

Insight into Answers to Interview Questions

Interviewers will regularly ask you questions that are disguised to find a deeper answer than you might think at first. Below you will find typical questions asked by interviewers along with what they are likely looking for in your answer. Take the opportunity to practice your responses to these mock interview questions on the lines provided, and remember to give specific examples of your past experiences in your answers.

Question: Describe your most recent significant personal achievement and what it took to accomplish it.

What They're Looking For: How the candidate's motivation influenced a specific accomplishment, elements of choosing to work longer/harder, giving up other things to complete a task, persistence.

Practice Response: _____

Question: Give me an example of when you had to persist in the face of adversity to accomplish an objective.

What They're Looking For: Elements of a desire to see things through, persist, not give up easily; recognition of the notion of giving 100% all the time; failure is not an option, knows negatives will lead to positives.

Practice Response: _____

Question: Give me some examples of your short-term goals (e.g., weekly, monthly).

What They're Looking For: Many goals representing the short-term (e.g., day, week, month), is it common practice for them to set goals, extent to which they use a planner or calendar often, are those goals written and/or challenging.

Practice Response: _____

Question: Give me some examples of long-term goals (1-3 years).

What They're Looking For: Level of commitment to goals and quantity of goals set vs. reached. Most people don't reach all their goals; admission of this and offering legitimate/reasonable justification (e.g., change in focus, resources unavailable, etc.) is desirable. Consistently attributing blame outside of one's self could be a concern.

Practice Response: _____

Question: Tell me about a time when you were concerned about being able to handle a new job assignment or responsibility. What did you do about your concern?

What They're Looking For: "Roll up your sleeves and get to work" outlook; finds the bright spots amid the concern, refuses to accept failure, confidence in general capabilities, thrives on challenges, looks forward to completing the task; has specific examples of overcoming difficult tasks or situations.

Practice Response: _____

Question: Tell me about a time when you failed at something. What was the reason for your failure? What did you do, how did you react?

What They're Looking For: Honest response regarding a moderately important failure; what they attribute the failure to (themselves or others); what they did as a result of the failure; did they try again or try harder, redirect effort to another goal, see it as a challenge and learning opportunity.

Practice Response: _____

Question: Tell me about a time when you went beyond normal job duties/requirements to accomplish something.

What They're Looking For: Don't want to do just the minimum; going beyond normal duties as a choice or requirement?; prefers to clear agenda, get things done early or stay ahead.

Practice Response: _____

Question: How often do you have to juggle multiple tasks at work? Can you give me examples?

What They're Looking For: Awareness that multi-tasking is common in most jobs; examples of methodically tackling tasks one at a time that compete for the allocation of time and resources, flexibility to accommodate changes in plans.

Practice Response: _____

Question: Describe a typical day for yourself.

What They're Looking For: Setting a plan, starting to work through that plan, flexibility if a crisis occurs, returns to original task after interruption, satisfied with what gets accomplished in a typical day (appropriate progress).

Practice Response: _____

Question: Are you a risk taker? Give me an example of a time when you took a risk.

What They're Looking For: Confidence in capabilities to minimize risk, thinks about probabilities of success, willingness to accept outcome, willingness to learn from negative outcome and do it again, understands the concept of investing effort now for future payoff.

Practice Response: _____

Question: Describe any activities you have chosen to do in the past year to improve your life. What led to performing these activities? What were the outcomes of them?

What They're Looking For: Always need to have productive activities to perform, seeking to challenge themselves, volunteer activities (e.g., coaching a team), things done to improve their work potential: courses, reading, capabilities mastered, certifications/licenses obtained, etc.

Practice Response: _____

Question: What kind of system of process do you use to keep track of and plan the important things you have to do? What would you change about how you plan your life and work if you enter into this business?

What They're Looking For: Candidate absolutely relies on their system, uses it consistently, can't function without it, helps keep them moving forward, keeps them focused on important goals.

Practice Response: _____

Question: What do you do to motivate yourself?

What They're Looking For: Chooses to reward self; sets personal goals, regularly increases goals as they are realized, keeps goals in forefront of mind, chooses to compete with self; satisfaction in going good work is its own reward.

Practice Response: _____
