



PREPARE RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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Most job seekers are intimidated and some even terrified, by job interviews. They see the whole encounter as one big unknown, where they will be peppered with a series of difficult and unanticipated questions, for which they are unprepared. This thought frequently causes otherwise capable and confident people to break out in a cold sweat. If you could only have a list of the questions in advance, then you could prepare and take most of the stress out of the situation. But there are literally thousands of questions that interviewers can and do ask, so preparation is almost impossible, right? Wrong.

Preparation is the single most important thing any interviewee can do to ensure success in a job interview. Keep in mind that all interviewers have a similar set of goals in mind when they set about looking for someone to fill a vacant or newly created position. They are searching for someone who will come in and do the work with the least amount of cost and disruption to the normal flow of business.

Sometimes, they are not very skillful at making these determinations, but this is the objective nonetheless. So, they set about asking any and every question that comes to mind that they think might help in sorting out the best candidate. That's the bad news. The good news is that within all the questions you may be asked, the interviewer only wants to determine the overall response to the following three questions.



“Can You Do the Job?”

“Will You Do the Job?”

“Will You Fit In?”

No matter how a question is phrased, any variation of an interview question will always fit into one of these three. Many interviewers are unaware of this fact and often struggle to come up with questions that will help them know a good candidate from all the others. They may spend an inordinate amount of interview time on one area at the expense of the others.

Once the interview is over, the interviewer will consciously or subconsciously judge each candidate on whether or not they meet these three criteria, whether the right questions were asked or not. In other words, you, as the interviewee, must answer each of these questions with a “yes” whether it is directly asked or not. And you must find a way to offer enough supporting information to convince the interviewer that you are the best candidate for the job. If the answer to any question is perceived, rightly or wrongly, to be “no”, you will be eliminated from any future consideration. Let's look at each question separately.

Can You Do the Job?

These questions that fall under this category encompass the entire arena of technical and experiential qualifications. Before you are offered a job, an employer must be convinced that you know how to do the work. Therefore, they will want to hear about your background, education, previous positions, technical skills, areas of expertise, etc. This is the most common line of questioning in a job interview, and is the area where you are probably most comfortable. As with all three of the question categories, you must completely and thoroughly convince the interviewer that you are capable and competent to perform the requisite duties.

Will You Do the Job?



These kinds of questions begin to probe a little more deeply into subjective categories. In this area, you must show that, not only do you have the capability to do the job, but you also can be counted on to actually put your qualifications to work. The workplace is full of people who have the ability to be good performers, but for some reason, never quite live up to their potential. While they are fully qualified and able to do the job, they turn out to be lazy, undependable, unmotivated, or otherwise unwilling to do what it takes.

Every employer always intends to hire people who have the proper motivation and drive necessary to succeed, but it's often hard to determine that in an interview. It's your job to tell them.

Will You Fit In?

This can be one of the most important factors in predicting success in a new job. Unfortunately, it is also the hardest to determine. In fact, most interviewers are uncomfortable and ill prepared to even explore this critical area. However, just like the other two categories, once the interview is over, they will still attempt to make a decision as to your ability to smoothly integrate into their organization, even if they asked no direct questions about this concern. Rightly or wrongly, they will judge you on personality, style, appearance, image and all the other “touchy, feely” factors that are hard to measure, but extremely important. It is essential to your interview success that you find a way to make your case that you will indeed fit in with their corporate culture and their public image.

If every interview question is a variation of can you do the job, will you do the job and will you fit in, then the only purpose for an interview is help the potential employer gather information to use in selecting one candidate over the others by answering these concerns. And the only way to do that is to determine if a particular candidate can do the job, will do the job, and will fit in. Even though they don't often realize it, interviewers are always asking these three simple, but very important questions.

Action: Download the Common Interview Questions Worksheet: [This worksheet can be downloaded in Word format under Meridian Career Compass.](#) Complete the exercise requested, and be sure to save a copy for your own records.