



STRATEGIES FOR HANDLING TOUGH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

If you feel like the job interview process is a complex combination of mind games that are intended to leave you clueless as to how to answer tough interview questions, you couldn't be more wrong.

Time is of the essence; employers want to hire someone asap. therefore, they're not into playing games. The typical interview questions they ask are designed to cut to the chase and give you the best chance to sell yourself to them.

Your challenge as a job seeker, therefore, is to anticipate tough interview questions and knock your answers out of the park.

To help kick-start your interview preparation, craft smart answers to these five frequently asked interview questions. Knowing how to respond can give you the edge you need to nab a job offer.

1. So, tell me (*us*) about yourself?

Many interviewers open-up with this as an 'ice breaker' says Mark Berkowitz CERTIFIED EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW PROFESSIONAL of Career Development Resources LLC, a full-service career management firm.

It would appear that the hiring manager is trying to ease into the interview and lighten the conversation, which can be a good thing for both sides. Your response will set the tone for the entire interview.

Don't flub your way through this harmless-sounding question. Focus. Determining what you want the hiring manager to know about you is a key component of how to win the job offer. Many career coaches suggest preparing your 'elevator pitch'—a two- to three-minute summary of your skills and professional experience, where you focus on credentials that are directly related to the job that you're interviewing for. *Berkowitz, of Career Development Resources LLC has four strategically designed ways to handle that 'ice-breaker' question.* Some of them have been included in Wendy Enelow's book WINNING INTERVIEWS for \$100,000+ JOBS. You can also contact Mark through the contact page at www.careerdevelopmentresource.com for recommendations on selecting your best 'opening salvo'.

2. Why are you looking to leave your current job?

One thing to know about how to answer tough interview questions: Don't dwell on the negative. Naturally, employers will want to know what prompted you to want to change jobs. Phrase your answer carefully, especially if you're unhappy with your current job. (And let's be honest: You probably wouldn't be looking for a new job if things were perfect with your current position.)

Your other challenge: You've got to be very careful and diplomatic with your answer. The last thing you want to do is badmouth your current employer; because it gives the impression that *if and when you move on, you'll be bad mouthing them!*

The key is to offer a positive explanation, regardless of whether you're having a negative experience at your job. One approach: "I love my current job, but I'm looking to work for an organization that aligns more with the skills I want to develop." Or, keep it simple. You can never go wrong by focusing on the exciting opportunities this new employer offers.

3. Why do you want to work here?

This question evaluates cultural fit, which is a top priority for employers today. It's important to companies, particularly from a financial perspective because if you get hired and decide to quit because the job or company isn't a good fit, it's going to cost the employer a significant amount of money and time to find your replacement. (Fact: The average cost-per-hire is a whopping \$4,129, while the average time it takes to fill a given position is 42 days, according to the SHRM: the Society for Human Resource Management.)

Your answer should reflect the company's desired image. Do your homework by studying their website—paying special attention to the “about us” or “our mission” section. Once you have a good understanding of what matters to the company, you can shape your response along these lines: “When I read through the core values of your company, what really jumped out at me was [X, Y, and Z].”

4. Why do you want this job?

This question may seem like it's identical to the previous one, but the difference is it's not about cultural fit—it's about the work itself. An employer wants to hear how qualified and passionate you are, and a can-do attitude will take you far.

They want reassurance that you're genuinely interested in the job and not just looking for a paycheck. “This is your perfect opportunity to show them that you're *the* best qualified candidate for the job.”

Before the interview, make sure you review the job description in the original job posting. Then, highlight your skills that connect to the day-to-day job responsibilities. (“I saw that this job requires proficiency in forensic accounting. Here's how I've used these skills to solve problems at my previous jobs.”) Also, talk about why you're enthusiastic about the job specifically. (“What really excites me about this position is it's hands-on with clients.”)

5. What's your greatest weakness?

This can be a tricky one to answer, especially if your first reaction is to try to present a strength as a weakness (e.g. “I can be too much of a perfectionist sometimes”), but hiring managers can see right through that.

It's OK to talk about a skill or technical ability that needs improvement, but you need to be able to point to steps that you're currently taking to improve it. (“I'm in the process of strengthening my SEO skills by taking an online course.”)

You have to also make sure your weakness doesn't hinder your ability to perform the basic functions of the job. For instance, if you're applying for a bookkeeping job, you don't want to point out that you're not great at math.

Emphasize that you don't shy away from a challenge, and that you look forward to becoming a stronger employee to better serve your team.

Knowing how to answer tough interview questions is just one part of the job search. Need some more help finding the right job? At Career Development Resources we have decades of experience helping candidates successfully win their highly-desirable dream job offers such as:

- ✓ Landing a coveted internship with prestigious organizations
- ✓ Gaining acceptance to a post-graduate Doctoral program at her first-choice university
- ✓ An Executive Chef who doubled his salary.
- ✓ Moving from mid-management to CFO of a top national department store chain

You can check out some of the actual testimonials at www.careerdevelopmentresource.com

Career Strategist Mark Berkowitz is the owner and President of **CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES, LLC**. Revolutionizing careers since 1985, Mark provides one-on-one career consulting services, résumé building assistance and guidance to help each client achieve not only job advancement, but lasting and meaningful success in their career path as well. A distinguished figure in his field, Berkowitz is one of the top career

builders in the country and has been quoted in nearly two dozen books and publications on the topic of career advancement.

Passionate about empowering others to realize their dreams, Mark served as an executive board member of the PROFESSIONAL ASSN. OF RÉSUMÉ WRITERS & CAREER COACHES. He has been helping clients successfully advance in, and/or change their careers for over 36 years. With a Master's Degree in Career Development and four specialized certifications ([National Certified Career Counselor](#), [Certified Professional Résumé Writer](#), [Int'l Certified Job & Career Transition Coach](#), and [Certified Employment Interview Professional](#)), he is uniquely qualified to help you improve your career situation. A recognized expert in the field, he had not only taught in Graduate Schools and led workshops and seminars, but also trained other counselors. Mark served as chairman of the Certification Board for the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches and was a founding member of the Career Management Alliance (fkn Career Masters Institute). Additionally, he has shared his expertise in effectively utilizing career assessment tools with graduate counseling students from nearby Fordham University, helping to prepare them for their future counseling careers.

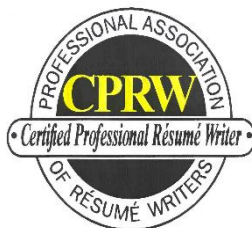
Mark connects with clients locally as well as international clients via the internet. He also provides outreach to high school and college students, presenting career planning and job search strategy workshops.

- Highly regarded with résumés, cover letters, and interview strategies showcased in nearly two dozen books.
- Enjoys an INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION as a “Résumé Guru” by members of the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches.

His work appears in nearly two dozen books on résumé /cover letter writing and winning interview strategies. He has been spotlighted on WCBS television in “*Acing The Interview*” and has been named as the “*Professional of the Year 2024*” by the [PODCAST BUSINESS NEWS NETWORK](#).



Berkowitz has been recognized as “... ***one of the leading résumé writers in the U.S. today***” in Professional Résumés for Executives, Managers, and Other Administrators. Wendy Enelow, President of the Career Masters Institute has acknowledged Mark as “... ***one of the most talented career counselors I have ever met.***”



You can contact him at 1+ (910) 833-5013 or cardevres1@gmail.com to find out how he can assist you in launching your career into a higher orbit.

See how you can benefit from professional expertise

instead of suffering from your career mistakes.