

## Types of Interview Questions

The majority of interview questions will focus on experiences from your past, but at the executive level, interview questions are more than likely to go beyond that level of difficulty. By asking non-traditional interview questions, hiring executives and search consultants can find out how you will perform in the position, uncover your problem-solving skills, see how you react to unpredictable circumstances, and numerous other traits that could make you successful or unsuccessful in the role.

Here are some examples of traditional and non-traditional questions and suggestions on how to formulate your responses. As you prepare for an interview, you may consider putting together some notes and stories with examples. Also, take the time to prepare a few questions of your own for the interviewer. Some examples of these types of questions are listed at the end of this section.

### **Tell me about yourself.**

As one of the most common interview questions, it is probable that you will be asked this during at least one interview in the hiring process. By asking this question, interviewers are looking to see how you adapt and what things you decide to focus on while talking about yourself. The best way to answer this question is by summarizing your career thus far (highlighting key achievements that relate to the role you're interviewing for) and where you see your career going in the future (reiterating why you think working for this company fits your future goals).

### **What was your reason for leaving your last employer?**

Be honest when answering this question, but don't be too negative. Point out positive developments that transpired as a result of leaving the company and explain that you are keen to enter the following stage of your career.

### **What are your strengths?**

This question should be answered using two or three attributes or skills that are relevant to the position for which you're interviewing. It's important to cite evidence of these strengths through CAR stories and by citing reviews or observations coworkers or superiors have made about your performance. Otherwise, it will seem like you're simply bragging.

### **What are your weaknesses? Or tell me about a failed project.**

This question can be difficult for interviewees at all levels, but that's what makes it a great question from the interviewer's perspective. Rather than focusing on all the things you may not be as good at, you should choose one weakness or failed project and explain a situation where you've improved or overcame that weakness or project (again a CAR story could be very effective here).

### **Do you have the key skills this position requires?**

Numerous interview questions often place emphasis on key skills for the position, so make sure you prepare examples of your ability for all the key skills required for the role.

### **What is the one thing you would change about our company if you could today?**

This question helps the interviewer find out how much you know about the company. It also gives them some insight into what kinds of strategies you would focus on if you were to be hired for the position. Don't worry about being overly detailed when answering this question. The interviewer will be looking to see how much you know about the company, your thought process, attitude, and priorities.

**Do you understand our company culture?**

Culture fit has become a top priority for companies, especially at the executive level where the company culture could be impacted by an executive's leadership style. Ensuring there is a company culture fit is as much for your own benefit (personal happiness) as for the organization's. You'll be able to gain an understanding of the company's culture from their website, public image, and by talking to current and former employees.

**Can you tell me about a situation involving conflict management?**

This situational interview question allows you to show off your experience managing employees and dealing with coworkers. The best way to answer it is by telling a CAR story about a situation where conflict occurred and how you listened, negotiated, persuaded, etc. to solve it.

**What are your salary requirements?**

This question can be difficult because neither party wants to show their compensation hand first for fear of giving away too much or too little. In case the interviewer is not willing to state the salary range first, you should be prepared before the interview to answer this question with a compensation or salary range. You can do this by researching the average pay for similar positions on various salary sites and by speaking with others in your network. You'll also need to factor in cost of living and additional parts of your compensation package, including bonuses and perks.

**Why is there a gap in your employment? Or why have you changed jobs so often?**

If your resume shows gaps in your career or numerous job changes, you should be prepared for these questions. It is common for people to take time off to raise children or undertake charity work, so as long as you have an explanation, these types of situations shouldn't raise a red flag to the employer. Find a way to answer these types of questions in a positive way, but don't lie. Remember that this is about fit on both sides. Be truthful, and if it is an issue with the company, then there may be a culture fit problem.

**What are five trends in our industry?**

This question directly assesses your knowledge of the industry and your ability to think strategically under pressure. If you're not very familiar with trends in the industry you're interested in working in, deep preparation and research will likely be necessary to be able to answer this question.

**Talk about a situation that required you to change rapidly.**

As an executive, you must be able to adapt quickly to change. The interviewer will ask this question to assess how well you can do this, as well as your personality and leadership style. Answer this question with an engaging CAR story.

**Have you ever had to fire someone for poor performance? How did you manage the situation?**

This question gives insight into both your management style and your conflict management abilities. If you've never had to fire someone thus far, you may choose to discuss how you've kept your employees performance up during difficult situations.

## Questions You Can Ask During Your Interview

- *What are you looking for in an ideal candidate for this position?*
- *How would I be measured?*
- *What challenges would I have to tackle first?*
- *What are the next steps?*
- *Tell me more about the team I would be managing.*
- *Which departments would my role intersect with the most?*
- *What do you like about working here?*
- *What are the company's goals for the next five years?*
- *How are new employees onboarded?*
- *What is the company culture like?*
- *Questions based on your research.*
- *What are the people I'll be supervising like?*
- *How does the company deal with changing priorities?*
- *Why is this position open?*
- *What do you expect the person in this role to accomplish in the next six months and beyond?*
- *What are the next steps in the hiring process?*

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