



## COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviews can be stressful. You know you want the job, but fear that you might talk yourself out of the job because of some harmless thing you might have said. This issue discusses the seven most commonly-asked interview questions as well as how you can put your best foot forward:

Q1. What's the weather like out there? Did you have any trouble getting here? This type of question is often asked when you first arrive. Either of these questions may be used as icebreakers. So, there is no harm in speaking freely about the weather outside. However, if asked about any difficulties finding the interview venue, speak briefly. You don't want to delve into any difficulties in finding the venue, the awful traffic, or the poor connections between different modes of public transport.

Q2. What do you know about us? This question is used to find out how much you already know about the company itself. The more informed you are, the better. It is also useful to include discussion of the industry or sector in which the company operates. The interviewer does not, however, expect you to know everything about the company. More often than not, the interviewer will add to what you already know.

Q3. What do you know about the position? This question is used to find out how much you already know about the position you are applying for. You will be well-served to understand the role, along with its most important features. It will be helpful if you understand how the role fits into the department and/or company as a whole. Much of this information is provided in the job description. You may be able to gather more information about the position by speaking to the current job incumbent prior to the interview. The more you understand of the role, and the more you can convey to the prospective employer, the better. Once again, the prospective employer does not expect you to know everything and will add to what you already know.

Q4. Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses. This interviewer may ask this question about your three greatest strengths and weaknesses. If you are lucky, you will only be asked to share up to three strengths (and no weaknesses). Both sides of this question can be best answered by engaging in prior reflection. In the case of your strengths, you could consider your contributions from high school to present day. Be sure to consider personal, professional and community contributions you may have made. For each of your contributions, think about the underlying strengths and capabilities that have enabled you to make those contributions. By focusing on your contributions and working backwards to identify the underlying strengths, you have naturally identified some concrete examples of your strengths. You may identify further strengths by considering the knowledge, skills and abilities you possess and that are valued or envied by others (including family, friends, work colleagues, subordinates and supervisors). You may also identify further strengths by considering how you communicate (orally and in writing) as well as how you engage in leadership, committee and community work. Make sure you come away with three concrete examples that best demonstrate your respective strengths. In the case of your weaknesses, reflect on what you know to be weaknesses, as well as what family, friends and colleagues have found annoying about you. You don't have to talk about anything that you are uncomfortable sharing. Interviewers are interested in your degree of self-insight as well as the degree to which you are prepared to work on yourself. So, just pick three weaknesses that you are willing to discuss at the interview. You would be well-served to include a discussion of how you are currently working to address the weakness(es) you raise.

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Q5. What makes you uniquely qualified for the role? This question may also be asked in the form of "what do you bring to the table" or "why should we hire you". In whatever shape or form this question is asked, it is your opportunity to showcase who you are and what you can do for the company. It is an opportunity for you to show how your knowledge, skills, abilities (KSAs) and past experiences have placed you in a position to do well in this role. Once again, this is a question that you may like to reflect upon beforehand. At a minimum, you want to consider how your KSAs will enable you to perform the role as stated in the position description. However, you can take this one step further by considering the problems the company is likely to face, along with potential opportunities that it may be able to tap into. You can then consider how your KSAs enable you to help the company overcome its problems and tap into those opportunities.

Q6. If scenario X happened, what would you do? Scenario X in this question will depend on the kind of role you are applying for. Feel free to take a moment to ponder the question. Feel free to ask the interviewer to repeat the question if you think you might of missed a key component of the scenario. Once you are ready to answer the question, be mindful that there is no one right or wrong answer. The interviewer is looking for common-sense, reasonable answers. If the scenario involves human interaction, your answer will also need to demonstrate that you would treat those individuals courteously and respectfully.

Q7. Any questions? Most job-seekers usually answer this question in the negative. If, however, you haven't had the opportunity to discuss the company's problems or potential opportunities, this may be an ideal time to do just that. You could introduce your thoughts by asking whether the problem you identified is indeed a problem for the company. Similarly, you could ask whether the opportunity you recognise is indeed something the company would like to tap into. The ensuing dialogue would naturally lead into a discussion of how you could help the company overcome its problems and tap into those opportunities.

With preparation, you can confidently answer any interview question that might arise, knowing that you truly will put your best foot forward.

## CONSULTING HOURS

Rachel is available for consultation on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Her colleagues are available by appointment. We are open every day except 1<sup>st</sup> January, Good Friday and 25<sup>th</sup> December each year.

## LIBRARY HOUR

The **RACHEL ABRAMSON & ASSOCIATES** library is open following our **SEMINARS OF THE FUTURE®** and **pPP®** seminars. It is also open by appointment.

## DIARY DATES FOR 2014

Monday's **pPP®**, Year 1, 6.00-8.00 pm

- 3 Mar: Setting Up Your Business: What You Need to Know.
- 7 Apr: Handling the Paperwork, including the GST.
- 5 May: Processes and Procedures that Work.
- 2 June: Determining Your Price and Fee Setting.
- 7 July: Budgets and Cash Flows.
- 4 Aug: Marketing Your Business: Your Product.
- 1 Sept: Marketing Your Business: Promotion Strategies that Work.
- 6 Oct: Marketing Your Business: Getting Your Image Right.
- 3 Nov: Marketing Your Business: Alternate Places for Your Product.
- 1 Dec: Marketing Your Business: Databases for Your Business.  
And: graduation ceremony.

The **SEMINARS OF THE FUTURE®** will be offered in March, July and October in 2014. You are welcome to mix and match the three days, according to your diary. As always, our **SEMINARS OF THE FUTURE®** will provide you the most up-to-date career food for thought.

- Day 1:  17 Mar or  9 Jul or  10 Oct
- 10.00: Who am I? (In work and life?).
  - 11.15: Who do I want to be? Identifying your true calling, life purpose, values and nourishing interests.
  - 02.00: Identifying potential barriers to career/life success.
  - 03.15: Your unique action plan.

- Day 2:  24 Mar or  16 Jul or  17 Oct
- 10.00: Managing work and life time in turning your plan to action.
  - 11.15: How to best answer questions of age, experience or gaps in your career.
  - 02.00: Yes you can! Finding the right path to a confident, proactive career.
  - 03.15: Building social media profile to support your career.

- Day 3:  31 Mar or  23 Jul or  24 Oct
- 10.00: Selection criteria, cover letters and your CV.
  - 11.15: Interviewing prospective employers.
  - 02.00: Networking and the hidden job market.
  - 03.15: Preparing the way for that next promotion