

Common Interview Questions and Answers

In August's newsletter, we dealt with the top 5 interview questions (link). This month's article will continue the theme and explore other commonly asked interview questions. We'll reveal what lies behind each question and guide you on how to best respond.

What types of people do you find it difficult to get along with?

The focus of your answer should be how you work well with tricky personalities. Describe the type of person that you find most challenging and highlight what you do to ensure a good and effective working relationship with them.

What is your biggest achievement?

Try to choose an achievement that gives you an edge over other applicants. So for example, if you're a recently qualified accountant, there's little point saying that getting your accountancy qualification is your biggest achievement as this is probably a basic requirement of the job.

How would your last boss describe you?

This is a chance for you to blow your own trumpet. Many people feel uncomfortable selling themselves and end up giving insipid answers such as "I'm reliable, a good time keeper..... etc." Add a bit of colour – let the interviewer know what value you brought your last employer and give examples to back it up.

Where do you see yourself in five years time?

Remember every employer is looking for a return on investment. You'll need to show them that you plan being in the company for the next five years. It's a good idea to say that your focus for the next 6 months is to master the new role and become proficient with their systems and procedures. How you pitch things after this really depends on the specific role and the company culture. You'll need to do your research to see if they want a high flyer, who's hungry to progress in a tight time frame or if they want more of a steady eddie.

What are your salary expectations?

Tricky question - side step it if at all possible. Your aim at first interview is to sell your experience and position yourself as the best fit for the role. You have no bargaining power at this stage. Whilst salary is important – now is not the time!

Conclusion:

As always, practice makes perfect. Whilst, there's no such thing as a right or wrong answer, understanding what lies behind a question will sharpen your response and help pitch you as a serious contender. If you want more information on how to answer specific interview questions, go to our website www.interviewtechniques. Happy interviewing!

About the Author

Laura McGrath is the owner of [Interview Techniques](http://www.interviewtechniques.ie), a leading provider of interview coaching services. She has spent the last 15 years in staffing and recruitment and is a regular contributor with *Recruit Ireland* and the *Sunday Business Post*.

Go to: www.interviewtechniques.ie

Email: info@interviewtechniques.ie

Call: 01 231 3003