



Skills 360 – Interview Tips 3: Career Goals

Discussion Questions

1. What are your reasons for leaving different jobs in the past, and how would you talk about those reasons in an interview?
2. Do you have a good idea where you want to be in five years?
3. Where could you find good information about a company where you're going to have an interview?

Vocabulary

Fit: something that is suitable for a situation; "Experience and training are not enough; we need to hire someone with the right personality who's a good fit for our culture."

To squirm: to show discomfort or awkwardness by twisting and turning; "As the meeting dragged on, I could see people start to squirm and look at their phones."

To fish for something: to try to get information without asking directly; "Bonnie was just asking me simple questions about how I'm doing, but I felt she was fishing for something more."

To relocate: to move to a different place, especially to live or work; "With virtual work tools, many companies are realizing they can save money by relocating to cheaper areas."

Work-life balance: the healthy relationship between how much time is spent at work and on personal matters, such as family; "After working 12-hour days for so long, I decided that I needed better work-life balance."

Laid off: having your employment ended, especially temporarily, because there is not enough work to do or not enough money; "Hundreds of workers were laid off from the plant when the car manufacturer decided to decrease production."

Candid: honest and direct; "Let's be candid about this problem everyone: why aren't you all getting along, and what help do you need to move on?"

Future-focused: thinking about and planning for the future; "I don't care what the company used to be like Ted, we need to be future-focused if we want to survive this crisis."

To badmouth: to say bad things about someone; "Renata, I hear that you've been badmouthing me in the staff room. Care to tell me what's wrong?"

To segue: to change or transition smoothly or naturally from one topic to the next; "So, with that question about finances, let's segue into a discussion of this year's budget."

Key: the most important thing for achieving something; "If you want to be happy at work, the real key is finding something you enjoy doing, not a high salary."

To jibe with: be a good fit with or agree; "I like the idea Dave, but it doesn't really jibe with any of the strategic priorities we've decided on."

Contribution: work that helps a project or organization achieve a goal; "We're holding a party for Sal's retirement, to thank him for his amazing contributions to the company over the past 25 years."

Aspirations: things you want or hope to achieve in the future; "One of my biggest aspirations is to start my own company someday."

To take on: to accept a responsibility or task; "I'm sorry Jean, I'd like to help but I'm just far too busy to take on any additional work right now."

To sink into: to put or invest time or money into something; "We've sunk a million dollars into this new drug already, and we really want it to go to market soon."

To pay off: to bring some benefit, for an effort or investment; "Our real estate investments in Detroit didn't really pay off, but those in Seattle have been great!"

To run off with: to take something without permission; "My former business partner ran off with all the IP and most of the money, leaving me with not much to show for our efforts."

To do your homework: to prepare well or study something so you can deal with it well; "Before going into that negotiation, do your homework and find out what the other side really needs to get out of it."

Scared off: unwilling to be involved with something or someone because of possible difficulty or danger; "I was eager to be a lawyer when I was younger, but I got scared off by the long hours and competition."

Disgruntled: unhappy or dissatisfied; "Workers haven't seen a pay raise in three years and are starting to feel pretty disgruntled."

Vocal: tending to express opinions often and strongly; "Jeremy, I know you like to be vocal during staff meetings, but for once could you just listen to others?"

To generate: to create or produce; "I'm glad to see our overseas marketing efforts are starting to generate some really good sales figures."

To turn the tables: to reverse positions, especially by moving from a position of disadvantage to advantage; "Our competition was beating us pretty badly until we turned the tables with our popular T50 mobile phone."

Troubling: causing worry or concern; "One defect in a thousand is not so bad, but thirteen? I find that very troubling."

To get to the heart of something: to find or determine the most important idea or issue; "Okay, enough small talk people. Let's get to the heart of this problem so we can finish this project on time."

After all: used for giving a reason for something you've just said; "Sue and I work really great together. After all, we've been on the same team for twelve years."

Desperate: needing or wanting something a lot; "With such a big decrease in sales, we're desperate to find ways to cut costs."

Two-way street: a situation or relationship where both sides must give and take; "Come on Frank, I need your help for once. A business partnership is a two-way street, you know."

Transcript

Hello and welcome back to the Skills 360 podcast. I'm your host, Tim Simmons, and today I want to finish up our series on English interview skills.

In previous lessons, we've gone over some of the fundamental questions about who you are and what you've done. Today I want to take a closer look at talking about your career goals and researching prospective employers. Interviewers don't just want to know whether you've got the skills, personality, and qualifications. They also want to know that you're a good *fit*, and that they are a good fit for *you*.

One important question you need to be ready for in an interview in English is "why are you leaving your current position?" This question makes a lot of people *squirm*. But it's actually an opportunity to talk about growth and change. Nobody stays at the same job their entire life. And this question isn't necessarily *fishing for* problems in your past.

What kinds of things can you talk about as reasons for change? You might mention several desires, such as the desire to learn, to take on more responsibility, to enhance certain skills, to *relocate*, to adjust your *work-life balance*. All these are great reasons to change. Of course, if you were *laid off*, you need to be *candid* about that. I'm not suggesting you lie. Just that you keep your answer *future-focused*. And that means *not badmouthing* your current boss, colleagues, or workplace.

Talking about why you're leaving your current job will *segue* naturally to answering questions about why you want *this* job. And the *key* here is showing knowledge, suitability, and value. By knowledge, I mean you know something about the company, its products, its reputation, its culture, and its values. By suitability, I mean that you *jibe with* the company and the job fits with your career goals. And by value, I mean that your skills and experience will help you make a real *contribution*.

Speaking of career goals, another common but tough question during a job interview is "where do you see yourself in five years?" With most interview questions, I advise people to be specific. But not this one. It's okay to state very generally what your *aspirations* are. For example, you might say "I'd really like to be involved with the strategic side of things" or "I'd like to be *taking on* more management responsibilities."

Whatever your answer, it should be possible to achieve *within the company where you're applying*. They're going to *sink* time, money, and resources *into* you. They want to know it will *pay off* for *them*, not just you. So, perhaps the worst thing you can say is "I want to run my own business." The interviewer will immediately think you're going to *run off with* all their ideas!

One thing you'll notice is that most of my suggestions require you to actually know something about the company where you're applying. All successful interviewees have *done their homework* in this regard. You can start with the company website, of course, but also check Google for recent news stories and press releases. Use LinkedIn to find out more about the company's leaders and employees. And look through other social

media channels to get a more complete understanding. The Glassdoor website can also give you an inside look at company culture – but don't get **scared off** by a few negative reviews. **Disgruntled** people are often the most **vocal**.

Researching the company will also help **generate** some good questions that *you* can ask. It's fairly standard at or near the end of a job interview for the interviewer to **turn the tables** with a question like "Do you have any questions for me?" The worst thing you can do is to say something like "no, all good thanks." That shows a **troubling** lack of interest.

So, what *should* you ask about? Here's a few good ones. "How will you measure the success of the person you hire?" "What are some of the challenges the person in this position will face?" "Can you describe a typical day or week in the job?" "How would you describe the culture here?" And probably one of the best questions, because it **gets to the heart** of what they're looking for, is "In the past, what has differentiated the people who were *good* at this job and those who were *great*?"

That final question will impress the interviewer and give you a good idea if you really want the position or not. **After all**, unless you're really **desperate**, an interview is a **two-way street**. You're *both* assessing whether you and the job are a good match.

And as I've explained, you'll have to do that by talking about why you are leaving your current position, why you want *this* job, and where you see yourself in the future. And through it all, a solid understanding of the company is just as important as an understanding of English for job interviews.

That's all for today. If you'd like to test yourself on what we've just covered, have a look at the BusinessEnglishPod.com website. There you'll find a quiz about today's show as well as a PDF transcript.

So long, stay safe. And happy learning!

Review

1. The question "why are you leaving your current job" is...
 - A ... impossible to answer in a way that satisfies interviewers.
 - B ... usually trying to uncover problems in your past.
 - C ... an invitation to discuss dissatisfaction with your situation.
 - D ... an opportunity to discuss growth.
2. Which of the following are good reasons for change that you could mention in an interview? Select all that apply:
 - A Desire to adjust work-life balance.
 - B Need to relocate.
 - C Fear of being laid off.
 - D Problems with colleagues or boss.
 - E Desire to take on more responsibility.
3. The key to answering why you want the job you're applying for is showing...
 - A ... reputation, fit, and ambition.
 - B ... knowledge, suitability, and value.
 - C ... intelligence, competitiveness, and memory.
 - D ... toughness, a learning attitude, and hope.
4. When an interviewer asks "where do you see yourself in five years," your answer should be:
 - A Very specific.
 - B Possible within the company where you're applying.
 - C Focused on ideas for your own business.
 - D Quite general.
5. When you're researching a company before an interview, why shouldn't you worry about a few negative company reviews online?
 - A Unhappy people usually express their opinions more than others.
 - B Online information is not trustworthy.
 - C They are often put there by the company's competitors.
 - D In a difficult job market, you need to take what you can get.
6. What is NOT a good idea to say when an interviewer asks you whether you have any questions?
 - A What are some of the challenges of the position?
 - B No, I think we've covered everything.
 - C How would you describe the culture?
 - D What is a typical day on the job like for this position?

Review Answers

1. The question "why are you leaving your current job" is...
D ... an opportunity to discuss growth.
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