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Title:

Inside a Job Interview: Answers to the 15 Most Frequently Asked Questions � Part 3

Word Count:

871

Summary:

If you have some trepidation about job interviews, relax, you are normal. Who among us wants to be interviewed by someone we do not know, controlling an interview with their questions and concerns, and then sit in judgment of us without an opportunity to prove ourselves? Learn how to turn that negative feeling into positive energy by getting the answers to the 15 most frequently asked questions in a job interview. Here are the quality answers.

Keywords:

interviews, jobs, careers, resumes, hiring, business, cover letters, references

Article Body:

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13) Do you have references?

It is not a good idea to give references at the resume stage. References are far more appropriate at the interview stage, and even then, do not give references unless they ask for them. When and if they ask, always have them available at the interview.

The reason you do not want to be giving references at the resume stage is that, if they can read your resume and check your references and�on that basis�make a decision not to interview or hire you, you have done yourself a real disservice. You want to get in front of people (secure interviews). Give them the resume, but not the references unless they ask for them.

Most prospects give names, addresses and phone numbers for references when asked. It is better not to do this. It inconveniences the interviewer in that they have to call to get the reference. And while you think you know what someone may say about you, the fact is, you do not.

The references being called may not be available, or may be on vacation. They may have left the firm, been fired or laid off since you last checked their availability.

Therefore, it is best to use written references only. Have the person put the written reference about you on the company�s or organization's letterhead so it looks official, and have them sign it. If the person giving the reference will not put it on company letterhead because it is against company policy, then have them use a plain sheet of paper. They can still use their name, company position, and company name at the bottom of the letter. Usually, written references are taken at face value. Oftentimes, with a written reference, a call is made only to verify employment.

Many candidates think that written references have to come from the big boss, or their immediate supervisor. You have other options if your boss or supervisor will not do it for you, or if you would not want them to do it for you.

When you have little work experience and have volunteered at your church, have your priest or pastor write a reference attesting to your character, ambition, dependability and productivity.

When you have worked with key employees, supervisors or managers of other companies, ask them to write you a reference attesting to your professionalism and ability to work with people.

When you have worked closely with vendors, suppliers, or their sales representatives, ask them to write you a letter of reference.

You could even have another person holding the same position at another company, who you have worked with, write you a reference.

Ask a lot of people to write references because many of them will agree to do it and be happy to do it, but, unfortunately, you are not on the top of their priority list. You can be forgotten despite their good intentions to help you. Ask a lot of people and realize that for every 10 people you ask who are willing to do it and happy to do it, you will be doing very well to get 1 or 2 to actually do it.

And, when all else fails, remember that any written job evaluations you have can also be used as references until you can secure written references. You do not need a lot of references. Two or three are adequate, and they can be personal (about you) as well as professional (about the job you do).

14) Do you have any questions?

It is very important that you have questions at the interview. Any question you ask shows an indicated interest, or genuine concern on your part.

When any of the basic questions about the job have not been covered in the interview, this is a good time to ask about salary, benefits, what is expected, how you will be evaluated, and the opportunities for advancement. Other good questions include:

"Is your company or organization growing?" (Growing organizations create jobs and promotions.)

"What happened to the last person who held the position?" (Maybe they were not fired or incompetent. Maybe the company offered no advancement or salary increases, encouraged lousy working conditions, or refused to get rid of an incompetent boss.)

"How committed are you to research and development?" (Companies that invest in their future plan to be successful, profitable, and on the cutting edge of what is happening in their industry.)

"How fast can people who perform be promoted?" (You want to know that, when you produce, you will be compensated for your effort rather than draw the same salary as another employee who produces far less by comparison.)

"Is this company family owned and operated?" (When it is, you can forget getting anywhere very fast; all of the relatives will get the positions, and this will happen in many cases whether the relatives are competent or not.)

"Is there any possibility of an equity interest in the future?" (Buying in, even on a little scale, can be lucrative. More than one employee has become a millionaire by taking advantage of stock options. Look at the fortunes people made when they hooked up with Microsoft, when the software giant grew so rapidly.)