



Q1. Tell me about yourself.

- TIP Use the format SET when answering this first interview question:
- S Skills and qualities you have that match the role.
- E Experience and/or educational qualifications.
- T The type of person you are.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be interviewed for this position today. I have applied for the job because I believe the skills and qualities I possess are a match for the job description. I have several years experience in this industry which means I can come into your company and make a fast and immediate impact. I am a strong communicator, I work very well both on my own and as part of a team, I will always provide excellent customer service and I will always perform to a high standard whilst under pressure. I am a positive, forward-thinking person and I genuinely believe I can come into the team and help push the company forward towards achieving its goals. If you hire me, you will quickly see a positive return on your investment.

Q2. Why do you want to work for us?

TIP – Tell them you are seeking long-term employment with a positive, forward-thinking company and that you want to be part of a team that are all striving to achieve the same goal.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

I have been keen to apply for a job with your company for some time now, and I have kept my eyes open for the right opportunity to be advertised. I want to work for your company because not only do I believe this is a place I can develop and grow as a person, but it is also a place that is clearly driven towards being the best it can be within this sector. The research I carried out before applying points to the fact your company is well run and you clearly support your employees in their work. The people I have spoken to who already work here had nothing but positive things to say about how the business is managed and how everyone is encouraged to be innovative and positive in their approach to their work.

Q3. How would you deal with conflict with a co-worker?

TIP – Don't fall into the trap of saying you would leave the conflict for your manager to resolve. The interviewer wants to hear that you would sort out the problem yourself.

I would take the lead and try and resolve the conflict myself for the sake of the team and the organization. We are all grown adults, and as such, we have a responsibility to get on with each other, to compromise where appropriate, and to do our best to work harmoniously to achieve your combined team goals. I would speak to the person with who the conflict was with, to ascertain the cause of it before suggesting a way forward that we were both comfortable with. I am confident that we could sort out our differences and move forward quickly.

Q4. Why do you want this job?

TIP – They will ask all the other candidates this same question too, so it is imperative we give the interviewer an answer that makes you stand out. Here it is!

SAMPLE ANSWER:

I want this job because the job description is a close match for my own skills, qualities and experience. This means I can come into the position and make an immediate impact. I want this job because it is with your company. You are clearly innovative, forward-thinking and you want to continually grow and develop. We spend a lot of time at work, and I only want to work for a positive employer that supports its staff to help them do a great job. Finally, I want this job because I feel in the long-term, there will be opportunities for me to grow, develop and advance professionally within the company.

Q5. Tell me about a time when you provided excellent customer service.

TIP – This is a behavioral interview question and my advice is to use the S.T.A.R technique to structure your response. The S.T.A.R technique stands for:

- SITUATION Briefly outline the situation you were in.
- TASK Explain the task that needed to be done.
- ACTION Give details about the action you took, and the action others took.
- RESULT Tell the interviewer the results following your actions. (Make sure the results are positive!)

SAMPLE ANSWER:

SITUATION: A customer contacted our company by telephone because they wanted to order a product online. They were extremely nervous about using our online payment system and they were seeking reassurances.

TASK: It was my task to explain the online payment process and to talk them through how to choose a product from our website and then make the secure payment.

ACTION: I asked the customer numerous questions to find out which product they needed. Once they had chosen the product, I explained how the online payment process worked and how their card details were 100% secure. I then spent a considerable amount of time walking them through the payment process.

RESULT: Once they had made the payment they thanked me for my time and I contacted them a couple of days later just to follow up and make sure they had received their product.

Q6. What's your greatest achievement?

TIP – Where possible, give an answer that explains something you achieved with a previous employer. Perhaps you helped a previous employer successfully launch a new product, or even break previous company sales figures for a particular year. If this is your first job, talk about either your educational qualifications, something you did for charity, or how you won a team sporting event.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

My greatest achievement has to be in my previous role when I worked as part of a team that managed to increase company sales by 25% in a year. We achieved this by successfully launching new company products online and by upselling to previous customers. The shift to marketing our products online made a massive difference to our sales figures, and I was very proud to be a part of the team that had so much success in that particular year.

Q7. Tell me about a time when you were under pressure at work. What was the situation, and how did you get through it?

TIP – The best way to answer this difficult behavioral interview question is to give a situation you were in when you had to work to a strict timescale. If you add a time pressure to the answer, it will be appealing to the vast majority of employers and hiring managers.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

SITUATION: It was Friday afternoon and my manager came into the office to ask for a volunteer to put together some company sales figures which they needed urgently for a meeting at 4 pm. I put my hand up and volunteered to do the job for my manager.

TASK: It was my responsibility to put together 3 years worth of historical company sales figures based on product type, serial number and the total sales generated. I literally had three hours to complete the task so I set to work immediately.

ACTION: To make sure I completed the task on time and to the right standard, I created a spreadsheet with three columns and I then worked through each product meticulously, cross-checking as I went.

RESULT: I only stopped for a short break once and by the time 4 pm had come along I had presented the figures to my manager. I enjoy working under pressure and my ability to remain calm and work meticulously is an advantage in situations like this.

Q8. Where do you see yourself in five years?

TIP – When answering this common interview question, put yourself in the shoes of the employer. What do they want to hear from your answer? They want to hear three things:

- 1. That you will still be working for them in five years' time.
- 2. That you will have developed to become a highly-trusted and productive member of their team.
- 3. That you will help other people to get up to speed when they join the company.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

In five years from now, I will hopefully still be working for you, either in this role or perhaps even having gained advancement to a higher level if you need me to. In five years I will have developed into a trusted, loyal, and committed member of the company who can be relied upon to do a great job for you. I feel in five years' time I will have sufficient experience and expertise to help train up newer members of the organization as and when they join.

Q9. What did you like and dislike about your previous job?

TIP – Do not say you disliked your boss or your work colleagues! Be respectful, but don't be afraid to say you disliked a particular aspect of your work, especially if it demonstrates you are a driven and enthusiastic person.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

There were many things I liked, such as the team I was a part of and how we all pulled together to get things done during tasks and projects. I enjoyed the supportive working environment and the fact my manager was prepared to send people on training and development courses to ensure we all had the right skills and qualities needed to do our jobs properly. I also liked the fact my manager wasn't afraid to

say when she thought we could have done something better. This ensured we all progressed both as individuals and as part of a team. The only thing that slightly frustrated me about my last job is I did not feel we were ambitious enough in moving forward as a company. We were successful, but I felt we could have achieved many more things, especially if we had embraced digital technology and the advertising opportunities that come with it.

Q10. Describe a time when you disagreed with your boss.

TIP – Again, use the S.T.A.R technique to give a great answer here. Do not say... "I would never disagree with my boss!" This interview question is assessing your ability to disagree with your manager or supervisor in a constructive and beneficial way.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

SITUATION: I had been resolving a difficult customer complaint and I needed to speak to my manager to get approval to give the customer a full refund and a replacement product.

TASK: My proposal went against company guidelines but after dealing with the customer, I felt this was the best way forward.

ACTION: When I put forward my proposal, my boss said no. He told me to only offer a replacement product and not a refund. I explained to my boss how I felt this was the wrong thing to do. I explained that I had spoken to the customer at length and because they had been a loyal, high spending customer of ours over many years, we were in danger of losing their custom moving forward if we did not agree to their demands. There was also the potential of them leaving a negative review online which could cost the company in lost sales revenue moving forward.

RESULT: By remaining calm and by explaining my thought process with clarity and purpose, I was able to persuade my manager to agree to my proposal.

Q11. What's your least favorite task?

TIP – Be careful not to say something that is part of the job description. Here are two good answers to use depending on the job you are applying for.

SAMPLE ANSWER #1 (NON-ADMIN ROLES):

I would say my least favorite task is doing repetitive admin tasks. However, I do see these as an important part of my job and I will always do them diligently and professionally.

SAMPLE ANSWER #2 (ADMIN ROLES):

My least favorite job is professional development training as it takes me away from my day-to-day admin duties. However, I see it as an important part of my work and I will always undertake any training and development with diligence and professionalism.

Q12. Tell me about a time you took the initiative to solve a difficult problem.

TIP – Taking the initiative is one of *the* most important qualities needed at work. It means you are not afraid to take the lead when something needs resolving and you can come up with solutions to difficult problems.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

SITUATION: A supplier contacted our company one day to explain a product they had been supplying us with was no longer available. This was a major problem because we already had several orders from customers who were waiting on this product.

TASK: I saw it as my responsibility to use my initiative to find an alternative supplier who could supply the product moving forward.

ACTION: I started by researching online alternative suppliers. I looked into their business history, their reviews, and also their online company accounts to make sure they were reliable and trustworthy. I then drew up a shortlist of three companies and I contacted all of them to obtain quotes to supply us with the product.

RESULT: After speaking to all three companies, I chose the one that could provide the best value for money and that could also quickly supply us with the product so the customers who had already ordered the product were not left waiting.

Q13. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

TIP – Give four or five strengths that are a good match for the job you are applying for (refer to the job description if there is one), and then give just one weakness that is not a requirement of the role. It is important to say you are always seeking to improve on your weakness at the end of your answer.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

My strengths include my ability to learn things very quickly and to work alone, unsupervised to a high standard. My strong communication skills and how I am a people-person are other strengths. I enjoy providing great service to customers and I will always positively represent your company brand. I am

someone who adapts well to change and I view it as an important aspect of both my own personal progression and company growth. My weakness is the fact I am not yet confident at speaking in front of large groups of people or giving presentations. However, this is certainly one area I want to improve in, and I have been reading a great book that has been helping me to start building confidence in this area. I am the type of person who is always open to constructive feedback, so if you want me to develop in a particular area, just let me know I will take the steps needed to develop.

Q14. Tell me about a time when you did something at work that had a positive impact on your team or the organization.

TIP – Doing something positive at work could include saving the business money, providing great customer service that goes above and beyond, increasing sales, making a suggestion that improves systems or processes, or undertaking a training course that improves working efficiency.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

One Friday afternoon, I had completed my work for the day so I decided to do a task that I had wanted to do for some time. The company had used the same office resources supplier for many years, and I felt we were spending way too much money with them. We had never negotiated a better deal and I felt there were considerable savings to be had. I assessed how much we spent each month before drawing up a list of all the products we ordered regularly from our supplier. I then contacted several new office suppliers by telephone to get quotes, and two of them came back with very competitive prices that could potentially save the company \$300 each month. Over the year, this would be a saving of \$3,600. I presented my findings to my manager who then used this information to go back to our current supplier to negotiate a better deal.

Q15. Why should we hire you?

TIP – When you answer this common but difficult interview question, it is important to use the following three phrases:

#1. Add value.

#2. Commercially-aware.

#3. Fast-learner.

Here's a great answer to help you.

You should hire me because having studied the job description and the requirements of the role, I can come into the position and ADD VALUE quickly. I am a FAST-LEARNER, which means you won't have to spend your valuable time and effort training me up and supervising me for weeks on end. You should hire me because I am COMMERCIALLY AWARE. This means I understand that for your business to be successful, I must come into the role, do everything to a high standard and always represent your business positively and loyally.

Q16. Talk about a time when you had to work closely with someone whose personality was very different from yours.

TIP – This question is assessing your ability to willingly and cooperatively work with anyone within a team. It takes all types of personality to make a strong team, so give a specific example (using the S.T.A.R technique) where you worked with someone who had a very different personality to yours.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

SITUATION: In my previous role, a new member of our team joined the organization and I volunteered to help them settle into the role and to teach them how to carry out their duties to the correct standard. She was very nervous and shy, and when I spoke to her, it was clear that English was not her first language. TASK: It was my responsibility to welcome her to the team, to help make her feel valued, and to

ascertain her level of skill so I could put a plan of action in place to train her.

ACTION: Because of her shy personality, I wanted to encourage her to have more confidence in her abilities. It was clear she was going to be good at her job, but I just needed to help her get over the initial anxiety of joining a new team that she was unfamiliar with. By introducing her to all team members, and by being patient with her whilst going through company procedures and training, her confidence levels started to improve dramatically.

RESULT: Within two weeks of joining, she was a fully trained up and confident member of the team who everyone valued.

Q17. Describe a time when the team you were a part of was undergoing some change. How did the change impact you, and how did you adapt?

TIP – Change is a very important part of all successful organizations. For a business or company to stay at the forefront of its industry, change must be embraced by everyone within the team. Give a specific answer that demonstrates you always embrace change positively and you adapt to it quickly.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

In my previous job, a new manager came into the team and she wanted to make big changes to the way we operated. This was a big thing for the team because the previous manager had not changed anything for many years. I was quite excited about the change because I felt there were some things we could improve on. The change impacted me because I had to learn new skills and duties. Some members of the team were negative about the change but I encouraged them to view it more positively and to see it as an opportunity for personal growth. I adapted by being supportive of the change, by viewing it positivey and by doing all I could to learn the new duties quickly and diligently. Change is a good thing and if you embrace it, positive things can happen.

Q18. What motivates you?

TIP – Give a mixture of personal and professional motivators and do not say you are motivated by the weekends!

SAMPLE ANSWER:

I am motivated by several things. I am currently saving up for a deposit to buy my first house so I am motivated by that. I know the only way I will achieve that goal is if I work hard, I do a good job for my employer and I achieve long-term stable employment. I am also motivated at work by continuous improvement. We spend a lot of time at work, and I want to feel my time spent there is being put to good use. If I am working in a positive environment alongside other like-minded people who are all trying to do a good job, improve and develop, then I feel highly motivated and happy.

Q19. Tell me about a time when you had to collaborate with a coworker who was difficult to work with.

TIP – This is a difficult interview question to answer correctly. It is assessing your ability to put differences aside and focus on the task in hand. It also assesses your ability to build positive relationships with your co-workers. Here's a great answer to help you.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

SITUATION: I was working on a challenging project with four other people. One of the team members was very difficult to deal with. He was over-confident, opinionated, and quite abrupt in his style of communication.

TASK: For the sake of the project, it was important that we all got on together, so I focused on trying to build a good relationship with him.

ACTION: During team meetings, I encouraged him to use his strengths to the team's advantage. He was very good technically and he was very enthusiastic, so I suggested he should get more involved in the practical side of the project delivery. He agreed to this and his enthusiasm for getting the project delivered on time rubbed off on the rest of the team.

RESULT: By focusing on his strengths as opposed to his weaknesses, I was able to develop a strong working relationship with him throughout the duration of the project.

Q20. Describe a time when you had to be flexible in a work situation.

TIP – The most effective way to answer this question to gain the highest scores possible is to give a situation where you volunteered to help your employer when asked to.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

SITUATION: It was 9 am on a Monday morning and my supervisor came into the work area to ask for a volunteer to go and work in another department within the company to help as someone from their team had called in sick.

TASK: Despite not knowing anything about their area of expertise, I quickly put my hand up because I saw this as an opportunity to learn something new.

ACTION: When I arrived at the new department the supervisor briefed me on my duties for the day. I was required to deal with customers on the telephone and respond to their queries using a pre-determined systematic approach that was written down on laminated cards. I spent the first ten minutes familiarising myself with the task and the cards before setting to work answering calls.

RESULT: During the day I was with the department, I managed to successfully handle over 70 calls and it was a great experience for me to find out how a different side of the company operated.

Q21. Describe a time you had to give a person difficult feedback?

TIP – The situation you give to this interview question can either be work-related or from your personal life. Demonstrate your ability to give feedback using tact and diplomacy. Here's a great answer to guide you.

SITUATION: Whilst working in a previous role, I noticed a work colleague was making numerous foolish mistakes with their work. They appeared unfazed by their mistakes and I was concerned they would start to have a negative impact on the team if left unchecked.

TASK: As their co-worker, I felt I had a responsibility to say something. I needed to use tact and diplomacy to encourage them to improve.

ACTION: I spoke to my work colleague in private and I asked them if they were OK, to which they said they were. I then mentioned the mistakes they were making and I asked them why they felt they were making so many. Initially, they were quite defensive, but I persevered diplomatically. I said that I was concerned that if they continued to make the mistakes it would not only affect the team but they could end up in trouble with our manager. I encouraged them to change, and I offered to help them if they were struggling with their work.

RESULT: By having the confidence to have the conversation with my work colleague made a huge difference to their work. From that day onwards, they never made the same mistake again and I am glad that I intervened.

Q22. Describe yourself in three words.

TIP – When answering this interview question don't be afraid to sell yourself and remember to explain *why* you chose the 3 words.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

I would describe myself as loyal, self-motivated, and commercially-aware. Being a loyal employee means you can trust me to do a good job and to always be a good role model for your company. Being self-motivated means you will never have to pick me up for not doing my job properly either on time or to the necessary standard. Being commercially-aware means that I respect the fact that the only way your business will thrive is if people like me do a good job for your company, and I also seek to improve and develop year on year.

Q23. How do you respond to stress and pressure?

TIP – Stress and pressure are part of everyday working life. Show you are not fazed by stress or pressure and that you cope with it by remaining calm and focused on your job, and by being organized in your work.

I see stress as part of everyday working life and I feel I am at my best when the pressure is on. If we are working to a tight deadline then I enjoy the challenge of getting my tasks completed on time so the team can meet its objectives. I cope with stress and pressure by keeping fit, by remaining calm at work, and by ensuring I plan and organize my work well in advance.

Q24. Describe a time when you got frustrated or angry at work.

TIP – The most effective way to answer this interview question is to talk about how you got passionate about a situation that impacted the organization you were working for. Do not say, *I never get frustrated or angry*, because we all do from time to time!

SAMPLE ANSWER:

I very rarely get frustrated or angry at work as I genuinely have a calm head. However, one situation comes to mind where a supplier let us down at the last minute and this frustrated me because it meant some of our customers would not receive their goods on time. I shared my frustrations with the supplier on the telephone and they were left well aware that their actions would have a negative impact on our customers, which was not acceptable. Once I had calmed down, I set about trying to find a new supplier so our customers would not be left waiting too long for their goods. I would like to think my frustration in this situation was simply down to my passion for our customers and for ensuring they get what they've paid for.

Q25. How would you deal with a customer complaint?

TIP – There is a very simple process for dealing with customer complaints that only takes a few seconds to learn. Make sure you learn it before you attend your job interview.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

I would deal with any customer complaint by following the rules and procedures laid down by my employer. I would start by listening to the customer and asking them relevant and timely questions to establish the reasons for their complaint. Once the customer had time to speak and vent their frustrations, I would apologize unreservedly, I would show empathy and understanding, and I would then set about resolving their complaint quickly to their satisfaction. Once the complaint had been resolved, I would seek ways to prevent it from happening again and I would contact the customer in a day or two's time to check they were still satisfied with my resolution.

Q26. When have you gone above and beyond for a customer?

TIP – This is your opportunity to show the interviewer what great customer service is! Again, use the S.T.A.R technique to structure a brilliant answer that shows you have the knowledge and the experience to do a great job for them!

SAMPLE ANSWER:

SITUATION: A customer contacted our company on a Thursday afternoon to request that a product be sent out urgent delivery as it was their grandson's birthday the following day.

TASK: Although they had missed our next-day delivery deadline, I wanted to see if I could help them as I knew how important it was for their grandson to get his present in time for his birthday.

ACTION: I told the customer that I would call them back within the hour once I'd had the time to call around a few courier companies to see if they could deliver for her on time. I then spent the next twenty minutes trying to find a courier service that would pick up the product and deliver it for them. Luckily, I managed to find one! I then called the customer back to deliver the good news and they agreed to pay the additional delivery service charge for the guaranteed next-day delivery.

RESULT: The following day I called the customer just to make sure their grandson had received his present on time, which he had done.

Q27. Why are there gaps in your employment?

TIP – Whilst it is important to be honest about any gaps in your employment, I believe the best way to answer this question is to show you used your time away from work in a positive way. Here are a couple of strong answers to help you.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

I wanted to spend time traveling before I settled down for long-term employment. During my travels, I gained invaluable life skills and I learned so much about different cultures and how, when integrated with other cultures, great things can happen. My traveling is now complete and I am ready to settle into a positive working routine.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

I took time away from work to raise my family and I am so glad that I did. I am now very excited about getting back into the workplace and my family has certainly benefited from the time I spent away from work. The time is now right for me to come back to work and I am eager to get started. During my time at

home raising my family, I kept my knowledge of this industry up-to-date and I also studied several online training courses via the website Udemy.com.

Q28. Why did you leave your last job? Why do you want to leave your current job?

TIP – Do not be negative of your previous employer or your work colleagues. If you leave your job on good terms, the interviewer will view this positively!

SAMPLE ANSWER:

I feel I have developed as far as I can in my job, and I am now ready for a new challenge with an exciting employer who has ambitious plans for the future. I have loved every minute of my time at work with my employer and my boss has been very supportive, but I am now ready to leave and move on, and the only company I want to work for is yours.

Q29. How did you find out about this job?

TIP – Demonstrate that you have been keeping an eye out for vacancies to come up with their company. This is much better than applying on the spot because the job looks appealing.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

I have been interested in your company for some time now and periodically I have looked out for the right vacancy to be advertised. Although I am very excited about the job, I am more excited about the prospect of working for your company because of your track record and because of your plans for the future.

Q30. What are your salary expectations?

TIP – Before you attend your job interview, look to see what the average salary range is for the position you are applying for. This can be achieved on GlassDoor.com or PayScale.com. Then, ask for a salary that is slightly below the top average range and justify why you are asking for that amount.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

Prior to attending the interview I conducted some research and I believe the average salary for this position is between \$35,000 and \$43,000. I believe I am worth the higher salary amount due to my track record and my experience. However, I appreciate you do not know me and I have a responsibility to prove to you my worth. Therefore, I would be happy with a salary of \$40,000 and I believe you would be getting great value for money by hiring me at that amount.

BONUS INTERVIEW QUESTION & ANSWER:

That's the end of your interview, do you have any questions for us?

- TIP Make sure you ask three smart questions at the end of your interview. Here they are:
- Q. What would you need me to concentrate on in the first 30 days of starting in the role?
- Q. What advice would you give to the successful candidate who wants to make a positive impression in the role?
- Q. What has frustrated you about previous employees who have held this position in the past?

How to Use These Interview Questions and Answers:

These interview questions and answers are intended to guide you in your preparation for your job interview. These questions have been picked by the PassMyInterview team because we believe that they are the best representative of what you will face in your interview.

The sample answers in this resource are collated from years of experience and research in the recruitment sector. The answers confidently display the appropriate qualities and competencies that the interviewer expects from successful candidates.

Read the sample answers carefully, and take note of what skills and competencies they demonstrate. You might notice that, when the question asks for examples, the answer uses the STAR method to construct the response:

Situation. Start off your response to the interview question by explaining what the 'situation' was and who was involved.

Task. Once you have detailed the situation, explain what the 'task' was, or what needed to be done.

Action. Now explain what 'action' you took, and what action others took. Also explain why you took this particular course of action.

Result. Explain to the panel what you would do differently if the same situation arose again. It is good to be reflective at the end of your responses. This demonstrates a level of maturity and it will also show the panel that you are willing to learn from every experience.

In order to get the best possible results, apply this system to your own examples and experiences in working life. These sample answers are intended to inspire you to create your own responses to the questions.

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