rundown of your qualifications and experience. Talk about your education, work history, recent career experience and future goals.

### Suggested answer:

*"I graduated from University X and since then, I have been working in public relations with an agency where I have generated millions of PR hits for my clients. While I've enjoyed working on the agency side, I'm looking to expand my horizons and start doing PR for corporate companies such as this one."*



## Tough question No. 2: “Why did you leave your last job?”

**This is your chance to talk about your experience and your career goals, not to badmouth a former boss or give a laundry list of reasons for your exit. Instead, focus on what you learned in your previous position and how you are ready to use those skills in a new position.**

### **Suggested answer:**

*"The company just wasn't a good fit for my creativity, but I learned that organizations have distinct personalities just like people do. Now I know where I'll be a better fit."*





## Tough question No. 3:

### “Where do you see yourself in five years?”

Let the employer know that you're stable and **you want to be with this company** for the long haul. Keep your aspirations to take over the firm with which you are interviewing, own your own company, retire at 40 or be married with five children to yourself.

#### Suggested answer:

*"I want to secure a civil engineering position with a national firm that concentrates on retail development. Ideally, I would like to work for a young company, such as this one, so I can get in on the ground floor and take advantage of all the opportunities a growing firm has to offer."*





## Tough question No 4: "What are your weaknesses?"

The key to answering this age-old question is not to respond literally. Your future employer most likely won't care if your weak spot is that you can't cook, nor do they want to hear the generic responses, like you're "too detail oriented" or "work too hard." Respond to this query by identifying areas in your work where you can improve and figure out how they can be assets to a future employer. If you didn't have the opportunity to develop certain skills at your previous job, explain how eager you are to gain that skill .

### Suggested answer:

*"In my last position, I wasn't able to develop my public-speaking skills. I'd really like to be able to work in a place that will help me get better at giving presentations and talking in front of others."*







## Tough question No. 5: “Why were you laid off?”

This question will become more common as the economy continues to slow down. It's a tough question, however, especially because many workers aren't told exactly why they were laid off. The best way to tackle this question is to answer as honestly as possible.

### **Suggested answer:**

*"As I'm sure you're aware, the economy is tough right now and my company felt the effects of it. I was part of a large staff reduction and that's really all I know. I am confident, however, that it had nothing to do with my job performance, as exemplified by my accomplishments. For example..."*





## Tough question No. 6:

### **"Tell me about the worst boss you ever had."**

Never, ever talk badly about your past bosses. A potential boss will anticipate that you'll talk about him or her in the same manner somewhere down the line.

#### **Suggested answer:**

*"While none of my past bosses were awful, there are some who taught me more than others did. I've definitely learned what types of management styles I work with the best."*



## Tough question No. 7: “How would others describe you?”

You should always be asking for feedback from your colleagues and supervisors in order to gauge your performance; this way, you can honestly answer the question based on their comments. Keep track of the feedback to be able to give to an employer, if asked. Doing so will also help you identify strengths and weaknesses.

### Suggested answer:

*"My former colleagues have said that I'm easy to do business with and that I always hit the ground running with new projects. I have more specific feedback with me, if you'd like to take a look at it."*



## Tough question No. 8:

**"What can you offer me that another person can't?"**

This is when you talk about your record of getting things done. Go into specifics from your résumé and portfolio; show an employer your value and how you'd be an asset.

### **Suggested answer:**

*"I'm the best person for the job. I know there are other candidates who could fill this position, but my passion for excellence sets me apart from the pack. I am committed to always producing the best results. For example..."*



## Tough question No. 9: "If you could choose any company to work for, where would you go?"

Never say that you would choose any company other than the one where you are interviewing. Talk about the job and the company for which you are being interviewed.

### Suggested answer:

*"I wouldn't have applied for this position if I didn't sincerely want to work with your organization." Continue with specific examples of why you respect the company with which you are interviewing and why you'll be a good fit.*





## Tough question No. 10: "Would you be willing to take a salary cut?"

Salary is a delicate topic. In today's tough economy though, how much a company can afford to pay you might be the deal breaker in whether or not you are offered a position.

### Suggested answer:

*"I'm making \$X now. I understand that the salary range for this position is \$XX - \$XX. Like most people, I would like to improve on my salary, but I'm more interested in the job itself than the money. I would be open to negotiating a lower starting salary but would hope that we can revisit the subject in a few months after I've proved myself to you."*





## Your Questions about the Company/Position

Have questions prepared to ask the interviewer:

- How will I know that I'm successful in this position?
- How is success measured?
- Why is this position open?
- What are the career growth options?
- What are the biggest challenges the person in this position will face?
- Describe a typical day or week in the position?



## Wrapping up the Interview

- Ask about next steps
- Thank the interviewer
- Ask for a business card
- Follow up with a thank you note (either e-mail or hand written)
- Follow up with one phone call if the interviewer has not called you back by the time they said they would.





## Homework

- Prepare general interview questions for you to ask at your next interview
- Determine what you will wear.
- Write out your answers to the “10 Tough Questions”
- Practice your answers to the “10 Tough Questions”



What questions do you have?