**HR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**General Guidelines in Answering Interview Questions:**

Everyone is nervous on interviews. If you simply

*allow*

yourself to feel nervous, you'll do much

better. Remember also that it's difficult for the interviewer as well.

In general, be upbeat and positive. Never be negative.

Rehearse your answers and time them. Never talk for more than 2 minutes straight.

Don't try to memorize answers word for word. Use the answers shown here as a guide only, and

don't be af raid to include your own thoughts and words. To help you remember key concepts, jot

down and review a few key words for each answer. Rehearse your answers frequently, and they

will come to you natur ally in interviews.

As you will read in the accompanying report, the single most important strategy in interviewing,

as in all phases of your job search, is what we call:

*"The Greatest Executive Job Finding Secret."*

And that is...

*Find out what people want, than show them how you can help them get it.*

Find out what an employer wants most in his or her ideal candidate, then show how you meet

those qualifications.

In other words, you must match your abilities, with the needs of the employer.

*You must sell*

*what the buyer is buying*

. To do that, before you know what to emphasize in your answers, you

must find out what the buyer is buying... what he is looking for. And the best way to do that is to

ask a few questions yourself.

You will see how to bring this off skillfully as you read the first two questions of this report. But

regardless of how you accomplish it, you must remember this strategy above all:

*before blurting*

*out your qualifications, you must get some idea of what the employer wants most*

. Once you

know what he wants, you can then present your qualifications as the perfect “key” that fits the

“lock” of that position.

Other important interview strategies:

Turn weaknesses into strengths (You'll see how to do this in a few moments.)

Think before you answer. A pause to collect your thoughts is a hallmark of a thoughtful

person.

As a daily exercise, practice being more optimistic. For example, try putting a positive spin on

events and situations you would normally regard as negative. This is not meant to turn you into a

Pollyanna, but to sharpen your selling skills. The best salespeople, as well as the best liked

interview candidates, come off as being naturally optimistic, "can do" people. You will

dramatically raise your level of attractiveness by daily practicing to be more optimistic.

Be honest...never lie.

Keep an interview diary. Right after each interview note what you did right, what could have

gone a little better, and what steps you should take next with this contact. Then take those steps.

Don't be like the 95% of humanity who say they will follow up on something, but never do.

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**HR QUESTIONS - I**

***1.Tell me about yourself.***

**TRAPS:**

Beware, about 80% of all interviews begin with this “innocent” question. Many

candidates, unprepared for the question, skewer themselves by rambling, recapping their life

story, delving into ancient work history or personal matters.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Start with the present and tell why you are well qualified for the position.

Remember that the key to all successful interviewing is to match your qualifications to what the

interviewer is looking for. In other words

*you must sell what the buyer is buying. This is the*

*single most important strategy in job hunting.*

So, before you answer this or

*any*

question it's imperative that you try to uncover your

interviewer's greatest need, want, problem or goal.

To do so, make you take these two steps:

1.

Do all the homework you can before the interview to uncover

*this person's*

wants and

needs (not the generalized needs of the industry or company)

2.

As early as you can in the interview, ask for a more complete description of what the

position entails. You might say: “I have a number of accomplishments I'd like to tell you

about, but I want to make the best use of our time together and talk directly to your needs.

To help me do, that, could you tell me more about the most important priorities of this

position? All I know is what I (heard from the recruiter, read in the classified ad, etc.)”

Then,

*ALWAYS follow-up with a second and possibly, third question*

, to draw out his needs even

more. Surprisingly, it's usually this

*second*

or

*third*

question that unearths what the interviewer is

*most*

looking for.

You might ask simply, "And in addition to that?..." or, "Is there anything else you see as essential

to success in this position?:

This process will not feel easy or natural at first, because it is easier simply to answer questions,

but only if you uncover the employer's wants and needs will your answers make the most sense.

Practice asking these key questions before giving your answers, the process will f eel mor e

natural

*and you will be light years ahead of the other job candidates you're competing with*

.

After uncovering what the employer is looking for, describe why the needs of this job bear

striking parallels to tasks you've succeeded at before. Be sure to illustrate with specific examples

of your responsibilities and especially your achievements, all of which are geared to present

yourself as a perfect match for the needs he has just described.

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***2. What are your greatest strengths?***

**TRAPS:**

This question seems like a softball lob, but be prepared. You don't want to come across

as egotistical or arrogant. Neither is this a time to be humble.

**BEST ANSWER:**

You know that your key strategy is to first uncover your interviewer's

greatest wants and needs before you answer questions. And from Question 1, you know how to

do this.

Prior to any interview, you should have a list mentally prepared of your greatest strengths. You

should also have, a specific example or two, which illustrates each strength, an example chosen

from your most recent and most impressive achievements.

You should, have this list of your greatest strengths and corresponding examples from your

achievements so well committed to memor y that you can recite them cold after being shaken

awake at 2:30AM.

Then, once you uncover your interviewer's greatest wants and needs, you can choose those

achievements from your list that best match up.

As a general guideline, the 10 most desirable traits that all employers love to see in their

employees are:

1.

A proven track record as an achiever...

*especially if yourachievements match up*

*with the employer's greatest wants and needs.*

2.

Intelligence...management "savvy".

3.

Honesty...integrity...a decent human being.

4.

Good fit with corporate culture...someone to feel comfortable with...a team player

who meshes well with interviewer's team.

5.

Likeability...positive attitude...sense of humor.

6.

Good communication skills.

7.

Dedication...willingness to walk the extra mile to achieve excellence.

8.

Definiteness of purpose...clear goals.

9.

Enthusiasm...high level of motivation.

10.

Confident...healthy...a leader.

***3.What are your greatest weaknesses?***

**TRAPS:**

Beware - this is an eliminator question, designed to shorten the candidate list. Any

admission of a weakness or fault will earn you an “A” for honesty, but an “F” for the interview.

**PASSABLE ANSWER:**

Disguise a strength as a weakness.

***Example:***

“I sometimes push my people too hard. I like to work with a sense of urgency and

everyone is not always on the same wavelength.”

***Drawback:***

This strategy is better than admitting a flaw, but it's so widely used, it is transparent

to any experienced interviewer.

**BEST ANSWER:**

(and another reason it's so important to get a thorough description of your

interviewer's needs

*before*

you answer questions): Assure the interviewer that you can think of

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nothing that would stand in the way of your performing in this position with excellence. Then,

quickly review you strongest qualifications.

***Example:***

“Nobody's perfect, but based on what you've told me about this position, I believe I' d

make an outstanding match. I know that when I hire people, I look for two things most of all. Do

they have the

*qualifications*

to do the job well, and the

*motivation*

to do it well? Everything in

my background shows I have both the qualifications and a strong desire to achieve excellence in

whatever I take on. So I can say in all honesty that I see nothing that would cause you even a

small concern about my ability or my strong desire to perform this job with excellence.”

*Alternate strategy*

(if you don't yet know enough about the position to talk about such a perfect

fit):

Instead of confessing a weakness, describe what you

*like most*

and

*like least*

, making sure that

what you like most matches up with the most important qualification for success in the position,

and what you like least is not essential.

***Example:***

Let's say you're applying for a teaching position. “If given a choice, I like to spend as

much time as possible in front of my prospects selling, as opposed to shuffling paperwork back

at the office. Of course, I long ago learned the importance of filing paperwork properly, and I do

it conscientiously. But what I really love to do is sell (if your interviewer were a sales manager,

this should be music to his ears.)

***4.Tell me about something you did – or failed to do – that you now feel a little ashamed***

***of.***

**TRAPS:**

There are some questions your interviewer has no business asking, and this is one. But

while you may feel like answering, “

*none of your business,”*

naturally you can t. Some

interviewers ask this question on the chance you admit to something, but if not, at least they ll

see how you think on your feet.

Some unprepared candidates, flustered by this question, unburden themselves of guilt from their

personal life or career, perhaps expressing regrets regarding a parent, spouse, child, etc. All such

answers can be disastrous.

**BEST ANSWER:**

As with faults and weaknesses,

*never confess a regret.*

But don t seem as if

you re stonewalling either.

***Best strategy:***

Say you harbor no regrets, then add a principle or habit you practice regularly for

healthy human relations.

***Example:***

Pause for reflection, as if the question never occurred to you. Then say, “You know, I

really can t think of anything.” (Pause again, then add): “I would add that as a gener al

management principle, I ve found that the best way to avoid regrets is to avoid causing them in

the first place. I practice one habit that helps me a great deal in this regard. At the end of each

day, I mentally review the day s events and conversations to take a second look at the people and

developments I m involved with and do a doublecheck of what they re likel y to be feeling.

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Sometimes I ll see things that do need more follow-up, whether a pat on the back, or maybe a

five minute chat in someone s office to make sure we re clear on things…whatever.”

“I also like to make each person feel like a member of an elite team, like the Boston Celtics or

LA Lakers in their prime. I ve found that if you let each team member know you expect

excellence in their performance…if you work hard to set an example yourself…and if you let

people know you appreciate and respect their f eelings, you wind up with a highly motivated

group, a team that s having fun at work because they re striving for excellence rather than

brooding over slights or r egrets.”

***5.Why should I hire you?***

**TRAPS:**

Believe it or not, this is a killer question because so many candidates are unprepared

for it. If you stammer or adlib you ve blown it.

**BEST ANSWER:**

By now you can see how critical it is to apply the overall strategy of

uncovering the employer s needs

*before*

you answer questions. If you know the employer s

greatest needs and desires, this question will give you a big leg up over other candidates because

you will give him better reasons for hiring you than anyone else is likely to…reasons tied

directly to his needs.

Whether your interviewer asks you this question

*explicitly*

or not, this is the most important

question of your interview because he

*must*

answer this question favorably in is own mind before

you will be hired.

*So help him out!*

Walk through each of the position s requirements as you

understand them, and follow each with a reason why you meet that requirement so well.

***Example:***

“As I understand your needs, you are first and foremost looking for someone who can

manage the sales and marketing of your book publishing division. As you ve said you need

someone with a strong background in trade book sales. This is where I ve spent almost all of my

career, so I ve chalked up 18 years of experience exactly in this area. I believe that I know the

right contacts, methods, principles, and successful management techniques as well as any person

can in our industry.”

“You also need someone who can expand your book distribution channels. In my prior post, my

innovative promotional ideas doubled, then tripled, the number of outlets selling our books. I m

confident I can do the same for you.”

“You need someone to give a new shot in the arm to your mail order sales, someone who knows

how to sell in space and direct mail media. Here, too, I believe I have exactly the experience you

need. In the last five years, I ve increased our mail order book sales from $600,000 to

$2,800,000, and now we re the country s second leading marketer of scientific and medical

books by mail.”

*Etc., etc., etc.,*

Every one of these selling “couplets” (his need matched by your qualifications) is a touchdown

that runs up your score. IT is your best opportunity to outsell your competition.

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***6.Aren’t you overqualified for this position?***

**TRAPS:**

The employer may be concerned that you ll grow dissatisfied and leave.

**BEST ANSWER:**

As with any objection, don t view this as a sign of imminent defeat. It s an

invitation to teach the interviewer a new way to think about this situation, seeing advantages

instead of drawbacks.

***Example:***

“I recognize the job market for what it is – a marketplace. Like any marketplace, it s

subject to the laws of supply and demand. So „overqualified can be a relative term, depending

on how tight the job market is. And right now, it s very tight. I understand and accept that.”

“I also believe that there could be very positive benefits for both of us in this match.”

“Because of my unusually strong experience in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , I could start to contribute

right away, perhaps much faster than someone who d have to be brought along more slowly.”

“There s also the value of all the training and years of experience that other companies have

invested tens of thousands of dollars to give me. You d be getting all the value of that without

having to pay an extra dime for it. With someone who has yet to acquire that experience, he d

have to gain it on

*your*

*nickel.*

”

“I could also help you in many things they don t teach at the Harvard Business School. For

example…(how to hire, train, motivate, etc.) When it comes to knowing how to work well with

people and getting the most out of them, there s just no substitute for what you learn over many

years of front-line experience. You company would gain all this, too.”

“From my side, there are strong benefits, as well. Right now, I am unemployed. I want to work,

, and the position you have here is exactly what I love to do and am best at. I ll be

*very much*

happy doing this work and that s what matters most to me, a lot more that money or title.”

“Most important, I m looking to make a long term commitment in my career now. I ve had

enough of job-hunting and want a permanent spot at this point in my career. I also know that if I

perform this job with excellence, other opportunities cannot help but open up for me right here.

In time, I ll find many other ways to help this company and in so doing, help myself. I really am

looking to make a long-term commitment.”

**NOTE:**

The main concern behind the “overqualified” question is that you will leave your new

employer as soon as something better comes your way. Anything you can say to demonstrate the

sincerity of your commitment to the employer and reassure him that you re looking to stay for

the long-term will help you overcome this objection.

***7.Where do you see yourself five years from now?***

**TRAPS:**

One reason interviewers ask this question is to see if you r e settling for this position,

using it merely as a stopover until something better comes along. Or they could be trying to

gauge your level of ambition.

If you re too specific, i.e., naming the promotions you someday hope to win, you ll sound

presumptuous. If you re too vague, you ll seem rudderless.

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**BEST ANSWER:**

Reassure your interviewer that you re looking to make a long-term

commitment…that this position entails exactly what you re looking to do and what you do

extremely well. As for your future, you believe that if you perform each job at hand with

excellence, future opportunities will take care of themselves.

***Example:***

“I am definitely interested in making a long-term commitment to my next position.

Judging by what you ve told me about this position, it s exactly what I m looking for and what I

am very well qualified to do. In terms of my future career path, I m confident that if I do my

work with excellence, opportunities will inevitable open up for me. It s always been that way in

my career, and I m confident I ll have similar opportunities here.”

***8.Describe your ideal company, location and job.***

**TRAPS:**

This is often asked by an experienced interviewer who thinks you may be

overqualified, but knows better than to show his hand by posing his objection directly. So he ll

use this question instead, which often gets a candidate to reveal that, indeed, he or she is looking

for something other than the position at hand.

**BEST ANSWER:**

The only right answer is to describe what this company is offering, being

sure to make your answer believable with specific reasons, stated with sincerity, why each

quality represented by this opportunity is attractive to you.

Remember that if you re coming from a company that s the leader in its field or from a

glamorous or much admired company, industry, city or position, your interviewer and his

company may well have an “Avis” complex. That is, they may feel a bit defensive about being

“second best” to the place you re coming from, worried that you may consider them bush league.

This anxiety could well be there even though you ve done nothing to inspire it. You must go out

of your way to assuage such anxiety, even if it s not expressed, by putting

*their*

virtues high on

the list of exactly what you re looking for, providing credible reason for wanting these qualities.

If you do not express genuine enthusiasm for the firm, its culture, location, industry, etc., you

may fail to answer this “Avis” complex objection and, as a result, leave the interviewer

suspecting that a hot shot like you, coming from a Fortune 500 company in New York, just

wouldn t be happy at an unknown manufacturer based in Topeka, Kansas.

***9.Why do you want to work at our company?***

**TRAPS:**

This question tests whether you ve done any homework about the firm. If you

haven t, you lose. If you have, you win big.

**BEST ANSWER:**

This question is your opportunity to hit the ball out of the park, thanks to the

in-depth research you should do before any interview.

Best sources for researching your target company: annual reports, the corporate newsletter,

contacts you know at the company or its suppliers, advertisements, articles about the company in

the trade press.

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***10.What are your career options right now?***

**TRAPS:**

The interviewer is trying to find out,

*“How desperate are you?”*

**BEST ANSWER:**

Prepare for this question by thinking of how you can position yourself as a

desired commodity. If you are still working, describe the possibilities at your present firm and

why, though you re greatly appreciated there, you re looking for something more (challenge,

money, responsibility, etc.). Also mention that you re seriously exploring opportunities with one

or two other firms.

If you re not working, you can talk about other employment possibilities you re actually

exploring. But do this with a light touch, speaking only in general terms. You don t want to

seem manipulative or coy.

***11.What good books have you read lately?***

**TRAPS:**

As in all matters of your interview, never fake familiarity you don t have. Yet you

don t want to seem like a dullard who hasn t read a book since

*Tom Sawyer.*

**BEST ANSWER:**

Unless you re up for a position in academia or as book critic for

*The New*

, you re not expected to be a literary lion. But it wouldn t hurt to have read a handful

*York Times*

of the most recent and influential books in your profession and on management.

Consider it part of the work of your job search to read up on a few of these leading books. But

make sure they are

*quality*

books that reflect favorably upon you, nothing that could even

remotely be considered superficial. Finally, add a recently published bestselling work of fiction

by a world-class author and you ll pass this question with flying colors.

***12.Tell me about a situation when your work was criticized.***

**TRAPS:**

This is a tough question because it s a more clever and subtle way to get you to admit

to a weakness. You can t dodge it by pretending you ve never been criticized. Everybody has

been. Yet it can be quite damaging to start admitting potential faults and failures that you d just

as soon leave buried.

This question is also intended to probe how well you accept criticism and direction.

**BEST ANSWERS:**

Begin by emphasizing the extremely positive feedback you ve gotten

throughout your career and (if it s true) that your performance reviews have been uniformly

excellent.

Of course, no one is perfect and you always welcome suggestions on how to improve your

performance. Then, give an example of a not-too-damaging learning experience from

*early*

in

your career and relate the ways this lesson has since helped you. This demonstrates that you

learned from the experience and the lesson is now one of the strongest br eastplates in your suit of

armor.

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If you are pressed for a criticism from a

*recent*

position, choose something fairly trivial that in no

way is essential to your successful performance. Add that you ve learned from this, too, and

over the past several years/months, it s no longer an area of concern because you now make it a

regular practice to…etc.

Another way to answer this question would be to describe your intention to broaden your master

of an area of growing importance in your field. For example, this might be a computer program

you ve been meaning to sit down and learn… a new management technique you ve read

about…or perhaps attending a seminar on some cutting-edge branch of your profession.

Again, the key is to focus on something

*not essential*

to your brilliant performance but which

adds yet another dimension to your already impressive knowledge base.

***13.What are your outside interests?***

**TRAPS:**

You want to be a well-rounded, not a drone. But your potential employer would be

even more turned off if he suspects that your heavy extracurricular load will interfere with your

commitment to your work duties.

**BEST ANSWERS:**

Try to gauge how this company s culture would look upon your favorite

outside activities and be guided accordingly.

You can also use this question to shatter any stereotypes that could limit your chances. If you re

over 50, for example, describe your activities that demonstrate physical stamina. If you re

young, mention an activity that connotes wisdom and institutional trust, such as serving on the

board of a popular charity.

But above all, remember that your employer is hiring your for what you can do

*for him*

, not your

family, yourself or outside organizations, no matter how admirable those activities may be.

***14.The “Fatal Flaw” question?***

**TRAPS:**

If an interviewer has read your resume carefully, he may try to zero in on a “fatal

flaw” of your candidacy, perhaps that you don t have a college degree…you ve been out of the

job market for some time…you never earned your CPA, etc.

A fatal flaw question can be deadly, but usually only if you r espond by being overly defensive.

**BEST ANSWERS:**

As every master salesperson knows, you will encounter objections (whether

sale. They re part and parcel of the buyer s anxiety. The key

stated or merely thought) in

*every*

is not to

*exacerbate*

the buyer s anxiety but

*diminish*

it. Here s how…

Whenever you come up against a fatal flaw question:

1.Be completely honest, open and straightforward about admitting the shor tcoming.

(Showing you have nothing to hide diminishes the buyer s anxiety.)

2.Do

*not*

apologize or try to explain it away. You know that this supposed flaw is

nothing to be concerned about, and this is the attitude you want your interviewer to

adopt as well.

3.Add that as desirable as such a qualification might be, its lack has made you work

all the harder throughout your career and has not prevented you from compiling an

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outstanding tack record of achievements. You might even give examples of how,

through a relentless commitment to excellence, you have consistently outperformed

those who do have this qualification.

Of course, the ultimate way to handle “fatal flaw” questions is to

*prevent them from*

arising in the first place. You will do that by following the master strategy

described in Question 1, i.e., uncovering the employers needs and them matching

your qualifications to those needs.

Once you ve gotten the employer to start talking about his most urgently-felt wants

and goals for the position, and then help him see in step-by-step fashion how

perfectly your background and achievements match up with those needs, you re

going to have one very enthusiastic interviewer on your hands, one who is no longer

looking for “fatal flaws”.

***15.How do you feel about reporting to a younger person (minority, woman, etc)?***

**TRAPS:**

It s a shame that some interviewers feel the need to ask this question, but many

understand the reality that prejudices still exist among some job candidates, and it s better to try

to flush them out beforehand.

The trap here is that in today s politically sensitized environment, even a

*well-intentioned*

answer

can result in planting your foot neatly in your mouth. Avoid anything which smacks of a

patronizing or an insensitive attitude, such as “I think they make terrific bosses” or “Hey, some

of my best friends are…”

Of course, since almost anyone with an IQ above room temperature will at least try to steadfastly

*“Do*

affirm the right answer here, your interviewer will be judging your

*sincerity*

most of all.

*you really feel that way?”*

is what he or she will be wondering.

So you must make your answer believable and not just automatic. If the firm is wise enough to

have promoted peopled on the basis of ability alone, they re likely quite proud of it, and prefer to

hire others who will wholeheartedly share their strong sense of fair play.

**BEST ANSWER:**

You greatly admire a company that hires and promotes on merit alone and

you couldn t agree more with that philosophy. The age (gender, race, etc.) of the person you

report to would

*certainly*

make no difference to you.

Whoever has that position has obviously earned it and knows their job well. Both the person and

the position are fully deserving of respect. You believe that all people in a company, from the

receptionist to the Chairman, work best when their abilities, efforts and feelings are respected

and rewarded fairly, and that includes you. That s the best type of work environment you can

hope to find.

***16.On confidential matters…***

**TRAPS:**

When an interviewer presses you to reveal confidential information about a present or

former employer, you may feel it s a no-win situation. If you cooperate, you could be judged

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untrustworthy. If you don t, you may irritate the interviewer and seem obstinate, uncooperative

or overly suspicious.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Your interviewer may press you for this information for two reasons.

First, many companies use interviews to research the competition. It s a perfect set-up. Here in

their own lair, is an insider from the enemy camp who can reveal prized information on the

competition s plans, research, financial condition, etc.

Second, the company may be testing your integrity to see if you can be cajoled or bullied into

revealing confidential data.

What to do? The answer here is easy.

*Never*

reveal anything truly confidential about a present

or former employer. By all means, explain your reticence

*diplomatically*

. For example, “I

certainly want to be as open as I can about that. But I also wish to respect the rights of those

who have trusted me with their most sensitive information, just as you would hope to be able to

trust any of your key people when talking with a competitor…”

And certainly you can allude to your finest achievements in specific ways that don t reveal the

combination to the company safe.

But be guided by the golden rule. If you were the owner of your present company, would you

feel it ethically wrong for the information to be given to your competitors? If so, steadfastly

refuse to reveal it.

Remember that this question pits your desire to be cooperative against your integrity. Faced with

any such choice,

*always choose integrity.*

It is a far more valuable commodity than whatever

information the company may pry from you. Moreover, once you surrender the information,

your stock goes down. They will surely lose respect for you.

One President we know always presses candidates unmercifully for confidential information. If

he doesn t get it, he grows visibly annoyed, relentlessly inquisitive,

*It’s all an act.*

He couldn t

care less about the information. This is his way of testing the candidate s moral fiber. Only those

who hold fast are hired.

***17.Would you lie for the company?***

**TRAPS:**

This another question that pits two values against one another, in this case loyalty

against integrity.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Try to avoid choosing between two values, giving a positive statement which

covers all bases instead.

“I would never do anything to hurt the company..”

***Example:***

If aggressively pressed to choose between two competing values,

*always choose personal*

*integrity.*

It is the most prized of all values.

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***18.Looking back, what would you do differently in your life?***

**TRAPS:**

This question is usually asked to uncover any life-influencing mistakes, regrets,

disappointments or problems that may continue to affect your personality and performance.

You do not want to give the interviewer anything negative to remember you by, such as some

great personal or career disappointment, even long ago, that you wish could have been avoided.

Nor do you wish to give any answer which may hint that your whole heart and soul will not be in

your work.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Indicate that you are a happy, fulfilled, optimistic person and that, in general,

you wouldn t change a thing.

***Example:***

“It s been a good life, rich in learning and experience, and the best it yet to come.

Every experience in life is a lesson in it its own way. I wouldn t change a thing.”

***19.Can you work under pressure?***

**TRAPS:**

An easy question, but you want to make your answer

*believable.*

**BEST ANSWER:**

Absolutely…(then prove it with a vivid example or two of a goal or project

accomplished under severe pressure.)

***20.What makes you angry?***

**TRAPS:**

You don t want to come across either as a hothead or a wimp.

Give an answer that s suited to both your personality and the management

**BEST ANSWER:**

style of the firm. Here, the homework you ve done about the company and its style can help in

your choice of words.

***Examples:***

*If you are a reserved person and/or the corporate culture is coolly professional:*

“I m an even-tempered and positive person by nature, and I believe this helps me a great deal in

keeping my department running smoothly, harmoniously and with a genuine

*esprit de corps.*

I

believe in communicating clearly what s expected, getting people s commitment to those goals,

and then following up continuously to check progress.”

“If anyone or anything is going off track, I want to know about it early. If, after that kind of

open communication and follow up, someone isn t getting the job done, I ll want t o know why.

If there s no good reason, then I ll get impatient and angry…and take appropriate steps from

there. But if you hire good people, motivate them to strive for excellence and then follow up

constantly, it almost never gets to that state.”

*If you are feisty by nature and/or the position calls for a tough straw boss.*

“You know what makes me angr y? People who (the fill in the blanks with the most

objectionable traits for this type of position)…people who don t pull their own weight, who are

negative, people who lie…etc.”

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***21.Who has inspired you in your life and why?***

**TRAPS:**

The two traps here are unprepared ness and irrelevance. If you grope for an answer, it

seems you ve never been inspired. If you ramble about your high school basketball coach,

you ve wasted an opportunity to present qualities of great value to the company.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Have a few heroes in mind, from your mental “Board of Directors” –

Leaders in your industry, from history or anyone else who has been your mentor.

Be prepar ed to give examples of how their words, actions or teachings have helped inspire your

achievements. As always, prepare an answer which highlights qualities that would be highly

valuable in the position you are seeking.

***`***

***22.What was the toughest decision you ever had to make?***

**TRAPS:**

Giving an unprepared or irrelevant answer.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Be prepared with a good example, explaining why the decision was

difficult…the process you followed in reaching it…the courageous or effective way you carried

it out…and the beneficial results.

***23.Tell me about the most boring job you’ve ever had.***

**TRAPS:**

You give a very memorable description of a very boring job. Result? You become

associated with this boring job in the interviewer s mind.

**BEST ANSWER:**

You have never allowed yourself to grow bored with a job and you can t

understand it when others let themselves fall into that rut.

***Example:***

*“*

Perhaps I ve been fortunate, but that I ve never found myself bored with any job I

have ever held. I ve always enjoyed hard work. As with actors who feel there are no small

parts, I also believe that in every company or department there are exciting challenges and

intriguing problems crying out for energetic and enthusiastic solutions. If you re bored, it s

probably because you re not challenging yourself to tackle those problems right under your

nose.”

***24.What changes would you make if you came on board?***

**TRAPS:**

Watch out! This question can derail your candidacy faster than a bomb on the tracks –

and

*just as you are about to be hired.*

***Reason:***

No matter how bright you are, you cannot know the right actions to take in a

position before you settle in and get to know the operation s strengths, weaknesses key people,

financial condition, methods of operation, etc. If you lunge at this temptingly baited question,

you will probably be seen as someone who shoots from the hip.

Moreover, no matter how comfortable you may feel with your interviewer, you are still an

*outsider.*

No one, including your interviewer, likes to think that a know-it-all outsider is going to

come in, turn the place upside down and with sweeping, grand gestures, promptly demonstrate

what jerks everybody s been for years.

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**BEST ANSWER:**

You, of course, will want to take a good hard look at everything the

company is doing before making any recommendations.

***Example:***

“Well, I wouldn t be a very good doctor if I gave my diagnosis

*before*

the

examination. Should you hire me, as I hope you will, I d want to take a good hard look at

everything you re doing and understand why it s being done that way. I d like to have in-depth

meetings with you and the other key people to get a deeper grasp of what you feel you re doing

right and what could be improved.

“From what you ve told me so far, the areas of greatest concern to you are…” (name them. Then

do two things. First, ask if these are in fact his major concerns. If so then reaffirm how your

experience in meeting similar needs elsewhere might prove very helpful).

***25.How do you feel about working nights and weekends?***

**TRAPS:**

Blurt out “no way, Jose” and you can kiss the job offer goodbye. But what if you have

a family and want to work a reasonably normal schedule? Is there a way to get both the job and

the schedule you want?

**BEST ANSWER:**

First, if you re a confirmed workaholic, this question is a softball lob.

Whack it out of the park on the first swing by saying this kind of schedule is just your style. Add

that your family understands it. Indeed, they re happy for you, as they know you get your

greatest satisfaction from your work.

If however, you prefer a more balanced lifestyle, answer this question with another: “

*What’s the*

”

*norm for your best people here?*

If the hours still sound unrealistic for you, ask, “Do you have any top people who perform

exceptionally for you, but who also have families and like to get home in time to see them at

night?” Chances are this company does, and this associates you with this other “top-performers-

who-leave-not-later-than-six” group.

Depending on the answer, be honest about how you would fit into the picture. If all those extra

hours make you uncomfortable, say so, but phrase your response positively.

***Example:***

“I love my work and do it exceptionally well. I think the results speak for

themselves, especially in …(mention your two or three qualifications of greater interest to the

employer. Remember, this is what he wants most, not a workaholic with

*weak*

credentials). Not

only would I bring these qualities, but I ve built my whole career on working not just hard, but

*smart.*

I think you ll find me one of the most

*productive*

people here.

I

*do*

have a family who likes to see me after work and on weekends. They add balance and

richness to my life, which in turn helps me be happy and productive at work. If I could handle

some of the extra work at home in the evenings or on weekends, that would be ideal. You d be

getting a person of exceptional productivity who meets your needs with strong credentials. And

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I d be able to handle some of the heavy workload at home where I can be under the same roof as

my family. Everybody would win.”

***26.Are you willing to relocate or travel?***

**TRAPS:**

Answer with a flat “no” and you may slam the door shut on this opportunity. But what

if you d really prefer not to relocate or travel, yet wouldn t want to lose the job offer over it?

**BEST ANSWER:**

First find out where you may have to relocate and how much travel may be

involved. Then respond to the question.

If there s no problem, say so enthusiastically.

If you do have a reservation, there are two schools of thought on how to handle it.

One advises you to keep your options open and your reservations to yourself in the early going,

by saying, “no problem”. You str ategy here is to get the best offer you can, then make a

judgment whether it s worth it to you to relocate or travel.

Also, by the time the offer comes through, you may have other offers and can make a more

informed decision. Why kill of this opportunity before it has chance to blossom into something

really special? And if you re a little more desperate three months from now, you might wish you

hadn t slammed the door on relocating or traveling.

The second way to handle this question is to voice a reservation, but assert that you d be open to

relocating (or traveling) for the right opportunity.

The answering strategy you choose depends on how eager you are for the job. If you want to

take no chances, choose the first approach.

If you want to play a little harder-to-get in hopes of generating a more enticing offer, choose the

second.

***27.Do you have the stomach to fire people? Have you had experience firing many***

***people?***

**TRAPS:**

This “innocent” question could be a trap door which sends you down a chute and lands

you in a heap of dust outside the front door. Why? Because its real intent is not just to see if

you ve got the stomach to fire, but also to uncover

*poor judgment in hiring*

which has caused you

to fire so many. Also, if you fire so often, you could be a tyrant.

So don t rise to the bait by boasting how many you ve fired, unless you ve prepared to explain

why it was beyond your control, and not the r esult of your poor hiring procedures or foul

temperament.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Describe the rational and sensible management process you follow in both

hiring and firing.

***Example:***

“My whole management approach is to hire the best people I can find, train them

thoroughly and well, get them excited and proud to be part of our team, and then work with them

to achieve our goals together. If you do all of that right, especially hiring the right people, I ve

found you don t have to fire very often.

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“So with me, firing is a last resort. But when it s got to be done, it s got to be done, and the

faster and cleaner, the better. A poor employee can wreak terrible damage in undermining the

morale of an entir e team of good people. When there s no other way, I ve found it s better for

all concerned to act decisively in getting rid of offenders who won t change their ways.”

***28.What do you see as the proper role/mission of…***

***…a good (job title you’re seeking);***

***…a good manager;***

***…an executive in serving the community;***

***…a leading company in our industry; etc.***

**TRAPS:**

These and other “proper role” questions are designed to test your understanding of

your place in the bigger picture of your department, company, community and profession….as

well as the proper role each of these entities should play in

*its*

bigger picture.

The question is most frequently asked by the most

*thoughtful*

individuals and companies…or by

those concerned that you re coming from a place with a radically different corpor ate cultur e

(such as from a big government bureaucracy to an aggressive small company).

The most frequent mistake executives make in answering is simply not being prepared (seeming

as if they ve never giving any of this a though.)…or in phrasing an answer best suited to their

*prior*

organization s culture instead of the hiring company s.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Think of the most essential ingredients of success for each category above –

your job title, your role as manager, your firm s role, etc.

Identify at least three but no more than six qualities you feel are most important to success in

each role. Then commit your response to memory.

Here, again, the more information you ve already drawn out about the greatest wants and needs

of the interviewer, and the more homework you ve done to identif y the culture of the firm, the

more on-target your answer will be.

***29.What would you say to your boss if he’s crazy about an idea, but you think it stinks?***

**TRAPS:**

This is another question that pits two values, in this case loyalty and honesty, against

one another.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Remember the rule stated earlier: In any conflict between values,

*always*

*choose integrity.*

***Example:***

I believe that when evaluating anything, it s important to emphasize the positive.

What do I like about this idea?”

“Then, if you have reser vations, I certainly want to point them out, as specifically, objectively

and factually as I can.”

“After all, the most important thing I owe my boss is

. If he can t count on me for that,

*honesty*

then everything else I may do or say could be questionable in his eyes.”

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“But I also want to express my thoughts in a constructive way. So my goal in this case would be

to see if my boss and I could make his idea even stronger and more appealing, so that it

effectively overcomes any initial reservation I or others may have about it.”

“Of course, if he overrules me and says, „no, let s do it my way, then I owe him my full and

enthusiastic support to make it work as best it can.”

***30.How could you have improved your career progress?***

**TRAPS:**

This is another variation on the question, “If you could, how would you live your life

over?” Remember, you re not going to fall for any such invitations to rewrite person history.

You can t win if you do.

**BEST ANSWER:**

You re generally quite happy with your career progress. Maybe, if you had

known something earlier in life (impossible to know at the time, such as the booming growth in a

branch in your industry…or the corporate downsizing that would phase out your last job), you

might have moved in a certain direction sooner.

But all things considered, you take responsibility for where you are, how you ve gotten there,

where you are going…and you harbor no regrets.

***31.What would you do if a fellow executive on your own corporate level wasn’t pulling his/her***

***weight…and this was hurting your department?***

**TRAPS:**

This question and other hypothetical ones test your sense of human relations and how

you might handle office politics.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Try to gauge the political style of the firm and be guided accordingly. In

general, fall back on universal principles of effective human relations – which in the end,

embody the way you would like to be treated in a similar circumstance.

***Example:***

“Good human relations would call for me to go directly to the person and explain the

situation, to try to enlist his help in a constructive, positive solution. If I sensed resistance, I

would be as persuasive as I know how to explain the benefits we can all gain from working

together, and the problems we, the company and our customers will experience if we don t.”

**POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:**

**And what would you do if he still did not change his ways?**

**ANSWER:**

“One thing I wouldn t do is let the problem slide, because it would only get worse

and overlooking it would set a bad precedent. I would try again and again and again, in whatever

way I could, to solve the problem, involving wider and wider circles of people, both above and

below the offending executive and including my own boss if necessary, so that ever yone

involved can see the rewards for teamwork and the drawbacks of non-cooperation.”

“I might add that I ve never yet come across a situation that couldn t be resolved by harnessing

others in a determined, constructive effort.”

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***32.Give me an example of your creativity (analytical skill…managing ability, etc.)***

**TRAPS:**

The worst offense her e is simply being unprepared. Your hesitation may seem as if

you re having a hard time remembering the last time you were creative, analytical, etc.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Remember from Question 2 that you should commit to memory a list of your

greatest and most recent achievements, ever ready on the tip of your tongue.

If you have such a list, it s easy to present any of your achievements in light of the quality the

interviewer is asking about. For example, the smashing success you orchestrated at last year s

trade show could be used as an example of creativity, or analytical ability, or your ability to

manage.

***33.Where could you use some improvement?***

**TRAPS:**

Another tricky way to get you to admit weaknesses. Don t fall for it.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Keep this answer, like all your answers, positive. A good way to answer this

question is to identify a cutting-edge branch of your profession (one that s not essential to your

employer s needs) as an area you re ver y excited about and want to explore more fully over the

next six months.

***34.What do you worry about?***

**TRAPS:**

Admit to worrying and you could sound like a loser. Saying you never worr y doesn t

sound credible.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Redefine the word „worry so that it does not reflect negatively on you.

***Example:***

“I wouldn t call it worry, but I am a strongly goal-oriented person. So I keep turning

over in my mind anything that seems to be keeping me from achieving those goals, until I find a

solution. That s part of my tenacity, I suppose.”

***35.How many hours a week do you normally work?***

**TRAPS:**

You don t want to give a specific number. Make it to low, and you may not measure

up. Too high, and you ll forever feel guilty about sneaking out the door at 5:15.

**BEST ANSWER:**

*If you are in fact a workaholic and you sense this company would like that:*

Say you are a confirmed workaholic, that you often work nights and weekends. Your family

accepts this because it makes you fulfilled.

*If you are not a workaholic:*

Say you have always worked hard and put in long hours. It goes

with the territory. It one sense, it s hard to keep track of the hours because your work is a labor

of love, you enjoy nothing mor e than solving problems. So you re almost

*always*

thinking about

your work, including times when you re home, while shaving in the morning, while commuting,

etc.

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***36.What’s the most difficult part of being a (job title)?***

**TRAPS:**

Unless you phrase your answer properly, your interviewer may conclude that whatever

you identify as “difficult” is where you are weak.

**BEST ANSWER:**

First, redefine “difficult” to be “challenging” which is more positive. Then,

identify an area ever yone in your profession considers challenging and in which you excel.

Describe the process you follow that enables you to get splendid results…and be specific about

those results.

***Example:***

“I think ever y sales manager finds it challenging to motivate the troops in a recession.

But that s probably the strongest test of a top sales manager. I feel this is one area where I

excel.”

“When I see the first sign that sales may slip or that sales force motivation is flagging because of

a downturn in the economy, here s the plan I put into action immediately…” (followed by a

description of each step in the process…and

*most importantly,*

the exceptional results you ve

achieved.).

***37.The “Hypothetical Problem”***

*“How would you*

**TRAPS:**

Sometimes an interviewer will describe a difficult situation and ask,

*handle this?”*

Since it is virtually impossible to have all the facts in front of you from such a

short presentation, don t fall into the trap of trying to solve this problem and giving your verdict

on the spot. It will make your decision-making process seem woefully inadequate.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Instead, describe the rational, methodical process you would follow in

analyzing this problem, who you would consult with, generating possible solutions, choosing the

best course of action, and monitoring the results.

Remember, in all such,

*“What would you do?”*

questions, always describe your

*process or*

*working methods,*

and you ll never go wrong.

***38.What was the toughest challenge you’ve ever faced?***

**TRAPS:**

Being unprepared or citing an example from so early in your life that it doesn t score

many points for you at this stage of your career.

**BEST ANSWER:**

This is an easy question if you re prepared. Have a recent example ready that

demonstrates either:

1.

A quality most important to the job at hand; or

2.

A quality that is

*always*

in demand, such as leadership, initiative, managerial skill,

persuasiveness, courage, persistence, intelligence, etc.

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***39.Have you consider starting your own business?***

**TRAPS:**

If you say “yes” and elaborate enthusiastically, you could be perceived as a loose

cannon in a larger company, too entrepreneurial to make a good team player…or someone who

had to settle for the corporate life because you couldn t make a go of your own business.

Also too much enthusiasm in answering “yes” could rouse the paranoia of a small company

indicating that you may plan to go out on your own soon, perhaps taking some key accounts or

trade secrets with you.

On the other hand, if you answer “no, never” you could be perceived as a security-minded drone

who never dreamed a big dream.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Again it s best to:

1.Gauge this company s corporate culture before answering and…

2.Be honest (which doesn t mean you have to vividly share your f antasy of the

franchise or bed-and-breakfast you someday plan to open).

In general, if the corporate culture is that of a large, formal, military-style structure, minimize

any indication that you d love to have your own business. You might say, “Oh, I may have

given it a thought once or twice, but my whole career has been in larger organizations. That s

where I have excelled and where I want to be.”

If the corporate culture is closer to the free-wheeling, everybody s-a-deal-maker variety, then

emphasize that in a firm like this, you can virtually get the best of all worlds, the excitement of

seeing your own ideas and plans take shape…combined with the resources and stability of a

well-established organization. Sounds like the perfect environment to you.

In any case, no matter what the corporate culture, be sure to indicate that any desires about

running your own show are part of your

*past*

, not your present or future.

The last thing you want to project is an image of either a dreamer who failed and is now settling

for the corporate cocoon…or the restless maverick who will fly out the door with key accounts,

contacts and trade secrets under his arms just as soon as his bankroll has gotten rebuilt.

Always remember: Match what you want with what the position offers. The more information

you ve uncovered about the position, the more believable you can make your case.

***40.What are your goals?***

**TRAPS:**

Not having any…or having only vague generalities, not

*highly specific*

goals.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Many executives in a position to hire you are strong believers in goal-setting.

(It s one of the reason they ve achieved so much). They like to hire in kind.

If you re vague about your career and personal goals, it could be a big turnoff to may people you

will encounter in your job search.

Be ready to discuss your goals for each major area of your life: career, personal development

and learning, family, physical (health), community service and (if your interviewer is clearly a

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religious person) you could briefly and generally allude to your spiritual goals (showing you are

a well-rounded individual with your values in the right order).

Be prepared to describe each goal in terms of specific milestones you wish to accomplish along

the way, time periods you re allotting for accomplishment, why the goal is important to you, and

the specific steps you re taking to bring it about. But do this concisely, as you never want to talk

more than two minutes straight before letting your interviewer back into the conversation.

***41.What do you look for when you hire people?***

**TRAPS:**

Being unprepared for the question.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Speak your own thoughts here, but for the best answer weave them around

the three most important qualifications for

*any*

position.

1.

Can the person do the work (qualifications)?

2.

Will the person do the work (motivation)?

Will the person fit in (“our kind of team player”)?

3.

***42.Sell me this stapler…(this pencil…this clock…or some other object on***

***interviewer’s desk).***

**TRAPS:**

Some interviewers, especially business owners and hard-changing executives in

marketing-driven companies, feel that good salesmanship is

*essential*

for any key position and

ask for an instant demonstration of your skill. Be ready.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Of course, you already know the most important secret of all great

*find out what people want, then show them how to get it.”*

salesmanship – “

If your interviewer picks up his stapler and asks, “sell this to me,” you are going to demonstrate

this proven master principle.

*Here’s how:*

“Well, a good salesman must know both his product and his prospect before he sells anything. If

I were selling this, I d first get to know everything I could about it, all its features and benefits.”

“Then, if my goal were to sell it

*you*

, I would do some research on how you might use a fine

stapler like this. The best way to do that is by asking some questions. May I ask you a few

questions?”

Then ask a few questions such as, “Just out of curiosity, if you didn t already have a stapler like

this, why would you want one? And in addition to that? Any other reason? Anything else?”

“And would you want such a stapler to be reliable?...Hold a good supply of staples?” (Ask more

questions that point to the features this stapler has.)

Once you ve asked these questions, make your presentation citing all the features and benefits of

this stapler and why it s exactly what the interviewer just told you he s looking for.

Then close with, “Just out of curiosity, what would you consider a reasonable price for a quality

stapler like this…a stapler you could have

*right now*

and would (then repeat all the problems the

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stapler would solve for him)? Whatever he says, (unless it s zero), say, “Okay, we ve got a

deal.”

**NOTE:**

If your interviewer tests you by

*fighting*

ever y step of the way, denying that he even

wants such an item,

*don’t fight him.*

Take the product away from him by saying, “Mr. Prospect,

I m delighted you ve told me right upfront that there s no way you d ever want this stapler. As

you well know, the first rule of the most productive salespeople in any field is to meet the needs

of people who really

*need and want*

our products, and it just wastes everyone s time if we try to

force it on those who don t. And I certainly wouldn t want to waste your time. But we sell

many items. Is there

*any*

product on this desk you would ver y much like to own…just one

item?” When he points something out, repeat the process above. If he knows anything about

selling, he may give you a standing ovation.

***43.“The Salary Question” – How much money do you want?***

*“What salary are you worth?”*

…or,

*“How much are you*

**TRAPS:**

May also be phrases as,

*making now?”*

This is your most important negotiation. Handle it wrong and you can blow the

job offer or go to work at far less than you might have gotten.

**BEST ANSWER:**

For maximum salary negotiating power, remember these five guidelines:

1.Never bring up salary. Let the interviewer do it first. Good salespeople sell

their products thoroughly before talking price.

*So should you.*

Make the

interviewer want you first, and your bargaining position will be much stronger.

2.If your interviewer raises the salary question too early, before you ve had a

chance to create desir e for your qualifications,

*postpone*

the question, saying

something like, “Money is important to me, but is

*not*

my main concern.

Opportunity and growth are far more important. What I d rather do, if you

don t mind, is explore if I m right for the position, and then talk about money.

Would that be okay?”

i. The #1 rule of any negotiation is:

*the side with more information wins.*

After you ve done a thorough job of selling the interviewer and it s time to

talk salary, the secret is to get the employer talking about what he s

*you’re*

willing to pay

*before*

you reveal what

willing to accept. So, when asked

about salary, respond by asking, “I m sure the company has already established a

salary range for this position. Could you tell me what that is?” Or, “I want an

income commensurate with my ability and qualifications. I trust you ll be fair

with me. What does the position pay?” Or, more simply, “What does this position

pay?”

ii. Know beforehand what you d accept. To know what s reasonable,

research the job market and this position for any relevant salary information.

Remember that most executives look for a 20-25%$ pay boost when they switch

jobs. If you re grossly underpaid, you may want more.

iii. Never lie about what you currently make, but feel free to include the

estimated cost of all your fringes, which could well tack on 25-50% more to your

present “cash-only” salary.

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***44.The Illegal Question***

**TRAPS:**

Illegal questions include any regarding your age…number and ages of your children or

other dependents…marital status…maiden name…religion…political

affiliation…ancestry…national origin…birthplace…naturalization of your parents, spouse or

children…diseases…disabilities…clubs…or spouse s occupation…

*unless any of the above are*

*directly related to your performance of the job.*

You can t even be asked about

*arrests*

, though

you can be asked about

*convictions*

.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Under the ever-present threat of lawsuits, most interviewers are well aware

of these taboos. Yet you may encounter, usually on a second or third interview, a senior

executive who doesn t interview much and forgets he can t ask such questions.

You can handle an illegal question in several ways. First, you can assert your legal right not to

answer. But this will frighten or embarrass your interviewer and destroy any rapport you had.

Second, you could swallow your concerns over privacy and answer the question straight

forwardly if you feel the answer could help you. For example, your interviewer, a devout

Baptist, recognizes you from church and mentions it. Here, you could gain by talking about your

church.

Third, if you don t want your privacy invaded, you can diplomatically answer the

*concern*

behind the question without answering the question itself.

***Example:***

If you are over 50 and are asked, “

*How old are you?”*

you can answer with a friendly,

smiling question of your own on whether there s a concern that your age my affect your

performance. Follow this up by reassuring the interviewer that there s nothing in this job you

can t do and, in fact, your age and experience are the most important

*advantages*

you offer the

employer for the following reasons…

***Another example:***

If asked,

*“Do you plan to have children?”*

you could answer, “I am

wholeheartedly dedicated to my career“, perhaps adding, “I have no plans regarding children.”

(You needn t fear you ve pledged eternal childlessness. You have every right to change your

plans later. Get the job first and then enjoy all your options.)

Most importantly, remember that illegal questions arise from f ear that you won t perform well.

The best answer of all is to get the job and perform brilliantly. All concerns and f ears will then

varnish, replaced by respect and appreciation for your work.

***45.“Secret” Illegal Question***

**TRAPS:**

Much more frequent than the Illegal question

*(see Question 55)*

is the

*secret*

illegal

question. It s secret because it s asked only in the interviewer s mind. Since it s not even

expressed to you, you have no way to respond to it, and it can there be most damaging.

***Example:***

You re physically challenged, or a single mother returning to your professional

career, or over 50, or a member of an ethnic minority, or fit any of a dozen other categories that

do not strictly conform to the majority in a given company.

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Your interviewer wonders, “Is this person really able to handle the job?”…”Is he or she a „good

fit at a place like ours?”…”Will the chemistry ever be right with someone like this?” But the

interviewer never raises such questions because they re illegal. So what can you do?

**BEST ANSWER:**

Remember that just because the interviewer doesn t ask an illegal question

doesn t mean he doesn t have it. More than likely, he is going to come up with his own answer.

So you might as well help him out.

How? Well, you obviously can t respond to an illegal question if he hasn t even asked. This

may well offend him. And there s always the chance he wasn t even concerned about the issue

until you brought it up, and only then begins to wonder.

So you can t address “secret” illegal questions

*head-on.*

But what you can do is make sure

there s enough

*counterbalancing*

information to more than reassure him that there s no problem

in the area he

*may*

be doubtful about.

For example, let s say you re a sales rep who had polio as a child and you need a cane to walk.

You know your condition has never impeded your performance, yet you re concerned that your

interviewer may secretly be wondering about your stamina or ability to travel. Well, make sure

that you hit these abilities very hard, leaving no doubt about your capacity to handle them well.

So, too, if you re in any different from what passes for “normal”. Make sure, without in any way

seeming

*defensive*

about yourself that you mention strengths, accomplishments, preferences and

affiliations that strongly counterbalance any unspoken concern your interviewer may have.

***46.How do you define success…and how do you measure up to your own definition?***

**TRAPS:**

Seems like an obvious enough question. Yet many executives, unprepared for it,

fumble the ball.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Give a well-accepted definition of success that leads right into your own

stellar collection of achievements.

***Example:***

“The best definition I ve come across is that success is the progr essive realization of a

worthy goal.”

“As to how I would measure up to that definition, I would consider myself both successful and

fortunate…”(Then summarize your career goals and how your achievements have indeed

represented a progressive path toward realization of your goals.)

***47.“The Opinion Question” – What do you think about …Abortion…The President…The***

***Death Penalty…(or any other controversial subject)?***

**TRAPS:**

Obviously, these and other “opinion” questions should never be asked. Sometimes

they come up over a combination dinner/interview when the interviewer has had a drink or two,

is feeling relaxed, and is spouting off about something that bugged him in today s news. If you

give your opinion and it s the opposite of his, you won t change his opinions, but you could

easily lose the job offer.

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**BEST ANSWER:**

In all of these instances, just remember the tale about student and the wise

old rabbi. The scene is a seminary, where an overly serious student is pressing the rabbi to

answer the ultimate questions of suffering, life and death. But no matter how hard he presses,

the wise old rabbi will only answer each difficult question with a question of his own.

*“Why, rabbi, do you always answer a question*

In exasperation, the seminary student demands,

*with another question?”*

To which the rabbi responds,

*“And why not?”*

If you are ever uncomfortable with

*any*

question, asking a question in return is the greatest

escape hatch ever invented. It throws the onus back on the other person, sidetracks the

discussion from going into an area of risk to you, and gives you time to think of your answer or,

even better,

*your next question!*

In response to any of the “opinion” questions cited above, merely responding,

*“Why do you*

*ask?”*

will usually be enough to dissipate any pressure to give your opinion. But if your

interviewer again pr esses you for an opinion, you can ask another question.

Or you could assert a generality that almost ever yone would agree with. For example, if your

interviewer is complaining about politicians then suddenly turns to you and asks if you re a

Republican or Democrat, you could respond by saying, “Actually, I m finding it hard to find any

politicians I like these days.”

(Of course, your best question of all may be whether you want to work for someone

opinionated.)

***48.If you won $10 million lottery, would you still work?***

*“Hell, no, are you serious?”*

**TRAPS:**

Your totally honest response might be,

That might be so,

but any answer which shows you as fleeing work if given the chance could make you seem lazy.

On the other hand, if you answer,

*“Oh, I’d want to keep doing exactly what I am doing, only*

*doing it for your firm,”*

you could easily inspire your interviewer to silently mutter to himself,

*“Yeah, sure. Gimme a break.”*

**BEST ANSWER:**

This type of question is aimed at getting at your bedrock attitude about work

and how you feel about what you do. Your best answer will focus on your positive feelings.

***Example:***

“After I floated down from cloud nine, I think I would still hold my basic belief that

achievement and purposeful work are essential to a happy, productive life. After all, if money

alone bought happiness, then all rich people would be all happy, and that s not true.

“I love the work I do, and I think I d always want to be involved in my career in some fashion.

Winning the lottery would make it more fun because it would mean having more flexibility,

more options...who knows?”

“Of course, since I can t count on winning, I d just as soon create my own destiny by sticking

with what s worked for me, meaning good old reliable hard work and a desire to achieve. I think

those qualities have built many more fortunes that all the lotteries put together.”

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***49.Why should I hire you from the outside when I could promote someone from***

***within?***

**TRAPS:**

This question isn t as aggressive as it sounds. It represents the interviewer s own

dilemma over this common problem. He s probably leaning toward you already and for

reassurance, wants to hear what you have to say on the matter.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Help him see the qualifications that

*only*

you can offer.

***Example:***

“In general, I think it s a good policy to hire from within – to look outside probably

means you re not completely comfortable choosing someone from inside.

“Naturally, you want this department to be as strong as it possibly can be, so you want the

strongest candidate. I feel that I can fill that bill because…(then recap your strongest

qualifications that match up with his greatest needs).”

***50.Tell me something negative you’ve heard about our company…***

**TRAPS:**

This is a common fishing expedition to see what the industry grapevine may be saying

about the company. But it s also a tr ap because as an outsider, you never want to be the bearer

of unflattering news or gossip about the firm. It can only hurt your chances and sidetrack the

interviewer from getting sold on you.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Just remember the rule – never be negative – and you ll handle this one just

fine.

***51.On a scale of one to ten, rate me as an interviewer.***

**TRAPS:**

Give a perfect “10,” and you ll seem too easy to please. Give anything less than a

perfect 10, and he could press you as to where you re being critical, and that road leads

*downhill*

for you.

**BEST ANSWER:**

Once again,

*never be negative.*

The interviewer will only resent criticism

coming from you. This is the time to show your positivism.

However, don t give a numerical rating. Simply praise whatever interview style he s been using.

If he s been tough, say “You have been thorough and tough-minded, the very qualities needed to

conduct a good interview.”

If he s been methodical, say, “You have been very methodical and analytical, and I m sure that

approach results in excellent hires for your firm.”

In other words, pay him a sincere compliment

*that he can believe*

because it s anchored in the

behavior you ve just seen.

**HR QUESTIONS : II**

**1.Tell me about yourself . Use “Picture Frame Approach”**

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Answer in about two minutes. Avoid details, dont ramble. Touch on these four areas:

How many years, doing what function

Education credentials

Major responsibility and accomplishments

Personal summary of work style (plus career goals if applicable)

Prepare in advance using this formula:

“My name is”

1.

“I ve worked for X years as a [title]”

2.

“Currently, I m a [title] at [company] ”

3.

4.

“Before that, I was a [title] at [company] ”

5.

“I love the challenge of my work, especially the major strengths it allows me to offer,

including [A, B, and C]”.

6.

Second, help the interviewer by focusing the question with a question of your own:

“What about me would be most relevant to you and what this company needs?”

**2.Did you bring your resume?**

Yes. Be prepared with two or three extra copies. Do not offer them unless you re asked for

one.

**3.What do you know about our organization?**

Research the target company before the interview. Basic research is the only way to prepare

for this question. Do your homework, and youll score big on this question. Talk about

products, services, history and people, especially any friends that work there. “But I would

love to know more, particularly from your point of view. Do we have time to cover that now?

**4.According to your definition of success, how successful have you been so far?**

**(Is this person mature and self aware?)**

Be prepared to define success, and then respond (consistent record of responsibility)

**5.Would you describe a few situations in which your work was criticized?**

Give only one, and tell how you have corrected or plan to correct your work.

**6. How would you describe your personality?**

Keep your answer short and relevant to the job and the organizations culture.

**7.What are your strong points?**

Present three. Relate them to that particular company and job opening.

**8.What are your weak points?**

Don t say you have one, but give one that is really a “positive in disguise.” I am sometimes

impatient and do to much work myself when we are working against tight deadlines.” Or “I

compliment and praise my staff, but feel I can improve.”

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**9.How did you do in school?**

(Is the person motivated? What are his/her values, attitudes? Is there a fit?)

Emphasize your best and favorite subjects. If grades were average, talk about

leadership or jobs you took to finance your education. Talk about extra-curricular

activities (clubs, sports, volunteer work)

**10.What do you look for in a job?**

Flip this one over. Despite the question, the employer isn t really interested in what

you are looking for. He s interested in what he is looking for. Address his interests,

rather than yours. Use words like “contribute,” “enhance,” “improve,” and “team

environment.” Fit your answer to their needs Relate your preferences and

satisfiers/dissatisfiers to the job opening.

**11.How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our firm?**

“Not long, because of my experience, transferable skills and ability to learn.”

**12.How long would you stay with us?**

“As long as I feel that Im contributing, and that my contribution is recognized. Im

looking to make a long term commitment.”

**13. If you have never supervised, how do you feel about assuming those**

**responsibilities?**

If you want to supervise, say so, and be enthusiastic.

**14.Why do you want to become a supervisor?**

“To grow and develop professionally, to help others develop, to build a team and to

share what I have learned.”

**15.What do you see as the most difficult task in being a supervisor?**

“Getting things planned and done through others and dealing with different

personalities.” Show how you have done this in the past.

**16.Describe what would be an ideal working environment?**

Team work is the key.

**17. Do you prefer working with figures, or with words?**

Be aware of what the job requires and

*position your answer in that context. In many*

*cases it would be both.*

**18.What kinds of people do you find difficult to work with?**

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Use this question as a chance to show that you are a team player: “The only people I have

trouble with are those who arent team players, who just dont perform, who complain

constantly, and who fail to respond to any efforts to motivate them.” The interviewer is

expecting a response focused on personality and personal dislikes. Surprise her by delivering

an answer that reflects company values.

**19.Why do you want to work in a company of this size. Or this type?**

Explain how this size or type of company works well for you, using examples from the past if

possible.

**20. If you had your choice of jobs and companies, where would you go?**

Say that this job and this company ar e very close to what best suits you.

**21.Why do you want to work for us?**

You feel you can help achieve the companies objectives, especially in the short run. You like

what you have learned about the company, its policies, goals and management: “I ve

researched the company and people tell me its a good place to work.”

**22.What was the last book you read? Movie you saw? Sporting event you attended?**

Think this through. Your answer should be compatible with accepted norms.

**23.What are you doing, or what have you done to reach your career objectives?**

Talk about formal courses and training programs.

**24.What kind of hours are you used to working?**

**(Does the person match job and criteria?)**

“As many hours as it takes to get the job done.”

**25. What would you do for us?**

Relate past success in accomplishing the objectives which are similar to those of the

prospective employer.

**26.Did you ever fire anyone? If so, what were the reasons and how did you handle**

**it?**

If you haven t, say so, but add that you could do it, if necessary.

**27.What is the most money you ever accounted for? Largest budget responsibility?**

Refer to accomplishments. If you haven t had budget responsibility, say so, but refer to an

accomplishment that demonstrates the same skill.

**28.What are your career goals?**

Talk first about doing the job for which you are applying. Your career goals should

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mesh with the hiring company goals.

**29.What position do you expect to have in two years?**

Just say you wish to exceed objectives so well that you will be on a promotable track.

**30.Why should we hire you?**

This may sound suspicious, negative, or just plain harsh. Actually, its a call for help. The

employer wants you to help him/her hire you. Keep your response brief. Recap any job

requirements the interviewer may have mentioned earlier in the interview, then, point by

point, match your skills, abilities and qualifications to those items. Relate a past experience

which represents success in achieving objectives which may be similar to those of the

prospective employer.

**31.You may be over-qualified or too experienced for the position we have to offer.**

“A strong company needs a strong person.” An employer will get faster return on investment

because you have more experience than required.

**32.Why haven’t you found a new position before now?**

“Finding the right job takes time. I m not looking for just any job.”

**33.If you could start again, what would you do differently?**

No need to be self-revealing. “Hindsight is 20/20; everyone would make some changes, but

I ve learned and grown from all my decisions.”

**34.How much do you expect if we offer this position to you?**

Be careful. If you don t know the market value, return the question by saying that you would

expect a fair salar y based on the job responsibilities, your experience and skills and the

market value of the job. Express your interest in the job because it fits your career goals

Receptive to a r easonable and competitive offer don t talk $s. It s always best to put of f

discussing salar y and let PPR Career handle that. ANSWER: I m open to a competitive offer.

I d prefer to discuss the opportunity and allow my recruiter to handle any salary questions.

**HR QUESTIONS - III**

Review these typical interview questions and think about how you would answer them. Read the

questions listed; you will also find some strategy suggestions with it.

**1. Tell me about yourself ?**

The most often asked question in interviews. You need to have a short statement prepared in

your mind. Be careful that it does not sound rehearsed. Limit it to work-related items unless

instructed otherwise. Talk about things you have done and jobs you have held that relate to the

position you are interviewing for. Start with the item farthest back and work up to the present.

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**2. Do you consider yourself successful?**

You should always answer yes and briefly explain why. A good explanation is that you have set

goals, and you have met some and are on track to achieve the others.

**3. What do you know about this organization?**

This question is one reason to do some research on the organization before the interview. Find

out where they have been and where they are going. What are the current issues and who are the

major players?

**4. What have you done to improve your knowledge in the last year?**

Try to include improvement activities that relate to the job. A wide variety of activities can be

mentioned as positive self-improvement. Have some good ones handy to mention.

**5. Are you applying for other jobs?**

Be honest but do not spend a lot of time in this area. Keep the focus on this job and what you can

do for this organization. Anything else is a distraction.

**6. Why do you want to work for this organization?**

This may take some thought and certainly, should be based on the research you have done on the

organization. Sincerity is extremely important here and will easily be sensed. Relate it to your

long-term career goals.

**7. Do you know anyone who works for us?**

Be aware of the policy on relatives working for the organization. This can affect your answer

even though they asked about friends not relatives. Be careful to mention a friend only if they are

well thought of.

**8. What kind of salary do you need?**

A loaded question. A nasty little game that you will probably lose if you answer first. So, do not

answer it. Instead, say something like, That's a tough question. Can you tell me the range for this

position? In most cases, the interviewer, taken off guard, will tell you. If not, say that it can

depend on the details of the job. Then give a wide range.

**9. Are you a team player?**

You are, of course, a team player. Be sure to have examples ready. Specifics that show you often

perform for the good of the team rather than for yourself are good evidence of your team attitude.

Do not brag, just say it in a matter-of-fact tone. This is a key point.

**10. How long would you expect to work for us if hired?**

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Specifics here are not good. Something like this should work: I'd like it to be a long time. Or As

long as we both feel I'm doing a good job.

**11. Have you ever had to fire anyone? How did you feel about that?**

This is serious. Do not make light of it or in any way seem like you like to fire people. At the

same time, you will do it when it is the right thing to do. When it comes to the organization

versus the individual who has created a harmful situation, you will protect the organization.

Remember firing is not the same as layoff or reduction in force.

**12. What is your philosophy towards work?**

The interviewer is not looking for a long or flowery dissertation here. Do you have strong

feelings that the job gets done? Yes. That's the type of answer that works best here. Short and

positive, showing a benefit to the organization.

**13. Have you ever been asked to leave a position?**

If you have not, say no. If you have, be honest, brief and avoid saying negative things about the

people or organization involved.

**14. Explain how you would be an asset to this organization.**

You should be anxious for this question. It gives you a chance to highlight your best points as

they relate to the position being discussed. Give a little advance thought to this relationship.

**15. Why should we hire you?**

Point out how your assets meet what the organization needs. Do not mention any other

candidates to make a comparison.

**16. Tell me about a suggestion you have made.**

Have a good one ready. Be sure and use a suggestion that was accepted and was then considered

successful. One related to the type of work applied for is a real plus.

**17. What is your greatest strength?**

Numerous answers are good, just stay positive. A few good examples:

Your ability to prioritize, Your problem-solving skills, Your ability to work under pressure, Your

ability to focus on projects, Your professional expertise, Your leadership skills, Your positive

attitude

**18. Tell me about your dream job.**

Stay away from a specific job. You cannot win. If you say the job you are contending for is it,

you strain credibility. If you say another job is it, you plant the suspicion that you will be

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dissatisfied with this position if hired. The best is to stay genetic and say something like: A job

where I love the work, like the people, can contribute and can't wait to get to work.

**19. What kind of person would you refuse to work with?**

Do not be trivial. It would take disloyalty to the organization, violence or lawbreaking to get you

to object. Minor objections will label you as a whiner.

**20. What is more important to you: the money or the work?**

Money is always important, but the work is the most important. There is no better answer.

**21. What has disappointed you about a job?**

Don't get trivial or negative. Safe areas are few but can include:

Not enough of a challenge. You wer e laid off in a reduction Company did not win a contract,

which would have given you more responsibility.

**22. Tell me about your ability to work under pressure.**

You may say that you thrive under certain types of pressure. Give an example that relates to the

type of position applied for.

**23. Do your skills match this job or another job more closely?**

Probably this one. Do not give fuel to the suspicion that you may want another job more than this

one.

**24. What motivates you to do your best on the job?**

This is a personal trait that only you can say, but good examples ar e:

Challenge, Achievement, Recognition

**25. Are you willing to work overtime? Nights? Weekends?**

This is up to you. Be totally honest.

**26. How would you know you were successful on this job?**

Several ways are good measures:

You set high standards for yourself and meet them. Your outcomes are a success.Your boss tell

you that you are successf ul

**27. Would you be willing to relocate if required?**

You should be clear on this with your family prior to the interview if you think there is a chance

it may come up. Do not say yes just to get the job if the real answer is no. This can create a lot of

problems later on in your career. Be honest at this point and save yourself future grief.

**28. Are you willing to put the interests of the organization ahead of your own?**

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This is a straight loyalty and dedication question. Do not worr y about the deep ethical and

philosophical implications. Just say yes.

**29. Describe your management style.**

Try to avoid labels. Some of the more common labels, like progressive, salesman or consensus,

can have several meanings or descriptions depending on which management expert you listen to.

The situational style is safe, because it says you will manage according to the situation, instead

of one size fits all.

**30. What have you learned from mistakes on the job?**

Here you have to come up with something or you strain credibility. Make it small, well

intentioned mistake with a positive lesson learned. An example would be working too far ahead

of colleagues on a project and thus throwing coordination off.

**31. Do you have any blind spots?**

Trick question. If you know about blind spots, they are no longer blind spots. Do not reveal any

personal areas of concern here. Let them do their own discovery on your bad points. Do not hand

it to them.

**32. If you were hiring a person for this job, what would you look for?**

Be careful to mention traits that are needed and that you have.

**33. Do you think you are overqualified for this position?**

Regardless of your qualifications, state that you are very well qualified for the position.

**34. What qualities do you look f or in a boss?**

Be generic and positive. Safe qualities are knowledgeable, a sense of humor, fair, loyal to

subordinates and holder of high standards. All bosses think they have these traits.

**35. What position do you prefer on a team working on a project?**

Be honest. If you are comfortable in different roles, point that out.

**36. Describe your work ethic.**

Emphasize benefits to the organization. Things like, determination to get the job done and work

hard but enjoy your work are good.

**37. What has been your biggest professional disappointment?**

Be sure that you refer to something that was beyond your control. Show acceptance and no

negative feelings.

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**38. Do you have any questions for me?**

Always have some questions prepared. Questions prepared where you will be an asset to the

organization are good. How soon will I be able to be productive? and What type of projects will I

be able to assist on? are examples.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK HR AFTER ATTENDING INTERVIEW:**

1.

How do you like me so far?

2.

Do you have any concerns about my ability to do the job and fit in?

3.

Is there anything standing in the way of us coming to an agreement?

4.

Do you have any concerns about my experience, education, skills?

5.

How do I compare with the other candidates you have interviewed?

6.

Describe your ideal candidate. What do my qualifications lack compared to those of the

theoretical ideal candidate?

I m ready to make a decision based on the information I have. Is there anything else I can

7.

elaborate on so that you would have a better understanding of my qualifications and

suitability for this position?

8.

Are there any areas in which you feel I fall short of your requirements?

9.

Can you give me any feedback that would make me more attractive to the company in the

future or that I could benefit from next time?

10.

Is there anything else you need from me to have a complete picture of my qualifications?

11.

Is there anything personally or professionally that you believe would prevent my being a

solid contributor in this role?

12.

Your search is over. You will not find anyone else more qualified to do this job than I. If

I were you, I d cancel all the other interviews and make me an offer.

I m not going to keep it a secret. I really want this job, and I know I will be fantastic in it.

13.

14.

Until I hear from you again, what particular aspects of the job and this interview should I

be considering?

15.

I know I can meet the demands of the position and would make an outstanding

contribution. Can I have the offer?

16.

What will be your recommendation to the hiring committee?

I m ready to make a decision based on the information I have. Is there anything else you

17.

need to make me an offer?

18.

I am very interested in this job, and I know your endorsement is key to my receiving an

offer. May I have your endorsement?

19.

It sounds to me as if we have a great fit here. What do you think?

20.

It has been an interesting and fruitful discussion. l would very much like to take it to the

next step

**QUESTIONS TO ASK HR DURING INTERVIEW:**

Usually by the end of the interview the HR person would ask you whether you have any

questions. Under the stress of the job interview sometimes nothing comes to mind, but here s a

list of useful questions to ask.

1.

Why do you enjoy working for this company?

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2.

What attracted you to this organization?

3.

Can you describe the work environment here?

4.

How do you describe the philosophy of the company or organization?

5.

What do you consider to be the organization s strengths and weaknesses?

6.

Can you tell me more about my day-to-day responsibilities?

7.

How soon are you looking to fill this position?

8.

How do my skills compare with those of the other candidates you have interviewed?

9.

I have really enjoyed meeting with you and your team, and I am very interested in the

opportunity. I feel my skills and experience would be a good match for this position.

What is the next step in your interview process?

10.

Before I leave, is there anything else you need to know concerning my ability to do this

job?

11.

In your opinion, what is the most important contribution that this company expects from

its employees?

12.

Is there a structured car eer path at the company?

13.

What are my prospects for advancement? If I do a good job, what is a logical next step?

14.

Assuming I was hired and performed well for a period of time, what additional

opportunities might this job lead to?

15.

Do the most successful people in the company tend to come from one area of the

company, such as sales or engineering, or do they rise from a cross section of functional

areas?

16.

I know that for the position for which I am interviewing, the company decided to recruit

from outside the organization. How do you decide between recruiting from within and

going outside?

17.

How does this position relate to the bottom line?

18.

What advice would you give to someone in my position?

19.

What major problems are we facing right now in this department or position?

20.

Can you give me a formal, written description of the position? I m interested in

reviewing in detail the major activities involved and what results are expected.

21.

Does this job usually lead to other positions in the company? Which ones?

Can you please tell me a little bit about the people with whom I ll be working most

22.

closely?

23.

As I understand the position, the title as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the duties are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and the

department is called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I would report dir ectly to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Is that right?

24.

Can you talk about the company s commitment to equal opportunity and diversity?

Who are the company s stars, and how was their status determined?

25.

26.

How are executives addressed by their subordinates?

27.

What can you tell me about the prevailing management style?

28.

If you hired me, what would be my first assignment?

29.

Does the company have a mission statement? May I see it? Does the company have a

mission statement? May I see it?

**GENERAL QUESTIONS:**

1.

Summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the financial position

of the company as you understand them.

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2.

We view the accounting/financial management functions in this position as more than

tracking numbers, but tracking and analyzing number to find ways to reduce expenditures

and increase revenues. What experience do you have in using your accounting and

financial management skills to identif y waste and opportunity? What were the results of

your efforts?

How have you increased revenues in the previous companies you ve worked for?

3.

4.

How much success have you had with budgets you have developed or assisted in

developing? Explain.

5.

When you think about managing the optical networking group, what do you think? How

would you approach this responsibility? What would you like to know about it?

6.

What are the most important policies and procedur es in your philosophy to cash

management?

7.

When analyzing your group budget, what would you be looking for?

8.

Describe two instances when you had to work weekends or evenings to meet expectations

and/or “fill the gap” from other employees and/or subordinates?

9.

What types of reports would you like to review your first month on the job and why?

What kind of regular meetings would you schedule with your division managers?

10.

What experience do you have with Local Area Networks/Servers/computer technicians

and dealing with vendors?

11.

What do you want staff to tell you about their position your first week on the job? After

the first month?

12.

How will you determine your expectations from your staff? At what point do you believe

it is important to give staff a “Preview Review”?

13.

How will you help staff change from a “This is how I ve always done it.” to new

processes you implement?

14.

How do you reward excellence, innovation, initiative, teamwork?

15.

How many performance evaluations have you conducted in the last 12 months? How did

your reports fare? How did you help them do well? What could you have done to help

them perform at the highest level

**SOME MORE HR QUESTIONS:**

**1.Why should I hire you? [Give example]**

I m very adaptive and respond well to pressure and change.

Leadership

“I think I have excellent leaderships skills which I have acquired through a combination

of effective communication, delegation and personal interaction. This has helped my team

achieve its goals."

**2.Tell me about yourself?**

Start from your education and give a brief coverage of previous experiences. Emphasize more on

your recent experience explaining your job profile.

**3.Why should we hire you? Or why are you interested in this job?**

Sum up your work experiences with your abilities and emphasize your strongest qualities and

achievements. Let your interviewer know that you will prove to be an asset to the company.

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**4.How much money do you want?**

Indicate your present salary and emphasize that the opportunity is the most important

consideration.

**5.Do you prefer to work in a group?**

Be honest and give examples how you've worked by yourself and also with others. Prove your

flexibility.

**Questions to Ask:**

1.

Could you tell me the growth plans and goals for the company?

2.

What skills are important to be successful in this position?

3.

Why did you join this company? (optional)

4.

What's the criteria your company uses for performance appraisal?

5.

With whom will I be interacting most frequently and what are their responsibilities and

the nature of our interaction?

6.

What is the time frame for making a decision at this position?

7.

What made the previous persons in this position successful/unsuccessful?

**Strengths and Weaknesses:**

You should keep a regular check on your strengths and weaknesses. Write down three (3)

technical and three (3) non-technical personal strengths. Most importantly, show examples of

your skills. This proves more effective than simply talking about them. So if you're asked about a

general skill, provide a specific example to help you fulfil the interviewer's expectations. It isn't

enough to say you've got "excellent leadership skills". Instead, try saying:

"I think I have excellent leaderships skills which I have acquired through a combination of

effective communication, delegation and personal interaction. This has helped my team achieve

its goals."

As compared to strengths, the area of weaknesses is difficult to handle. Put across your weakness

in such a way that it at least seems to be a positive virtue to the interviewer. Describe a weakness

or area for development that you have worked on and have now over come.

**Questions you should be prepared for:**

1.Tell us about yourself.

2.What do you know about our company?

3.Why do you want to join our company?

4.What are your strengths and weaknesses?

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5.Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

6.How have you improved the nature of your job in the past years of your working? Why

should we hire you?

7.What contributions to profits have you made in your present or former company? Why

are you looking for a change?

Here s a list of words drawn from studies which asked employers why they selected certain

candidates over others:

oral communications

motivation

initiative

assertiveness

enthusiasm

confidence

drive

energy

*You must start your interview by establishing yourself as confident and assertive.*

Here s how employers rated the importance of various qualifications using a five point scale:

Interpersonal skills 4.67

Teamwork skills 4.65

Analytical skills 4.56

Oral communication skills 4.53

Flexibility 4.52

Computer skills 4.32

Written communication skills 4.12

Leadership skills 4.08

Work experience 4.05

Internship experience 3.77

Co-op experience 3.37

In a related question, employers identified the personal char acteristics that are most important to

them. They are, in order:

Honesty/integrity

Motivation/initiative

Communication skills

Self-confidence

Flexibility

Interpersonal skills

Strong work ethic

Teamwork skills

Leadership skills

Enthusiasm

Almost all of the questions will be about you – your goals, skills, work attitudes, education,

expectations.

At the end of the interview, most interviewers generally ask if you have any questions.

Therefore, you should be prepared beforehand with 2-3 technical and 2-3 non-technical

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questions and commit them to your memory bef ore the interview.

Do not ask queries related to your salary, vacation, bonuses, or other benefits. This information

should be discussed at the time of getting your joining letter. Her e we are giving few sample

questions that you can ask at the time of your interview.

**Top 10 Interview Tips OF Hughes:**

Here are the 10 most commonly asked questions in the job interview, which will

help you prepare yourself better for the forthcoming campus placement and also

give you a competitive edge over others.

A well thought out answer to these questions, prepared and rehearsed in

advance with the logical sequencing of the events will help you sail through.

**1.Tell us about yourself**

This is an open canvas for you giving you an opportunity to direct and lead

your interview in the direction you want. Good idea will be to structure your

answer in the following three broad heads:

Family Background

Educational Background (starting from schooling to

professional qualifications)

Achievements

In all the above subheads speak only that information which will give strength

to your candidature. Avoid verbose description of yourself.

**2.Why do you want to join us?**

To answer this question, you must have researched the company well. Here you

can quote some of your personal beliefs, which are in conjunction with the

values of the company or talk about specific products and services which could

be your professional interest too.

In the event where your skill set is mapping with the requirement of the

company, do not miss the chance to highlight the same. Specify the initiatives

taken or work done to attain that skill set.

**3. What would you like to be doing five years from now?**

This question is asked to assess candidates career plan and ambition for

growth and to see if the company will be able to provide that opportunity over

period of time. Also to assess if your personal goals are not totally off

tangent with what companys objectives are. It is also to check your stability

with the organization. It is good idea to be very realistic in your answer. If

need be take guidance from your seniors who ar e already in the corporate

environment.

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**4. Do you prefer working with others or alone?**

This question is usually asked to determine whether you are a team player.

Before answering, however, be sure you know whether the job requires you to

work alone. Then answer appropriately.

**5.What are your biggest accomplishments?**

You may like to begin your reply with: "Although I feel my biggest

achievements are still ahead of me, I am proud of my involvement withI made my

contribution as part of that team and learnt a lot in the process". It will

be a good idea to close your answer with also specifying what attributes and

circumstances made you succeed.

**6.What are your favorite subjects?**

It is a leading question giving direction to the panel members for possible

areas where they can probe in further for your knowledge base and in depth

understanding. It is advisable to select the topics that you are competent in.

**7.Why should we hire you?**

Keep your answer short and to the point. You should highlight areas from your

background that relates to the need of the organization. Recap the

organizations description of the job, meeting it point by point with your

skills.

**8. What are your hobbies?**

This question is generally asked to assess whether you are "desktop" kind of a

person or an "interaction orientated person". It also indicates your

preference for team - oriented activities or projects with solo contributions.

It enables the organization to place you accordingly after selection. Be

candid with your answer.

**9. What is the worst feedback you have ever got?**

To answer this question you must admit and share your areas of improvement.

Also sharing an action plan for improving oneself will indicate your ability

to take criticism well. Your answer should be reflection of your

open-mindedness.

**10. What is the most difficult situation you have faced?**

Here you should be ready with the real life story. The question looks for

information on two fronts: How do you define difficult? and, what was your

handling of the situation? You should be able to clearly lay down the road map

for solving the problem, your ability to do task management and maintain good

interaction with your team members and other peers. It is advisable to close

with highlighting the learning out of the incident.

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**Job Interviewing Do's and Don'ts:**

Here are the keys to successful job interviewing. Follow these simple rules and you should

achieve success in this important phase of job-hunting.

Do take a practice run to the location wher e you are having the interview -- or be sure

you know exactly where it is and how long it takes to get ther e.

Do your research and know the type of job interview you will be encountering. (See types

of job interviews.) And do prepar e and practice for the interview, but don't memorize or

over-rehearse your answers. (See our some of the best collections of interview questions.)

Do dress the part for the job, the company and the industry. And do err on the side of

conservatism. If you're not sure, you should consider reading our article, when Job-

Hunting: Dress for Success.

Do plan to arrive about 10 minutes early. Late arrival for a job interview is never

excusable. If you are running late, do phone the company.

Do greet the receptionist or assistant with courtesy and respect. This is wher e you make

your first impression.

Don't chew gum during the interview.

If presented with a job application, do fill it out neatly, completely, and accurately.

Do bring extra resumes to the interview. (Even better, if you have a job skills portfolio,

do bring that with you to the interview.)

Don't rely on your application or resume to do the selling for you. No matter how

qualified you are for the position, you will need to sell yourself to the interviewer.

Do greet the interviewer(s) by title (Ms., Mr., and Dr.) and last name if you are sure of

the pronunciation. (If you're not sure, do ask the receptionist about the pronunciation

before going into the interview.

Do shake hands firmly. Don't have a limp or clammy handshake!

Do wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. And do remember body language and

posture: sit upright and look alert and interested at all times. Don't fidget or slouch.

Don't tell jokes during the interview.

Do make good eye contact with your interviewer(s).

Do show enthusiasm in the position and the company.

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Don't smoke, even if the interviewer does and offers you a cigarette. And don't smoke

beforehand so that you smell like smoke. And do brush your teeth, use mouthwash, or

have a breath mint before the interview.

Do avoid using poor language, slang, and pause words (such as "like," "uh” and "um").

Don't be soft-spoken. A forceful voice projects confidence.

Do have a high confidence and ener gy level, but don't be overly aggressive.

Don't act as though you would take any job or are desperate for employment.

Do avoid controversial topics.

Don't say anything negative about former colleagues, supervisors, or employers.

Do make sure that your good points come across to the interviewer in a factual, sincere

manner.

Don't ever lie. Answer questions truthfully, frankly and succinctly. And don't over-

answer questions.

Do stress your achievements. And don't offer any negative information about yourself.

Don't answer questions with a simple "yes" or "no." Explain whenever possible. Describe

those things about yourself that showcase your talents, skills, and determination. Give

examples.

Do show off the research you have done on the company and industry when responding

to questions. (See our Guide to Researching Companies.)

Don't bring up or discuss personal issues or family problems.

Do remember that the interview is also an important time for you to evaluate the

interviewer and the company she represents.

Don't respond to an unexpected question with an extended pause or by saying something

like, "boy, that's a good question." And do repeat the question out loud or ask for the

question to be repeated to give you a little more time to think about an answer. Also, a

short pause before responding is okay.

Do always conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are discussing.

Never close the door on an opportunity until you are sure about it.

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Don't answer cell phone calls during the interview, and do turn off (or set to silent ring)

your cell phone and/or pager.

Do show what you can do for the company rather than what the company can do for you.

Don't inquire about salary, vacations, bonuses, retirement, or other benefits until after

you've received an offer. Be prepared for a question about your salary requirements, but

do try and delay salary talk until you have an offer. (You might consider visiting our

salary tutorial for more tips and strategies.)

Do ask intelligent questions about the job, company, or industry. Don't ever not ask any

questions -- it shows a lack of interest.

Do close the interview by telling the interviewer(s) that you want the job and asking

about the next step in the process. (Some experts even say you should close the interview

by asking for the job.)

Do try and get business cards from each person you interviewed with -- or at least the

correct spelling of their first and last names. And don't make assumptions about simple

names -- was it Jon or John -- get the spelling.

Do immediately take down notes after the interview concludes so you don't forget crucial

details.

***How do we prepare resume?***

Freshers: Companies like Infosys, TCS and Wipro expects your percentage from 10

th

onwards, so it is better include all your curriculum (10th, 12

th

, all Degree) percentage in your

resume. Resumes should be scanable it should be simple and easy to get inf ormation within a

single look. It should not contain unwanted information.

Experience: You resume should have the following details, apart from the basic details.

1.

Company name

2.

Project name

3.

Project duration

4.

Client

5.

Team size

6.

Role

7.

Project description

8.

Activities (We have to mention our project activities)

9.

Platform

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**SAMPLE RESUME**

***Sample resume - Fresher***

Hi,

I have completed my MSC (CS, S/W) at Madurai Kamaraj University with 83.89% and

looking for a challenging job in IT field. I have clear Knowledge about C, C++, VC++ and

OOPS. I have attached my CV for your kind perusal. Please do the necessary.

Regards,

XXX

XXX,

C/o, Mrs Bharathi.

Arjun Illam,

4/116, Kambar street,

Karambakkam,

Porur,

Chennai - 116.

Phone : 9841315180

Mail id:

vijicpp03@yahoo.com

vijicpp@hotmail.com

**OBJECTIVE :**

To work in a challenging and creative environment and effectively contribute towards the goals

of the organization.

**AREAS OF INTEREST :**

Data Structures

Networking Concepts

OOPS

**EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION :**

2001-2003 M. Sc., Computer Science with 83.9%,

Department of Computer Science,

Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai

1998-2001 B. Sc., Computer Science with 73.9%,

Department of Computer Science,

N.S.College of Arts & Science, Theni

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1998 Higher Secondar y Course with 77%,

N.S.G.Higher Secondary School, Theni

1996 S. S. L. C., with 85%,

N.S.G.Higher Secondary School, Theni

**TECHNICAL SKILLS:**

Languages : C, C++

GUI Tools : VC++ 6.0, VB 6.0

Web Tools : HTML, ASP, VB Script

Databases : Oracle8.0, MS-Access, dbase

Operating system : Windows 9x, SCO UNIX, MS-DOS 6.2

**PROJECTS:**

1) TELNET CLIENT CONSOLE APPLICATION

Language : VC++ 6.0

Server Platform : Linux or UNIX

Client Platform : Windows

Team Size : Single

Duration : 4 months

Client : HCL Peripherals

Description :

Enables to login in to a Remote server having UNIX platforms. Also handles User

authentication, File Management, Remote command Processing, Node Management and

Chatting.

2) IMAGE PROCESSING

Language : VB 6.0

Platform : Windows

Team Size : Single

Duration : 2 months

Description :

Compress and decompress the image by traversing through kolam, Produces grey scale,

mirror, negative, invert images and also effect of torchlight on the image.

3) MAIL SERVER AND FILE TRANSFER

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Language : C

Platform : UNIX

Protocol : UDP

Team Size : Single

Duration : 1.5 months

Description :

Adds new users, Maintains user information and handles mail transfer. Transfers file in

case of requests from users.

**PERSONAL SKILLS:**

\* Excellent problem solving skills and a self starter

\* Takes initiative and works independently or as part of a group.

\* Well organized and easily meets deadlines.

**EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:**

Essay Writing, Quiz, Poem Writing, Public speaking, Story Writing and Dramatics.

**PERSONAL PROFILE:**

Name of Father : Mr. L.Sankaranarayanan

Date of Birth : May 7, 1981

Languages known : English, Tamil, and Telugu

Marital Status : Unmarried

Hobbies : Playing chess, listening to Music, Verse writing & Puzzle Solving.

***Sample resume - Experience***

Hi,

I am a software Engineer with around 2 years of experience and looking for a suitable

job change. Please do the necessary.

Regards,

YYY

YYY,

#844,35th Main, 11th Cross,

J.P.Nagar, I Phase,

Bangalore-78.

India.

E-mail:

bharathicpp@yahoo.com

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Phone: 98440-61400

**PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY:**

\* Strong in Object Oriented Concepts, Design and Programming.

\* Two plus years of experience in IT industry.

\* Solid experience in OOPS (C++)

\* Clear knowledge about Data structures.

\* The entire professional career is being made out of continuous achievements.

\* The client appreciation was received on various project works.

**EDUCATIONAL DETAILS:**

Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Science Engineering.

Vijayanagar Engineering College, Bellary.

Gulbarga University, India.

Passed out in August 2000.

Percentage of marks: 74.2%.

**ACADEMIC RECORDS:**

B.E. - 2000 - 74.2%

P.U.C. - 1996 - 71.9%

S.S.L.C. - 1994 - 72.2%

**EMPLOYMENT SUMMARY:**

\* Working as Software Engineer in MACMILLAN INDIA LTD, Bangalore.

(www.macmillan.com)

(From Sep 2000 to till date)

**TECHNICAL SKILLS:**

\* C

\* C++

\* Java

\* HTML

\* Pl/Sql

\* Oracle 8.0

\* Visual C++ 6.0

\* Strong in OOPS Concepts

\* Windows NT, Windows 9X and Windows 2000

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**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

PROJECT #1

PROJECT NAME: Agni

DURATION: Apr 2002 – Till date

CLIENT: Macmillan, India

TEAM SIZE: 2

ROLE: Team member

**DESCRIPTION:**

\* This is a conversion tool for GML (Generalized Markup Language).

\* Translates GML to Latex.

\* Basic entities are replaced with the corresponding latex code.

\* Accents are replaced accordingly.

\* GML tags are replaced with the corresponding latex code.

\* Creates error log file containing all the missed tags, entities and accents.

**ACTIVITIES:**

\* Requirements gathering from the client.

\* Involved in analysis modeling using Standard notations.

\* Identification of classes, attributes and methods for major components under development

\* Development of UI Components and Database designing.

\* Task allocation, monitoring and review of the tasks done by the team members (leading a team

of 3)

\* Complete quality awareness coordinator for the project by ensuring the internal/external

reviews and final inspections

**PLATFORM:**

\* C++

\* Visual C++

\* Windows 2000

PROJECT #2

PROJECT NAME: TeX Automation

DURATION: Oct 2001 – Mar 2002

CLIENT: Macmillan, India

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TEAM SIZE: 2

ROLE: Team Member

**DESCRIPTION:**

\* This tool is generalized one which can convert any type of file to the required format.

\* Reads the contents of a file.

\* Front matter structuring, mathematical formatting, Sections restructuring, Tables alignment

and cross references generation are the main modules of this project.

\* Cleaning module removes all the unnecessary tags.

\* All the unwanted input style files to be deleted.

**ACTIVITIES:**

\* Requirement analysis, Data collection and System study.

\* Analysis of TeX File format.

\* Low level and High level Designing.

\* Coding and Testing.

\* Test case preparation and Documentation of Application workflow.

**PLATFORM:**

\* C

\* C++

\* Windows NT

PROJECT #3

PROJECT NAME: Computer Adaptive Test

DURATION: Apr 2001 – Sep 2001

CLIENT: Macmillan, India

TEAM SIZE: 3

ROLE: Team Member

**DESCRIPTION:**

\* The GUI was designed with MFC.

\* The difficulty of each question changes according to answer given by the Candidate.

\* The questions start with the lowest difficulty level and keeps increasing if the user keeps giving

right answers.

\* The difficulty level starts decreasing once the user gives wrong answers.

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**ACTIVITIES:**

\* Involved in Designing Use Case Diagrams, Class Diagrams and Sequence Diagrams

\* Coding and Testing.

\* Analysis of future modification.

**PLATFORM:**

\* C++

\* Visual C++

\* Oracle

\* Windows 2000

PROJECT #4

PROJECT NAME: QC Check Tool for AIP LaTeX

DURATION: Sep 2000 – Mar 2001

CLIENT: Macmillan, India

TEAM SIZE: 2

ROLE: Team Member

**DESCRIPTION:**

\* Reads the contents of LaTex file.

\* Parses the contents.

\* Validates the syntax and the order in which the text should appear.

\* Creates and writes the errors to an error log.

\* Corrects some of the syntax errors in the file and makes a log of that as well.

**ACTIVITIES:**

\* Testing case preparation. Unit testing and Module testing.

\* Entire functionality testing.

\* Debugging the code.

\* Analysis of future modification and Data collection

**PLATFORM:**

\* C

\* C++

\* Windows NT

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP:**

Active Member of IEEE from 1995 onwards.

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**EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:**

Poem Writing, Story Writing, Dramatics, Chess, Tennis.

**PERSONAL DETAILS:**

Father's Name : N.Umamaheswara Reddy

Date of Birth : 25-05-1979.

Sex: Female.

Marital Status: Single.

Nationality: Indian.

Permanent Address: Venkateswar a Nilayam,

Near B.N.Temple, Gandhi Nagar,

Bellary-583103

Karnataka

India.

E-Mail:

bharathicpp@yahoo.com