

TOP 25

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INTERVIEW

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BIG DATA &
ANALYTICS

simplilearn



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

1. Please talk about your previous experience with Big Data

What does this question try to uncover?

This is a common question asked when you are being interviewed for any position. It is meant to give the interviewers an idea of what your experience is in the field. Big data and analytics has a wide range of applications, and finding the right candidate to fill the position can be a very difficult process. Each candidate's background will be unique, and this question helps the interviewers decide what questions should be asked next.

What you should say -

Provide a relatively thorough overview of your main duties in previous positions. Using your resume can provide you with an outline, and you can fill in a few details. The answer does not require a dissertation, but you do need to offer enough information for the interviewers to have a good idea of what you have done.

What you should not say -

There really isn't a wrong answer, but candidates should definitely avoid going launching into a lengthy discussion about only one or two areas. It is also important to keep from being negative when talking about the experience. Always look for a positive spin, even when discussing issues and problems. Avoid giving a short answer that is too generic to be of help in understanding what you have done.

What should you highlight in your answer?

Keeping in mind the answer will likely affect what questions are asked next, candidates should offer information that they want to expound upon in detail in response to those questions. This is the time to highlight those areas of experience you think are more relevant. For recent graduates, talking about the various projects you have worked on is an excellent substitute for experience.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

2. Can you describe the steps you undertake for analytics projects?

What does this question try to uncover?

Some companies are more process driven, requiring their analysts to follow an established set of steps to analyze data. Interviewers for these companies are looking for candidates who are more regimented in their approach to analysis. Other companies, primarily startups and tech companies, have a more fluid approach. These interviewers are usually looking for people who can work on projects from different angles.

What you should say -

Candidates who have a preferred method of analysis will be able to launch into the answer without needing help or much prompting. Keep in mind that it does not need to be overly detailed - just provide a high level look at the steps you feel are required. If you tend to follow a method that is less rigid, discuss the steps you think are important, and why.

What you should not say -

Candidates should avoid short, noncommittal responses. The only time you should sound like you are reciting from a textbook is if you are a recent graduate who has not had time to formulate the essential steps beyond what is required in theory.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The answer to this question should always outline what steps are needed to be successful in an analytics project. You also need to highlight why those steps are necessary because the why says a lot about how you get results and are likely to handle their projects. Also make sure to highlight an example or two in which you successfully applied the process to illustrate how you execute the steps to achieve results.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

3. Can you define what is required in data exploration?

What does this question try to uncover?

This question has several different purposes, depending on what kind of data you will be working with. For example, if the position is in marketing, the interviewers will be expecting you to go through both internal data and available data about competitors, including Social Media data mining. If the position is working with security, the question is looking for an entirely different application of data exploration.

What you should say -

While there is a general method to data exploration, different industries place stock on different aspects and sources. The way to answer this question is to keep in mind what the company does and to tailor your response according to the industry and the particular department you will be working in. Ensure you discuss basic aspects essential to all data exploration, regardless of industry.

What you should not say -

Avoid a roundabout answer, even if you aren't sure where you should focus your answer. Part of your job will be in effectively communicating your findings, so you will need to demonstrate an ability to cover information in a way that is easy to understand. Also, by avoiding a straight answer, it will seem as though you don't know what is required for this extremely important aspect of managing and analyzing big data.

What should you highlight in your answer?

With a number of different ways to answer the question, make sure that your answer lays out all the basic steps in the process, and then apply it to the specific element you are likely to need. If you have an example or two to demonstrate you have learned to effectively conduct a data exploration, make sure to refer to them during your explanation.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

4. What is the purpose of Data preparation, and how is this achieved?

What does this question try to uncover?

The interviewers are interested in how you prioritize data preparation and then determine what model should be used. Companies that are looking for candidates with a more structured approach are looking at whether you have a process that you perform. Companies that are more interested in a method that changes based on the project will still want to see that you have a process, although they will be interested in learning what kinds of contingencies you use for the early stages of working with the data and how adaptable your approach to data preparation is.

What you should say -

The primary goal of data preparation is to prepare the data for modeling, so you need to cover the way you organize data to meet this goal. You can also introduce which of the models you consider because the model you will ultimately use will determine the way you prepare the data. Make sure to discuss elements that are consistent no matter what model is ultimately chosen, such as identifying gaps, outlier values, and transforming variables.

What you should not say -

The answer should not focus solely on this single task, as it is a preparation for working with the data. Addressing the immediate requirements is important, but it should not be the only thing you discuss. Also avoid saying that it depends on the situation, because that is what data preparation is for; to determine what the situation is.

What should you highlight in your answer?

Your answer should highlight how your method prepares the data for the rest of the process. Point out how each step affects what model you will use and how you resolve issues found in this stage before you move to modeling the data.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

5. How do you deal with missing values?

What does this question try to uncover?

This is one of the fundamental problems that all employees who deal with data have to address. The sooner the gaps, duplications, and issues are found, the sooner they can be rectified before they affect results. Interviewers want to ensure that it is something you address before you begin working with what is presented. They always want to know what methods you use to resolve the issue.

What you should say -

There is a set process for identifying and resolving missing values, so even if you are a recent graduate, you should do alright answering this question. Offer a brief answer that covers how you must start with assessing what values are missing, how incomplete the data set is, then determining if there is a pattern to the missing data. Once you have an idea of why values are missing, talk about how you determine whether you can proceed without the values or if you have to find a way to discover what is causing the problem. If there is a root cause that is causing data to be missing, discuss how you resolve the issue.

What you should not say -

The process is one that is long and cumbersome, but the interviewers probably already know that. They are not looking for a rote-memory recital of everything that is needed for missing values, so avoid launching into a lengthy, monotonous 10-minute speech about it. Nor is it something you should leave for others to resolve.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The question seeks to determine what methods candidates use to resolve this common problem. Sometimes it is a sign that there is a bigger issue, so you need to discuss how you manage missing values when it could be something more serious. There are also occasions when missing data just shows that there is nothing to review. Make sure to highlight how you distinguish the difference.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

6. What are outlier values and how do you handle them?

What does this question try to uncover?

This is a technical question that the interviewers ask when they want to make sure that the candidates understand the concept of outlier values and how each candidate handles these common data problems. Every company takes its own approach, but you do have to determine what caused these values before you can determine how to handle them.

What you should say -

Since this is a technical question, you should provide an answer that offers more technical information than you would for a question that just asks about your experience. If the interviewers are asking a question like this, they probably know about the different methods and are seeking to determine what your preferred methods for analyzing and understanding outliers are.

What you should not say -

The question is not looking for a dissertation, but a concise discussion of values that skew the data by being far out of range. The correct answer should never start with ignoring these values. If you mention that there are instances when outliers should be ignored, make sure to go into detail about when and why they would not be required. If you do not, it suggests a lack of understanding of their relevance to the other information presented.

What should you highlight in your answer?

There are a number of answers to this question, but your answer should focus on your preferred way to handle outliers based on your experience. Do make sure to recognize the others and, time permitting, offer examples of when you would need to use them. If there are a few outliers, it may be alright to ignore the values. If there are a large number of outlier values, you may need to substitute the first percentile. Keep in mind that not all outliers are extreme deviations and that not all extreme deviations in data are outliers.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

7. Explain the way you assess logistic regression analysis results.

What does this question try to uncover?

This is another highly technical question that is looking for the candidate's preferred way of treating the data and results. Based on the candidate's experience, this answer is going to vary. It is likely that the interviewers are looking for a method that matches the one most frequently used by the company.

What you should say -

The three main methods are concordance, lift, and classification matrix. You should provide a brief overview of these concepts and when they are the most useful based on the available data. Then discuss which method you tend to rely on the most often.

What you should not say -

The interviewers asking this question are knowledgeable and are interested in both, what the candidate knows, and what kind of experience has lead the candidate to prefer one method over another. It is not a question that calls for a simple recital of definitions as answer. Nor should you only mention one method. Every method is superior to the others under a certain set of circumstances.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The answer to this question should highlight your experience and when you have used each of the methods. If you are a recent graduate, you can talk about when you used the different methods in class to illustrate their proper use.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

8. What does VaR measure?

What does this question try to uncover?

This is a highly technical question about value at risk that is applicable in certain situations. If you are asked this question during an interview, then the interviewers are expecting that you not only understand the concept, but that you have experience in applying it. VaR is specific to financial, investment, and risk analysis.

What you should say -

Start by defining the acronym if they provide it. If they use the full term, mention that it is commonly called VaR in your answer. Describe the situations that require this particular type of measurement, and illustrate it with a couple of examples.

What you should not say -

This question is going to be particular to certain positions. If it comes up in an interview and you are not comfortable answering the question, you should be honest. The interviewers will know if you are not familiar with the concept and that you do not have experience if you give a wrong answer.

What should you highlight in your answer?

Your experience with VaR is the best way to highlight what VaR measures. You should tailor your response to the position for which you are applying. For example, if you are interviewing for a financial company, focus on how VaR is used to analyze portfolios.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

9. Explain the importance of discount rate.

What does this question try to uncover?

Another technical question that has specific applications, this query is looking for similar experiences from the candidates. You are more likely to be asked this question if you are a recent graduate and do not have as much experience with the concept outside of the academic environment.

What you should say -

As with other technical questions, your answer should define the concept first. Once you have explained what discount rate is, talk about when it would be used and why it is more important in some circumstances than in others. Of course, it does not apply to a number of different fields, so make sure to talk about when it is a key to properly analyzing data.

What you should not say -

This is a relatively basic concept, so you should not spend a lot of time defining it. The answer should focus on its importance, which will vary based on experience. For recent graduates, it will be a little more difficult to provide experience to back your ideas up, but that does not mean you try to supplement experience with a long, drawn out answer.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The question is pretty straightforward, so your answer should be brief, and to the point. Essentially, everything you discuss should be pertinent to the question, but you can illustrate how you have found discount rate to be important based on experience. Just make sure you don't turn it into a much longer answer than it needs to be.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

10. Explain a project that you have worked on as if you were talking to someone who did not know the field.

What does this question try to uncover?

One of the most important skills to cultivate when working in big data and analytics is finding a way to turn large amounts of data into something that anyone can understand. You are like the translator between data and the people who need the bottom line. The interviewers want to know exactly how you perform this task using your experience.

What you should say -

Make sure to think about a situation before you go in for the interview. The best experiences to draw from will be occasions when you have successfully described and communicated the information in the past. Unless you are a recent graduate, this is something you may have done in the past. Think of a time when you were able to explain the project to people in a meeting or over the phone.

What you should not say -

This question is about how well you communicate. Your answer should not be full of ums, ahs, or other fillers. These are distracting and detract from the information you are trying to get across to the audience. Nor should your answer be overly long or rely on knowledge that only someone in your position will have.

What should you highlight in your answer?

Talk about how you understand the data, followed by the way you approach it for a novice or person inexperienced in the field. The example you use can be from a meeting, a training session, or even someone you talked in your personal life who asked what you do for a living. There isn't anything that you should highlight so much as being very cognizant of your word choices and the kinds of concepts you want to get across during the interview.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

11. What is your ideal work environment?

What does this question try to uncover?

Data analysis and dealing with big data is something that people approach from a number of different angles and approaches, including the kind of environment in which a person works best. There isn't really a wrong way to answer this question, but you will need to be cautious in eliminating a particular type of environment, unless you are already aware that the company does not operate under that type of environment.

What you should say -

Be honest. Your ideal environment does not have to be the one that the company can offer. This question usually works to make people feel comfortable during the interview, and to see if there is a type of environment that could be more productive for a person. This is not likely to change the environment you would work in within the company, but they will be analyzing your answer to see if your preferred environment is workable within their established parameters.

What you should not say -

Aside from helping ascertain a person's preferred approach, the question is really directed at figuring out whether you don't work well in certain situations. When people get comfortable, they are more likely to discuss negative aspects. Unless you don't mind not getting the job, you should avoid talking about what doesn't work for you.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The question is somewhat personal, so talk about the things in your ideal environment that help you improve your productivity. If you work best without distractions, talk about how you eliminate the regular problems inherent to a cubicle-environment. For any weakness you bring up, make sure to address how you can fix it. For the things you do prefer, talk about substitutes to these preferences.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

12. What is the biggest data set you've processed and how did you do it?

What does this question try to uncover?

This question is really geared more toward those who have experience in the field, not just an academic background, unless you have a master's or doctorate's degree. If interviewers are posing this question, you can safely assume that you are going to be dealing with vast amounts of data on a regular basis.

What you should say -

For candidates who have a considerable amount of experience, this can be a really difficult question. If your experience has numerous instances, select one where you had the greatest success with dealing with the data. If your experience is limited, focus on the project that clearly dealt with the most data, and in the event that you felt you could have done better, explain what you learned from the project.

What you should not say -

This question is looking for a specific situation and how each candidate handled it. Making a flippant remark that indicates that all projects have large amounts of data won't help even if you say it with a smile and very, very quickly get to a real example. The interviewers may or may not be as familiar with the subject because this is a somewhat vague question, particularly compared to the kinds of technical questions you are likely to face.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The best answer gives the interviewers an idea of the width and breadth of the data. You probably will not be able to go into detail about the project, but if you can give them a rough idea of how much data was involved, they will have a better idea of the size of the project. However, the focus should really be on your methods of processing big data more than the size of the project. The data size is really more the stage, and your method is the main focus.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

13. How do you determine when a paid account is being accessed by multiple users?

What does this question try to uncover?

Companies like Netflix and Hulu that have paid accounts like to ensure that their customers are not giving out login information so that other members of their family or a friend can also use the account without paying for it. The question is meant to ensure you know how to monitor for this behavior to prevent unauthorized users from getting free access.

What you should say -

Make sure you pay attention to the wording of the question. The focus is on how to determine when multiple users are accessing a single account versus a single user accessing an account from multiple devices. Your answer should focus on the method you would use to distinguish when the first scenario is occurring.

What you should not say -

The intent of this question is not to gauge your value-system or to examine your opinion on the matter. If this question comes up in an interview, do not talk about how you don't view it as a problem. Nor do you need to talk about how it is wrong for someone to do this, or even the situations where it is the case. It is actually meant to focus on the technical aspect of determining when an account is being abused.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The best way to answer the question is to highlight how your method first distinguishes between an authorized user or users accessing the account and when an account is likely being accessed by unauthorized users. This is actually something that many people do, and it is a problem that some companies would like to reduce by more vigilant monitoring of the problem.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

14. Do you prefer good data or good models? Why?

What does this question try to uncover?

This is a somewhat awkward question, and it may not be something you would have considered in a while, depending on the industry of your most recent experience. Usually, the more experience a person has, the more seamless these two would be, but it is a fair question and you should take your time to think about the difference before you answer.

What you should say -

Your answer should cover four aspects: a brief definition of the two, which you prefer, why you prefer it, and what the virtues of the other are. Some companies will lay more emphasis on good data and will expect their employees to find the right model for the situation. Others, usually those that are more process driven, like to have established models that are used, and analysts should be able to determine when the data is good. Your answer needs to cover not only what you prefer, but when the other works better.

What you should not say -

There are benefits to both good data and good models. Candidates for a position should avoid dismissing one or the other as if it were not important. You should also be honest. If you know a company prefers its employees to focus on one or the other and answer to appease them, you could have a problem later.

What should you highlight in your answer?

This question is about your preference, so the focus should really be on why you prefer one over the other. It should also be obvious from your answer when it is better to have the one you do not prefer over the one you do prefer.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

15. Explain how you would transform and convert unstructured data into structured data.

What does this question try to uncover?

Depending on what a company does, it may not be necessary to perform this conversion. However, if this question is asked during an interview, it is probably something you are going to need to do. The interviewers are looking at whether you not only know how, but to make sure you know when it is necessary.

What you should say -

Give a brief explanation of each type and why you would need to translate it. Then talk about how you execute the transformation. If you have examples of real-world situations where you have done this, use them to show that you have real-world experience working with translations of big data. If you are a recent graduate, you can use a project where you had to do this toward the end of your time at school.

What you should not say -

Do not focus too much on defining the two; it should be brief because the interviewers probably already know what they are. For recent graduates, you should avoid talking about a project for school where the main purpose was to translate unstructured data because those projects are in tightly restricted situations that do not mirror what you will work with in your career.

What should you highlight in your answer?

Your answer should highlight your experience and understanding of when it is not necessary to make this translation. This helps to set the framework for the steps as it explains what the end results should be.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

16. What method would you use to optimize delivery of a large email marketing campaign?

What does this question try to uncover?

This is a very specific question that usually applies to marketing and a few other more specific fields or industries where they would want to reach large audiences without spamming them. Usually, based on the job description, you will know if you will be able to answer this question. The interviewers are looking for an answer that is effective, even if it does not necessarily align with their current method.

What you should say -

This question is another technical one, but in this case it is a lot more specific. This is about the application of several different aspects of big data that you should be familiar with, so your answer needs to cover those areas. You need to explain the steps and why each step is necessary. If some steps are contingent, make sure to discuss why and when those steps would not be required.

What you should not say -

This is not a question you can guess your way to the right answer to. If it is a question that is likely to come up, you need to take the time to research it instead of misrepresenting the right way to do it.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The answer should be technically sound, and you need to highlight actual scenarios of how optimization works, why it is necessary, and how you do it. While it is alright to provide an answer that sounds as though it comes from a textbook, it is better if you can talk about optimizing large marketing campaigns from actual experience.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

17. Define star schema and how it relates to lookup tables.

What does this question try to uncover?

This is another technical question that is really looking for a specific, highly technical answer. It pertains to data-warehouses and is something that most people working with big data are likely to encounter over the course of their career. The interviewers are mostly making sure you understand the concepts, and it is a question that is much more likely to be asked of new graduates than people with extensive experience.

What you should say -

You really don't need a lengthy answer to this question. A simple definition of each and a discussion of when you would work with them is usually adequate. For experienced professionals, it is best to discuss how you have used them in your different positions.

What you should not say -

If you are asked this question and you don't remember the definitions, don't guess. It is far better to admit that you don't remember than to demonstrate that you don't. Although, to be honest, if you don't know the answer, you are not likely to get the position, regardless of whether you own up to not knowing or not.

What should you highlight in your answer?

As a relatively simple technical question, the interviewers are really checking your level of knowledge, more than anything else. There isn't anything in particular to highlight, unless you can talk about examples from previous positions.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

18. Have you optimized code or algorithms to make them faster?

What does this question try to uncover?

This is a question that some candidates dread, not necessarily because it is complex, but because there is definitely a right answer and a lot of wrong answers depending on what a company's focus is. The interviewers want to know that you take the initiative to improve processes to make them more innovative and efficient. For those that prefer a safer approach, they are really looking to find out if you ensure that a specific process is followed before you just start making changes without authorization or coordination.

What you should say -

It is not always easy to tell what kind of answer is desirable. There may be some financial companies that want you find to ways to improve the process. The best way to answer this question safely is to be honest. If you have not optimized code or algorithms before, it may not necessarily work against you.

What you should not say -

A quick answer that indicates an extreme position puts up red flags. It is possible to answer this as a yes or no question, but the interviewers definitely want details, not just a short answer. You should also avoid sounding like process does not matter. Whatever changes you make will need to be communicated to others through more than just a casual mention.

What should you highlight in your answer?

Highlighting the way you ensure that the change is an actual improvement and the metrics that you use to determine that it is a success are really the best ways to answer the question. Communication is also key, so make sure to talk about how you relay information to others once you have determined that a change should be implemented for future use.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

19. Do you prefer smaller decision trees or a single large one?

What does this question try to uncover?

Working with big data can be extremely difficult because it is a lot to process, and everyone adopts a preferred method of breaking it down. This question is meant to determine if candidates are more interested in the big picture or in dealing with manageable chunks of information.

What you should say -

There is really no wrong answer to this particular question because it is about your personal preference. The way to answer it is to acknowledge what works for both, but to describe why you prefer one over the other.

What you should not say -

This question is a relatively easy one to answer, but that does not mean you should devote a lot of time to answering it. Usually a minute or two is adequate to properly cover what your preference is and why.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The focus for this question should be on why you prefer a big-picture approach to a smaller, detail-oriented one. You should make sure to mention occasions when the other method works better because you will need to use both ways of making decisions over the course of your career. Talking about both techniques and what works and why for each of them shows that even though you have a preference, you know that sometimes opting for the other method may be necessary.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

20. How would you demonstrate that your changes to an algorithm are an improvement?

What does this question try to uncover?

Working with vast amounts of data always presents ways to improve the process, whether with faster algorithms or ones that are more reliable. You are accustomed to dealing with metrics, but this question looks to gauge if you know how to apply those metrics to your own work. Interviewers also want to see that you look for ways to improve the process.

What you should say -

The answer will depend on your experience. If you are a recent graduate, you will not have much experience with changing algorithms, but you may have developed some for a project. On the positive side, you probably did have to track metrics, so that part of the question will be easier for you to answer. If your experience is largely based on working for companies, you probably have the opportunity to change algorithms but may not have been required to track how they were an improvement. Your answer should demonstrate that you look for ways to improve the process and noticeable effects from changes you made.

What you should not say -

The only wrong answer to this is to say that you haven't looked for ways to improve algorithms. If you have not had a chance to improve them, provide details on why you were not able to adjust them. Some companies may not mind that you don't look for ways to improve algorithms, but if this question comes up in an interview, the interviewers are interested in whether you are proactive in process improvement.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The best way to answer this question is to show that you are engaged in process improvement and that you look for ways to make the process both faster and more reliable. Your answer should highlight the areas that you look at to see when an algorithm can be changed and an experience where you actually used your process to streamline the work. If you have metrics to provide, that is the best way to demonstrate your algorithm experience.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

21. Define root cause analysis and the difference between causes and correlation.

What does this question try to uncover?

As far as technical questions go, this may be the most critical one asked during the interview because it deals with problems and how to analyze them. Many big data positions have this at their core, so it is a question that looks to see how a candidate works with problems. Even in marketing, this is a required skill to possess.

What you should say -

As a technical question, the answer should be largely textbook driven, but it should have examples of your own personal experience to illustrate the points you are making. The interviewers are really looking at how you have worked with root cause analysis to get an idea of how you will handle it if you are hired.

What you should not say -

Avoid giving an answer that only focuses on definitions. Keep in mind that the question is not a test question, but one for a job. If you give a textbook answer without talking about how you have dealt with it, it sends the message that you have not actually dealt with root cause analysis, which is likely to be a deal-breaker for most employers.

What should you highlight in your answer?

Your answer should highlight your personal experience and how you have successfully used root cause analysis to help resolve an issue. While you will not be expected to do more than analyze the problem, if you have enough information to make recommendations, that is something potential employers want to hear.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

22. Is it better to have too many false negatives or too many false positives? Why?

What does this question try to uncover?

This is an interesting question that really looks to see how each candidate views another common problem with big data. The type of industry may determine which of the two is better to encounter on the job. The interviewers are interested more in the nature of your experience to find out which of the two you usually deal with in your current position.

What you should say -

The answer to this question really focuses on your experience with both problems and which you have found easier to manage. When you talk about which you prefer, make sure to describe the other one and discuss why it is worse to have the one you don't think is better.

What you should not say -

The question focuses on a choice. Saying that it not good to have either is not something you need to state. The interviewers asking this problem understand the technical concepts and do not need an answer that sounds a bit condescending.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The right answer will likely vary based on what company you are talking to and the industry. For example, marketing and health insurance companies are going to have very different takes on which is better. Your answer should talk about which you think is better, but should cover the problems with both, indicating why you find one easier to work with than the other.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

23. What criteria are you using to find a new job?

What does this question try to uncover?

This question is a variation of asking why you are job hunting, but it is looking for a little more information. Some candidates will be looking for a new position because they are bored with their current position, others are unemployed, and some want to leave their current company. Instead of asking you why you are looking, the main thing interviewers are looking to find out is what you want from your next job.

What you should say -

The best answer is an honest one within certain limitations. It will not do you any good to provide an answer that you think the interviewers want to hear. Money is a common criterion, but is rarely the only criterion a person uses to determine what company they want to work for. Detail the aspects of your ideal position that you would like to have, but make sure to point out the areas that are nice to have but are not requirements.

What you should not say -

The interviewers are already aware that things like salary are part of the criteria, so it is unnecessary to mention it as part of your criteria for the position. Salary and benefits are part of negotiating the position once an offer is made, not part of the interview process. Also, make sure you do not focus too much on the negative aspects of your current job to answer this question.

What should you highlight in your answer?

Qualified applicants in this field are highly sought after by companies. This means that you can highlight things you would like to have that are centered around the job, such as geography. Highlight where you would like to see your career go and how this fits into your criteria for a new position. If there are other criteria that interest you, such as flexible work hours, you should mention those as well.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

24. How do you handle pressure from outside sources?

What does this question try to uncover?

This is a somewhat politically loaded question. Some places want analysts to minimize potential issues, while others may want to see a certain result instead of looking at the complete picture the data presents. The interviewers are looking to see how you deal with pressure to work the data to meet a certain expectation or request.

What you should say -

This will be a difficult question to answer, but at least up front, most interviewers are going to want to hear that you put the integrity of the data above requests. If part of your criteria for the position is to work for a company that puts data integrity first, you can emphasize that again here. You can always ask for clarification on what kind of pressure you are likely to get so that you can answer the question to the interviewers' satisfaction.

What you should not say -

Interviewers do not want to hear that a candidate is likely to cave to outside pressure without finding out more information. Depending on the industry, if you sound like you can be easily swayed to manipulate data to meet a false impression, you could actually be a liability.

What should you highlight in your answer?

The answer should focus on how when you have had to deal with outside pressure in the way you analyze the data. There are some instances where you would actually need to seek outside information, such as marketing campaigns, so this is not necessarily a question that is checking on your integrity. For areas like marketing, you will want to focus on how you handle tight deadlines dictated by outside sources. Your answer should highlight the kind of pressure you are likely to face in the position.



INTERVIEW QUESTION:

25. What are the primary types of clients you have worked with?

What does this question try to uncover?

This is not a question that applies to every analytical position, but you will likely know before going into an interview if you will be working with clients. Sometimes it will be more in the capacity of a datacenter, other times it will be for marketing, or you could interact with clients who are within the company. The client does not have to be a company customer, so if you are accustomed to working within a company, that is what the interviewers want to know.

What you should say -

With several different definitions of client, consider who the people are that you primarily help have been in your current and previous jobs. If you have worked with executives within the company, discuss how you have worked with them. If your experience tends toward actual business clients, talk about how you have worked with them. Usually, analysts will work with multiple types of clients, so you can give examples of the different types of people you have worked with outside of your group.

What you should not say -

This is meant as a serious question and it deserves a serious answer. Avoid saying things that indicate anyone is a potential client. This not only doesn't answer the question, but also conveys the impression that you prefer to not deal with clients.

What should you highlight in your answer?

If you are a recent graduate, it is best to say that you have not had to deal with clients for this particular type of position and find out if they want you to discuss client interaction at part-time jobs you have held. For established professionals, try to highlight all of the different types of clients you have helped over the years. Most analysts have a wide client base, both inside the company and outside of it.

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