

Interview Questions

Can you tell me about a difficult work situations that you overcame?

Tip: This question is often used to assess how well you perform under pressure as well as your problem-solving abilities. Keep in mind stories are more memorable than facts and figures, so strive to “show” instead of “tell.” This is also an excellent opportunity to show your human side and how you’re willing to go the extra mile without being asked.

Example: *“It was the first day of my boss’s two-week vacation and our agency’s highest-paying client threatened to leave because he didn’t feel he was getting the personalized service he was promised. I spent my lunch hour on the phone with him talking through his concerns. We even brainstormed ideas for his next campaign. He was so grateful for the personal attention that he signed another six-month contract before my boss even returned from her trip.”*

Use the STAR method to answer the behavioral questions:

You can use the STAR interview method to prepare for behavioral interviews—a technique that helps you structure your response to behavioral interview questions. Using this method, you create a deliberate story arc that your interviewer can easily follow. Here's how it works:

Situation

What is the context of your story? In setting the situation, you are telling your listener when or where this event took place. For example, *“We were working on a six-month contract for a high-value client when our agency merged with another, larger firm...”*

Task

What was your role in this situation? For example, *“It was my role to lead the transition for my group while also communicating with our client to keep the project on track.”*

Action

What did you do? For example, “I set up weekly check-ins with the client to update them on the progress of the merger. This cemented an important level of trust between us. I also had regular one-on-ones with each person on the team, both to assess how they were handling the change and to make sure we would meet our deadlines.”

Result

What did your actions lead to? For example, “We ended up completing the project on time, meeting all of their specifications. It was incredibly rewarding to navigate a lot of change and succeed under pressure.”

Behavioral interview questions:

- Give me an example of a difficult problem you solved. How did you solve this problem?
- Tell me about a mistake that you've made. How did you handle it?
- Can you tell me about a challenging situation you overcame at work?
- Tell me about a time you learned a new skill. How did you approach it and how did you apply your new learnings?
- Has there been a time when you had to pitch an idea to a manager or senior leader? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you overcame a conflict at work.
- Explain a situation in which you would have handled things differently.
- Tell me about a time you handled a stressful situation when you were under a lot of pressure.
- Can you tell me about a time you set and achieved a certain goal?
- What is your proudest professional accomplishment and why?

Examples:

Question: Tell me about a time when you overcame a conflict at work.

Answer: *“At my last job, my colleague and I disagreed on how to handle a sensitive situation with our client. We made a mistake in their campaign that resulted in poor overall performance. While my colleague wanted to move forward without explaining the mistake, I thought it would be best to let the client know what happened.*

After going back and forth, I asked him if we could set some time aside to weigh the costs and benefits of each option. In the end, we needed to see each other’s motivations and fears to get a better understanding of the other.

We decided to let the client know what had happened and agreed to provide them with another campaign at no cost. While it did result in a short-term loss for the company, the client appreciated our honesty and booked an annual campaign exceeding their spending with us in the past. My colleague and I were also recognized for our teamwork and ended up counseling other client teams on conflict resolution.”

What are your salary expectations?

Tip: Interviewers ask this question to make sure your expectations are in line with the amount they've budgeted for the role. If you give a salary range exceedingly lower or higher than the market value of the position, it gives the impression that you don't know your worth. Research the typical compensation range for the role on Indeed Salaries and tend toward the higher side of your range. Be sure to let the hiring manager know if you're flexible with your rate.

Example: *"My salary expectation is between \$XX,XXX and \$XX,XXX, which is the average salary for a candidate with my level of experience in this city. However, I am flexible."*

Why they ask about the salary expectations?

When an employer asks about your salary expectations, it's usually for three reasons:

- **They have a budget.** The interviewer wants to make sure your compensation expectations align with the amount they've calculated for the job. If they find most candidates are asking for a great deal more than anticipated, it might mean requesting a larger budget for the position.
- **They want to gauge how well you know your worth.** A good candidate knows how much their skillset is worth in the market and can share it with confidence. To determine appropriate market value, factor in your level, years of experience and career achievements.

- **They want to determine whether you're at the appropriate professional level.** An applicant who asks for a significantly higher amount than other candidates may be too senior for the role. Alternatively, answering with a salary expectation on the low end could indicate you're at a lower experience level than the job requires.

Your answer to this question can be the beginning of the salary negotiation process. As a result, you want to make sure you're providing a well-researched response.

Why should we hire you?

Tip: While this question may seem like an intimidation tactic, interviewers generally bring this up to offer you another opportunity to explain why you're the best candidate. Your answer should address the skills and experience you offer and why you're a good culture fit.

Example: *"I have a passion for application development that's grown stronger over the course of my career. The company's mission aligns with my personal values and, from my limited time in the office, I can already tell this is the sort of positive culture in which I would thrive. I want to work for a company that has the potential to reshape the industry and I believe you're doing just that."*

Why do they ask this question?

Employers might ask this question to learn a few different things about you. First, they want to know what differentiates you from other candidates they might be interviewing. In other words, what would they gain by hiring you specifically over other interviewees? They might also ask this question to see how you handle difficult situations because this question has the potential to stump candidates. It can be challenging to explain why you're the best person for a job in a humble, thoughtful way.

This question allows you to pitch why you would be an asset to the company—answering it well will increase your chances of moving forward in the hiring process.

What did you like the most about your last position?

Tip: Tie your answer to this question into the company's needs and focus on explaining your proven performance at your last job. Be specific and provide an example.

Example: *"What I liked most about my last position was the ability to contribute in a collaborative way with other teams. Each team member was encouraged to bring new ideas to the project which were respectfully considered by all. For example, we once worked with a client who was relying on us to solve a critical issue. Our team met to discuss the situation. After I recommended a plan to resolve the issue, we took time considering the pros and the cons of the solution, building on how to make the idea better and more comprehensive. When we implemented it, it worked better and faster than everyone expected. The client was very pleased."*