

Interview Questions



What motivates you?

Tip: Employers ask this question to gauge your level of self-awareness and ensure your sources of motivation align with the role. To answer, be as specific as possible, provide real-life examples and tie your answer back to the job role.

Example: *“Making a true difference in the lives of my patients and their families motivates me to strive for excellence in everything I do. I look forward to seeing my patient’s reactions when we get a positive outcome that will change their lives forever. That’s why I became a nurse and why I’m pursuing a position in pediatrics.”*

Why asking “What motivates you?”

There are two main reasons hiring managers ask this question:

1. Employers want to know whether your sources of motivation align with the role.

The best candidate for a job will be naturally energized by the responsibilities and experiences associated with the position. For example, if you're interviewing to be a news reporter and you share a motivation for deadline-focused, fast-paced work, the interviewer can draw clear parallels between the job and your ideal work environment.

2. Employers want to determine whether you are self-aware enough to know what drives you

Much like asking about [your greatest strengths and weaknesses](#), interviewers ask what motivates you as a way to learn how well you know yourself. A candidate who can quickly provide a well-crafted, natural explanation of what keeps them motivated on the job is someone who is likely also a self-starter and knows how to stay on track.

What are your greatest strengths?

Tip: This question gives you an opportunity to talk about both your technical and soft skills. To answer, share qualities and personal attributes and then relate them back to the role for which you're interviewing.

Example: *"I'm a natural problem-solver. I find it rewarding to dig deep and uncover solutions to challenges—it's like solving a puzzle. It's something I've always excelled at and something I enjoy. Much of product development is about finding innovative solutions to challenging issues, which is what drew me to this career path in the first place."*

What are your strengths example answers:

It's surprisingly difficult for many people to talk about their strengths during an interview. It's challenging to balance your humility with the need to project confidence. As with weaknesses, you can generally choose between skills/habits and personality traits. Use the job description as your guide as you select your strengths. Follow the same formula of strength + context and story. When providing context for your strengths, address the specific qualities that qualify you for the job and distinguish you as a candidate.

Leadership:

“I’ve always been a natural leader. With more than 10 years of experience in finance and sales, I’ve exceeded my KPIs every quarter and have been promoted twice in the past five years. I look back at those successes and know that I wouldn’t have reached them if I hadn’t built and led teams composed of highly skilled and diverse individuals. I’m proud of my ability to get cross-functional groups on the same page. I’ve regularly honed my management skills through 360 reviews and candid sessions with my team, and I know continuing to build my leadership skills is something I want from my next role.”

Collaboration skills:

“I’m very collaborative and have always preferred to work in groups. In the project teams I’ve directed, members work with a variety of people and are motivated by diverse creative tasks. Since I began managing my current team, I’ve increased productivity by 15 percent and retention by 25 percent over three years.”

Interpersonal skills:

“I’m an empathetic person who’s skilled at relating to people and making them feel heard. In one memorable instance from earlier this year, I was on a support call with a customer whose contract we had terminated. Reinstating the service agreement would have increased her rates dramatically. She was understandably upset and felt trapped because she couldn’t be without car insurance for her and her family. It became clear very quickly that we couldn’t meet her needs but I wanted her to walk away with a favorable impression of the service we had provided. I talked her through some of her other options, even letting her know of other providers who might be able to offer her a lower rate so she could avoid a lapse in coverage. In the feedback survey from that interaction, she specifically mentioned that she would still be recommending our services to others. In my career in customer support, I’ve had many interactions like this—they are complex but end with the customer still feeling positive.”

Organization skills:

“I never miss a deadline. I’m highly organized, and I’ve applied my natural skill for organizing people and projects to all aspects of my work. After seven years of working as a project manager, I’ve had only one late product launch. From that experience, which took place three years ago, I learned a crucial lesson about trade-offs. I spent time addressing a crucial design need and that pushed everything else back. I wouldn’t trade the lessons I learned from that experience for anything—being sure to communicate to stakeholders about upcoming roadblocks chief among them.”