

Virtual Interview Workshop Handout

Resources & References

Situational Interview Questions and Sample Responses

Below are some situational interview questions and sample responses to a select few. Please review LiveCareer.com for additional information:

<https://www.livecareer.com/interview/questions/situational-interview-questions>

1. Who would you talk to if you discovered that a co-worker was disclosing confidential information that should not be divulged?

Sample excellent response:

I would first sit down privately with my co-worker and let him or her know what is happening. I would make it a dialogue rather than a lecture -- with the goal of helping the co-worker realize what a serious mistake he or she is making and how it could impact both the company and his or her personal life, and the lives of family and friends. If nothing comes of the meeting -- either the co-worker is defensive and denies it -- or does not agree to stop divulging confidential information, then I would be forced to go directly to my manager with the proof that I have of the unethical activities.

2. When would it be appropriate to bring in your supervisor while dealing with an angry customer?

Sample excellent response:

As an employee, it is my job to explore all the possible options to satisfy customer demands. However, if I see the customer is angry with me personally it is better to bring in a supervisor because he or she is more likely to listen to my supervisor than me. Also, it is important to stay friendly and always stay respectful and polite when dealing with customers in the face of frustration.

3. How would you attempt to make changes in the process if you felt a policy of your organization was hurting its members/workers?

Sample excellent response:

I would ask my co-workers if they felt the same way. I would want to make sure that I am not the only employee who feels like the policy is hurting members/workers. If others agreed with me, I would try to set up a meeting with a supervisor or someone who is in control of changing the policy and explain my concerns. I would then develop an alternative solution and present the problem with my developed alternative solution to the head of the organization.

Virtual Interview Workshop Handout

Resources & References

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me a little about yourself.

Talk about your experience, qualifications, and accomplishments - not your childhood, family, or hobbies.

2. Why do you want to work as a ...?

Talk about the interesting details of the job and why they fascinate you.

3. What are your top three skills?

Use your fingers and count off the skills- 1...2...3...

4. What qualifications do you have?

Name your skills and list your qualifications.

5. Tell me about my company.

Research! Get information on the company, size, its key products or services, the markets where it competes, and its overall reputation. Use the Internet to find recent information. Visit the company website. Check out the Reference USA and similar references.

6. How did you learn about us?

Friend, relative, newspaper story, advertisement, anything to show that they are not a random choice.

7. How many other companies have you approached?

“Several, but this is the company that best fits my skills and interests me the most.”

8. How many employers have you worked for during the last five years?

Tell the truth.

Virtual Interview Workshop Handout

Resources & References

9. You seem to switch jobs a lot. Why?

Job stagnation, downsizing, job elimination, a short-lived personal problem, or having made a bad choice are all good reasons.

10. How long do you plan to work here?

“A long time. This is the job I’ve been hoping for.”

11. Tell me about your current (or last) job.

List your duties and responsibilities. Discuss your accomplishments.

12. Why are you leaving that job?

Job stagnation, lack of advancement, career exploration, or simply having made a bad choice are all good reasons.

13. Are you planning to give notice that you’re leaving for another job?

Explain that you don’t want to leave them short-handed. A two-week notice is customary.

14. What do you think your manager would say about you?

Explain why you will be missed. Don’t give the impression that they’ll be glad to be rid of you.

15. What did you like most about that job?

Talk about your responsibilities, challenges, accomplishments, and the people.

16. What would you change about that job?

Don’t bad mouth the job. Explain that you’d want more responsibilities. It shows initiative.

17. Did you ever have a disagreement with a boss? Why? Why not?

Answer, “yes” and you’re a troublemaker, “no” and you’re a wimp. Use a STAR: “Sure we disagreed, but we worked well together. For example...”

18. Tell me about your education or training.

Explain your education and training and tell how it helped prepare you for this job.

Virtual Interview Workshop Handout

Resources & References

19. Why did you chose your major/university...

Remember that employers are interested in your decision-making skills - how you researched the information as well as the end result.

20. Did you enjoy school? Why?

The manager may want to know if you enjoy learning and whether you might benefit from a training program.

21. Which course did you find the most difficult? Why?

The interviewer wants to know if you have perseverance: "I got a D in my first term in algebra. My study skills were all wrong. I joined a study group. By third term I pulled it up to a B and kept it there."

22. Did you join any school activities? Why?

School activities show that you're sociable; that you enjoy being part of a group, and that you can work with other people. This is important in the workplace.

23. Give an example of any major problem you faced and how you solved it.

Use a STAR. Think of something related to work, school, civic, or leisure activities. Provide details. The interviewer wants to see how you define problems, identify options, decide on a solution, handle obstacles, and solve the problem.

24. Give a hypothetical situation:

You may be asked to react to a hypothetical situation which may occur on the job. You may be given a case study and ask how you would handle it. This tests how familiar you are with the field or position for which you are interviewing-and your ability to "think on your feet."

25. In your lifetime, what was your greatest accomplishment? What did you learn from it?

A brief personal statement such as your marriage, birth of a child, or helping someone in need followed by a solid work accomplishment works well.

Virtual Interview Workshop Handout

Resources & References

26. What was your greatest failure? What did you learn from it?

Mentioning a failure shows maturity. Use a STAR. Show your flexibility and ability to learn from mistakes as well as how you follow-up and made improvements to eliminate future mistakes.

27. What is your greatest weakness?

Focus on work, not character weaknesses. Turn it into a positive, “I’m accused of being a workaholic. I like to stay and get caught up on odds and end before I go home.

28. Have you ever been convicted of a crime?

It’s not illegal to ask this question if it has a bearing on the job you are seeking. A bank, for example, wouldn’t want a convicted embezzler working in the vault. If you have a conviction, admit it. Explain that what happened. Admit that you made a stupid mistake. Tell what you’ve done to make amends. Ask for a second chance.

29. Last year, how many days of work did you miss? How many days were you late?

This will tell the interviewer whether you’re going to show up for work on time every day. If you’ve missed more than a couple days, have some good explanations ready.

30. What motivates you?

Money is not a good answer. Use a STAR. “Having responsibilities and being acknowledged when the job is done right. For example,”.

31. Are you at your best when working alone or in a group?

Use a STAR. “Both. I enjoy working as part of a team and I can work independently to get my share of the work done. Let me give you an example...”

32. Would you rather be in charge of a project or work as part of a team? Why?

Use a STAR. “Either. I’m not afraid to take responsibility and I’m not afraid to roll up my sleeves and pitch in. Let me give you an example...”

Virtual Interview Workshop Handout

Resources & References

33. Describe a situation when one supervisor told you to do something now and another supervisor told you to do it later?

Use a STAR. The interviewer wants to see how you would handle conflict. How would you handle it?

34. What was your previous salary?

Tell the truth.

35. What kind of salary are you looking for today?

“I have no set salary in mind. What salary is usually offered to someone with my qualifications?” If the interviewer persists, give a general answer like, “somewhere in the high teens,” or “somewhere in the thirties.”

36. Have you ever been fired from a job? Why?

Explain that you usually get along well with everyone. But, you and your ex-manager just couldn't seem to make things work. Share what you learned.

37. Do you have any questions for me?

“Yes, thank you, I do have a few questions.”

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYER

1. Can you describe a typical day for someone in this position?
2. How does this position fit into the company's long-term plans?
3. What are the working hours of the department? Is there any shift work?
4. What are some of the qualifications you expect the ideal candidate for this position to have?
5. Can you tell me about this position and the type of person you are seeking?

Virtual Interview Workshop Handout

Resources & References

6. How do you define success? How do you evaluate employee success?
7. What characteristics do the individuals who are successful in this position possess?
8. Is there a training period? What does it involve?
9. What career patterns have others followed who have completed the training program?
10. How would my performance be evaluated? How often? By whom?
11. Does your organization encourage its members to pursue additional education? What area of study is most encouraged?
12. Is there a formal process for advancement within the organization?
13. How would you describe the company's culture or environment?
14. What current industry-wide trends are likely to affect your organization?
15. What do you think is the greatest opportunity facing the organization in the near future? The biggest challenge?
16. What challenges do you see for a new employee in this position?
17. What will be the next step in this process? When will a hiring decision be made?

Virtual Interview Workshop Handout

Resources & References

REFERENCES

- Barreiro, Sachi “Can Potential Employers Check Your Facebook Page?” <https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/can-potential-employers-check-your-facebook-page.html>
- Byham, William C. (1997). *Landing the Job You Want*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Erschine, Ryan (2016) “How to Define your Personal Brand — [www.entrepreneur.com article/278480](http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/278480)
- Farr, J. Michael (2004,2002). *The Very Quick Job Search & Getting the Job You Really Want* Indianapolis, IN: Jist Publishing
- Gang, Vivian (2012). *8 Mind Games That Recruiters Play During Interviews - www.businessinsider.com/8-mind-games-that-recruiters-lay-during-interviews*.
- Gang, Vivian (2013). *11 Common Interview Questions That Are Actually Illegal - www.businessinsider.com/11-illegal-interview-questions-2013-7*.
- www.betterteam.com/illegal-interview-questions
- Hill, V. & Kennedy, K (8/3/2016) <https://www.shrm.org/about-shrm/press-room/press-releases/pages/human-capital-benchmarking-report.aspx>
- Jahns, Erin (2020, June 5). I'm 55—Here Are 10 Things I Do Before Video Calls to Look More Photogenic. Retrieved from https://www.whowhatwear.com/how-to-look-photogenic-in-your-50s?utm_source=google
- Medley, Anthony (1993). *Sweaty Palms*. Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press.
- Null, Christopher (2020, April 13). How to Ace an Online Interview. Retrieved from <https://www.wired.com/story/tips-for-online-job-interviews/>
- <https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/can-potential-employers-check-your-facebook-page.html>
- <https://www.jobskills.info/career/behavioral-style-interview.htm>
- P&C Network (2001), *Job Interview Resources*. www.job-interview.net
- Parker, Y. (1995). *Blue Collar & Beyond: Resumes for Skilled Trades and Services*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.
- Parker, Y. (1996). *The Resume Catalog: 200 Damn Good Examples*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.
- Parot, Daniel and Haynes, Frances Bolles (2000). *101 Salary Secrets. How to Negotiate Like a Pro*. Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press.

Virtual Interview Workshop Handout

Resources & References

Payton, Jr., James. "4 Tips for Mastering the Video Interview"- *GIJobs.com*, May 2020 pg.10

Ryan, R. (1997). *Winning Resumes*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Ryan, Robin (1994). *60 Seconds and Your Hired*. Manassa Park, VA: Impact Publications.

Wendleton, Kate (1999). *Interview and Salary Negotiation*. New York, NY: The Five O'clock Club.

Whitcomb, Susan Britton (2005). *Interview Magic*. Indianapolis, IN: Jist Publications

<https://www.livecareer.com/interview/questions/situational-interview-questions-2>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIPIDbcEpyQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQsyC-ks9f4>