**Common Interview Questions and Answers**

* **Tell Me About Yourself.**

This question gives you an opportunity to tell the interviewer your major “selling points.” The challenge is determining how much or how little the interviewer wants you to reveal. Start with an overall explanation of your previous experiences and then go into detail of what you think is most pertinent to the position. If the interviewer interrupts with probing questions, it indicates exactly what they need you to discuss. Once you’ve finished answering their additional questions, remember to pick back up where you left off.

**Sample Response:**

I worked in retail operations and spent a great deal of time with my employee’s human resource issues. I thought HR might be an exciting career move. A position became available and I gave it a try. It was so refreshing to learn so many new things. My operations background helped the department better serve the company and it was that much easier to apply what I was learning. Implementation and communicating new programs went much smoother after I joined the team. (The interview would continue with you mentioning various projects that would directly relate to the job)

**Write your answer:**

* **What Are Your Greatest Strengths?**

Now’s not the time to be shy. This is where you really get to “sell yourself.” It’s a good idea to pick a strength that is best suited for the job you’re applying for.

**Sample Response:**

I can organize anything and love doing it. When I first started at my last job, you couldn’t see the desk under all of the clutter. Many file folders, labels and binders later; I found the desk and had a game plan for a system that would work for the office.

**Write your answer:**

* **What Are Your Greatest Weaknesses?**

This is such a dreaded question. Nobody is perfect; everyone has something they need to improve. Your answer demonstrates to your future boss how you would respond to criticism or an error on the job. It’s best to answer honestly and describe how you’re working or have worked to improve or overcome a weakness.

**Sample Response:**

I have to admit that I don’t have much experience with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. At my previous employer, the company was changing so rapidly that I got rather used to learning new skills and adapting to new environments. As a result, I’m not afraid to speak up when I need a little clarification and won’t make dangerous assumptions. It’s helped me to work better as a team.

**Write your answer:**

* **Why Should We Hire You?**

A company hires an individual mainly for their skills and abilities, but personality also is important. Summarize your skills and experiences that most directly complement what the interviewer needs to fill the position. Describe how the company would benefit from having you as an employee.

**Sample Response:**

I strive for high customer service and usually exceed expectations. (Highlight your previous experience and skills.) I think my skills and enthusiasm would make a great contribution to this company.

**Write your answer:**

* **What Makes You Qualified for this Job?**

This question requires some knowledge about what the company is looking for in an employee. Don’t waste time explaining some of the great skills you possess if they don’t relate to the job. Don’t say you’re a dedicated employee or a hard worker; give examples that demonstrate your skills.

**Sample Response:**

After hiring on with ABC Company we were audited by the Department of Labor. I was the point person for retrieving all necessary documents and implementing all necessary changes. Afterward, I rolled out training for the company on how to make the process go much smoother and reduce the risk of violations.

**Write your answer:**

* **Can You Tell Me About Your Skills?**

Although the question isn’t specific to the job, your answer should be. Mention other skills to appear well rounded or versatile. Don’t just state you have a skill — prove it.

**Sample Response:**

My math and computer skills have allowed me to automate the merit and incentive programs at my previous employers.

**Write your answer:**

* **Where Do You See Yourself In \_\_ Years?**

This question helps the interviewer understand the kind of career you’re pursuing, as well as your goals. The interviewer can assess whether their goals for the position and are a good match with yours.

**Sample Response:**

In X years I hope to have earned my CCP designation and advance from an analyst to a senior analyst who is working to become a supervisor or manager.

**Write your answer:**

* **Why Did You Leave (Or Why Are You Leaving) Your Job?**

Describe what you want in a job that perhaps your current or previous employer couldn’t offer. Reinforce your career goals or skills that would be better suited for another environment. This is not the time to appear as a disgruntled employee.

**Sample Response:**

I’ve learned a great deal from my current employer but, unfortunately, the next progression for my job is too large of a jump for an internal promotion.

**Write your answer:**

* **What Do You Look for in a Job?**

Give the interviewer an idea of how you work best. What sort of projects do you thrive at, what management style do you like, what sort of pace do you like to work at, how structured do you need things to be, etc.

**Sample Response:**

At my previous employer, HR was a strategic partner in the company. This helped facilitate communication down through the organization and create opportunities for HR to make the greatest impact. I work well juggling multiple projects and working for several client groups. As a manager I like to be able to reward my staff for accomplishments and hard work. In addition, I like to offer professional and career development to help move an employee throughout their career. I like to keep current on recent developments and trends in the profession while continuing to improve the HR function.

**Write your answer:**

* **What Questions Do You Have for Me?**

You may think you know everything, but in this case you want to seem curious. Appear interested in the job and equally eager to be a good match. Ask about the details of the job, culture of the company and/or department, if the position is replacing someone or is it newly created and why, what are the next steps in the interviewing process, where do they see the company/department/position in five years, etc.

**Other Questions to Answer**

Answer each of the following questions in order to think through various scenarios to talk about during interviews. For phone screens, make sure to look at this document and your resume.

* **What is your greatest strength?**
* **What is your greatest weakness?**
* **Why do you want to work for us?**
* **What is your understanding of this role?**
* **What did you enjoy about your past jobs?**
* **How do you build trust with a technical team?**
* **Give us an example of a time you managed a difficult client – how did you maintain a positive working relationship?**
* **Have you ever had to give and/or receive negative feedback to a member of your team – what did the conversation look like?**
* **Had a project that failed – what happened and what would you have done differently?**
* **Give us an example of one of your failures, how you fixed it, and what you learned from it.**
* **Who are our customers?**
* **Who are our competitors?**
* **Where have you gone above and beyond?**
* **How does this role fit into the career aspirations?**
* **What do you do to ensure deadlines are met?**
* **Give me a time where you have improved a process?**
* **Give me an example of a time you worked on a team to accomplish something.**
* **Can you briefly describe your career goals?**
* **Can you give me an example of a time that you had a problem and how you went about solving and analyzing the problem and what the resolution was?**
* **What do you do for fun?**
* **What would be your ideal job?**
* **Why did you choose to go to your university?**
* **What is your largest accomplishment?**
* **Describe a time where you showed initiative in project or field.**
* **What technical skills do you have to offer?**
* **Why should I hire you?**
* **What kind of time management skills do you use when you are assigned more work?**
* **What do you want to get out of working for us?**
* **What do you do for fun?**
* **Give us an example of one of your failures, how you fixed it, and what you learned from it.**