

INTERVIEW PREP/MOCK INTERVIEW

One of the best ways to conquer interview nerves is to be as prepared as possible. This will help anticipate any questions the interview may ask and have some key points for your answer in mind.

TOP 10 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. “Tell me about yourself” – Elevator pitch

An Elevator Pitch is a short statement that gives the interviewer an idea of who you are and what you can bring to the company. It is your opportunity to highlight your skills and experience. It should be a minimum of 30 seconds and can be up to two minutes long. The interviewer is trying to evaluate your communication skills and linear thinking. One effective way to think about your elevator pitch for a job interview is to ensure it covers the basics:

- Your specialty and industry
- Your experience in years
- Your goal

For example:

“I am a motivated and analytical project manager with more than 15 years’ experience in the financial services industry, specialising in business lending. In my current role I have been responsible for rolling out a new microenterprise program which has helped more than 100 small businesses kick start their operations. I am proud of my solid track record of delivering projects that have had proven business benefits and am now looking to take on greater responsibility, with project budgets greater than \$10 million and leading larger teams”

“I am an enthusiastic and driven Commerce graduate with an Honours degree from the University of Western Australia. I am currently looking to secure a Graduate Business Analyst position to utilise my strong analytical skills and business knowledge”

2. Describe your current (or most recent) position

One of the easier questions to answer – but you’ll still need to use it to highlight your job-relevant greatness.

3. Why are you looking for a new opportunity now?

Don’t bad mouth your previous employer or co-workers or sound too opportunistic. It is fine to mention major problems, a buy-out or shutdown. You may want to state that after long personal consideration, your chance to make a contribution is very low due to extensive company wide changes.

4. What are your strengths?

Know your key five or six strengths – the ones most compatible with the job opening. Discuss each with specific examples. Don’t include your management or interpersonal skills unless you can describe specific examples of good management, or how your relationship skills have been critical to your success.

5. What is your greatest weakness? / What are your weaknesses?

"I work too hard" is not the answer. The key to answering this question is to be honest yet strategic. You need to answer this question truthfully without taking yourself out of the running. You also need to address the unspoken follow up, which is what you are doing to overcome your weakness. Ultimately, you want to show the hiring manager that you are self-aware, thoughtful and proactive about your strengths and weaknesses.

6. Why do you want to work here?

This is a good chance to summarise. By now, you should know the key problems. Restate and show how you would address them. Don't be arrogant – instead demonstrate a thoughtful, organised and strong attitude.

7. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Requires an artful and diplomatic answer. One or two management jumps in 3-5 years is a reasonable goal. If your track record indicates you're in line for senior management in 10 years, then mention it. If you have had a rocky road, be introspective.

8. Why should we hire you?

This is where you need to spend time thinking about the role, the competencies, and how you're the perfect fit. Pick two or three main factors about the job and about yourself that are most relevant. Discuss for two minutes, including specific details. You may mention a technical skill, a management skill and/or a personal success story.

9. Do you have any questions for me?

Your questions here can either leave a strong, lasting impression on the interviewer, or make you come across as clueless. This question is asked in almost every single interview, so it is essential to have some questions prepared ahead of time. This will show the interviewer that you have done some research and are eager to know and learn as much as possible about the organisation and position. You should phrase questions that relate to your knowledge of the organisation but require more information for a more in depth understanding.

10. The sign of a good employee is the ability to take initiative. Can you describe a situation where you did this?

The proactive, results-oriented person doesn't have to be told what to do. To convince the interviewer you possess this trait, give a series of short examples describing your self-motivation. Discuss one example in-depth, describing the extra effort, your strong work ethic and your creative, resourceful side.