

TIPS FOR ANSWERING TRADITIONAL QUESTIONS

Here are a few general tips to remember before answering questions:

- Listen carefully. If you feel the question is unclear, ask politely for clarification.
- Pause before answering to consider all facts that may substantiate your response.
- Always offer positive information; avoid negativity at all times.
- Discuss only the facts needed to respond to the question.
- Get directly to the point. Ask if listener would like you to go into great detail before you do.
- Focus and re-focus attention on your successes. Remember, the goal is not to have the right answers so much as it is to convince the interviewer that you are the right person.
- Be truthful, but try not to offer unsolicited information
- Try not to open yourself to areas of questioning that could pose difficulties for you.

Tell me about yourself?

The response to this question should not be your life story. It is ok to give a very brief personal history. The primary goal is to simply introduce yourself. A successful answer will be demonstrated when you answer this with confidence because you have prepared in advance. Research the job that you are seeking and understand what qualities and experience may be sought after. Then correlate that to the strengths and experience that you possess and promote any relevant points. Demonstrating that you are a great match for the job by answering this question right will put you on the fast track to success.

Why Did You Choose Us?

This question allows interviewers to determine which job seekers just want a job or which really want to work for the company. This is an opportunity to show off your research. You may respond to current transactions the company may be involved with. If the company is the Cleveland Clinic you may want to discuss clinical trials or medical break-through recently published.

What Do You Want out of Life?

Today, many employers are looking for employees who lead well-rounded lives. Being well rounded and having a good social life outside of work allows you to better deal with potentially stressful situations of the job.

What are your career goals?

The purpose of this question is to determine if your goals are compatible with the company. This will help the company decide if they can offer you a position in line with your future goals. Always tie your response to the position that you are interviewing for. Stating how your experience and education can be applied to the position is a good way to impress the interviewer.

What are your strengths?

This is a direct question with no hidden meaning; answer it by outlining your skills, accomplishments and characteristics that pertain to the particular job. In order to prepare for this question, look over the job description and list the personal strengths that will probably be required for this job. Is this a position that requires handling large sums of money? Then the right candidate will be someone who's responsible, reliable, and ethical. If it's a customer care position, they'll be looking for someone who is personable, patient, and empathetic.

Create a list of the personal strengths needed that you possess. Also, think of situations in which you have demonstrated these strengths. This will prepare you for any further behavioral type interview questions that may follow.

How do you define success?

Begin with your definition of success, such as:

I learned early in my career, it's the passion that drives you toward your goals but it's the hard work that produces your success. I constantly strive to improve my performance by questioning today, how I could have accomplished more yesterday. This way, I'll always feel my next achievement will be greater than my last.

What Is Your Greatest Weakness?

According to Wetfeet.com, Neece and Lin agree that the best response breaks down into three parts. First, demonstrate you're self-aware by stating a weakness. Second, share how you're taking initiative to improve upon it. And third, discuss your success thus far—or as Lin says, tell the “happy ending” of it all.

For example, if you're bad at giving presentations, you might identify your weakness as public speaking. Tell how you overcame this weakness by constantly volunteering to present on behalf of your department in your old job, or attending Toastmasters meetings. Then, reflect on your comfort level with presenting now. Remember that you should disclose something that is not extremely important in the job you are interviewing for.

What Do You Consider To Be One Of Your Greatest Accomplishments?

Keep your answers job related and within reason. You can explain this without sounding too boastful. For example, stating something like” Although I feel that my biggest achievements are still ahead of me, I am proud of my involvement with....I made my contribution as part of that team and learned a lot about the process. We did it with a lot of hard work, collaboration, and keeping an eye on the bottom line.

Why Should I Hire You?

Know in advance why you feel you are the best person for the job. During the interview, you may also continue to receive clues about what the company is looking for and how you meet those needs. Highlight your background and how it relates to the current needs the interviewer has just described. Finish with the fact that you are a team player, take direction well, and have a strong desire to work for this company based on the research that you have done. Express confidence in the fact YOU are the best fit for this job.

What Would Your References Say About You?

In preparation for this question, as well as your job search overall, it is a good idea to pull out old performance reviews. Take a look at what you were recognized and praised for. This is a good opportunity to promote yourself from another person's perspective. This can also demonstrate how well you and your previous boss got along.

What Are Your Career Goals?

This question is designed to discover whether your goals are compatible with the company. The employer will be thinking ahead and trying to decide if he or she will be able to offer you a position to suit your goals in the future. When answering this question, it is important to tie your goals into the position available. Stating your immediate goals, such as applying your education and gaining real-life experience in the field, is a good way to impress the interviewer.

Why Did You Choose to work for this Company?

This is a traditional question and allows interviewers to quickly discover which potential employees want to work for this particular company and which just want a job. This is a chance to show off your research skills as well as flatter the company. A traditional response would mention recent transactions the company has been involved with, as well as highlighting particular company policies that you agree with. For example, when applying to a law firm, knowing several of the cases that the firm has handled and demonstrating that you were impressed with the firm's reasoning on the issues will show you are interested in the work that the company does.

What Do You Want out of Life?

According to Quintcareers.com, this is a traditional question asked by interviewers. Today, many employers are looking for employees who lead well-rounded lives. Having a good social life outside work allows you to cope with stress better. To answer this question, avoid stating that money is your main focus as many employers will assume that you will leave the company as soon as a better offer comes along. Stress, friendship, a fulfilling job and challenges are things that you want out of life. These show that you will work well with others, be able to cope with stress and are prepared to work hard to have a fulfilling job.