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Title:

What do Those Interview Questions Really Mean?

Word Count:

682

Summary:

What is the interviewer really looking for when going through the interview process?

Keywords:

Job Interview, tough questions

Article Body:

You have just been through a grueling interview. The questions were tough and some just seemed off-the-wall and some were rather innocent. What was the interviewer really looking for? What did s/he mean by those questions? Well, you can be certain that if you were interviewed by a seasoned interviewer, each and every question had a very distinct purpose. Listed below are some common and not-so-common questions with the potential purpose of the question.

Common questions and what the interviewer is really looking for:

Question: Tell me about yourself?

Answer: The interviewer is looking for you to talk about yourself and to reveal anything that s/he might not otherwise be able to ask. For example, do you have kids? Married? Hobbies? Interests? Single parent? Let's say the job involves shift work, the need to be at work at 7:00 every day or the flexibility to be on call? Candidates with children are perceived to have more problems getting to work on time, miss more work because of children illnesses, school functions, etc. Is this fair? No. Is this a reality for some hiring managers? Absolutely. So what to do. Talk specifically about previous work, your desire to work, etc. The only exception would be if you know for a fact you and the hiring manager have something in common that you can use to build interest with him/her and that you would be a great fit.

Question: Tell me about the most difficult person you had to deal with?

Answer: The interviewer could care less about the most difficult person you had to deal with. What s/he is fishing for here is your ability to get along with people. Do not answer this one too quickly. Answering quickly suggests you have had to deal with a log of difficulty people which really suggests that you are the difficult one. A better approach might be to tell the interviewer that you get along with everybody and that you do not have problems with difficult people. Assuming that that statement is true, expand on your ability to pull diverse groups of people together to complete a project

Question: If you could have any job in the world, what would it be?

Answer: While the obvious answer would seem to be �this job�, you might also talk about your desire to take the next step thereby giving the interviewer the thought that you are an achiever and willing to work hard. It always amazes me how many people that I have interviewed are stumped by this question or answer it saying a surfing job.

Question: Tell me what you liked about your last job and what you disliked

Answer: Here is another one to be careful on. Do not go on about all the things you disliked. It leads the interview to think you do not like anything. Even if your last job was really, really bad, focus on the positive aspects of the job such as the things you learned, the exposure it gave you, etc. If you talk more about what you disliked, chances are you will say you dislike something that may be a critical part of the job you are applying for.

Question: Tell me about your favorite and least favorite manager

Answer: Again, this is a tricky question. If you begin to talk about the things you dislike about your previous manager, the hiring manager will believe you have a problem with authority. Focus on the things you have learned from previous managers. Also talk about how you and a previous manager disagreed on an approach and how you worked the issue out.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, an experienced interviewing has a reason for each and every question. While the question may seem innocent enough, how you answer it could decide whether you get the job or not. Always to remember to focus on the positive aspect of your past. Focusing on the negative will give the impression that you are a negative person and probably not the best fit for the position.