

Don't muck it up! How to ace common interview questions

There are standard interview questions you'll come across when interviewing for any job, regardless of the industry or level of seniority. You may find yourself being asked them every time you go for a role, but there's a reason for that – they're tried and true formulas for hiring managers and recruiters to find out who you are and what your motivation for applying for the role is. Acing them is as simple as taking a moment to reflect on the basics, such as how you like to work and what your passions are. And who doesn't want to think about that?

To help you out, the team at Six Degrees Executive have shared four common job interview questions you're likely to face, and tips on how to answer them with such pizzazz that you'll be signing a contract in no time.

- **Where do you see yourself in five years?** This question can inspire anxiety in even the most organised interviewee – it can be hard to articulate your hopes and dreams. The trick is to show your enthusiasm for growing, says senior recruitment consultant Lyndsey Walker. “The client wants to find out whether you see this role as a stepping stone or if you have an ambition to climb the ladder at the company,” says Walker. “So highlight your ambition with a suggested development plan. For example, saying ‘I want to be manager in five years shows you're really driven. Mention your desire to learn as much as possible.”
- **What are your interests outside of work?** Recruiters aren't being nosey when they ask what you like to do on your downtime. Walker says, “Culture fit is far more important than it was years ago, so recruiters may use this question to determine whether you are the right cultural fit for the company. Getting an understanding of your interests outside of work is an effective way to understand this.” Think about this before the interview, so that you're not left scrambling for an answer when you're put on the spot, Walker says. “Always have answers prepared for a question about hobbies and make sure they're appropriate! They could be following a favourite footy team, playing an instrument or volunteering.”
- **Why did you leave your last job?** Depending on the circumstances surrounding your departure from your last role, this question can be tricky. The way to ace it is to not dwell on the past, says recruitment consultant Bronwyn Collins. “When answering this question, focus on your reason for taking the next role, rather than spending a lot of time on what lacked in your last role. Discuss what interests you have in the role you're interviewing for

that might have been lacking professionally in your last role.” Collins says it’s also wise to not speak too negatively about your last role, and avoid talking about “cultural fit issues”.

- **How would you describe your ability to build effective relationships?** No man is an island – even NASA astronaut Scott Kelly had to work with other people during his year in space. So naturally recruiters will ask about your ability to work with different people. Manager Dale Young says they may even ask you to discuss a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. “In this case, examples are best. Answer with a situation, how you managed the situation and what the outcome was, to give the interviewer a good understanding of how you work with others to achieve outcomes.”

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