

## Why are you looking for another job?

When answering this question:

Do not say anything negative about past or present employers.  
Keep your answer brief - don't go into a lot of detail (the briefer the response-the more convincing the answer).  
Do not volunteer any unnecessary information.

## “Have you changed jobs frequently? (Are you a job hopper?)”

Work out in advance a good rationale for your moves. People do change jobs and if your reasons are sound, say so. Don't be defensive or you'll trigger warning bells.

**Some acceptable reasons include:**

reorganization (a new Manager arrives and brings in his team),  
the company was in difficulty and had a massive lay off,  
a major contract or customer was lost resulting in loss of sales,  
the company was sold, you were offered a re-location that would have meant no  
apparent opportunity,

**Reasons to avoid:**

did not get along with employer, other staff or customers,  
did not like the management policies,  
passed over for an increase in salary,  
too much pressure/work/overtime,  
too many arguments,  
health problems,  
Personal problems interfering with work.

## “You've moved around a lot, how long would you stay with us?”

This needs preparation. If you have moved around, something along the lines of 'I'm seeking a long term opportunity, where I can learn and develop. Does this come with the position we are discussing?' should set the interviewer's mind at ease.

## "What sort of job are you looking for?"

Every interviewer hopes that the next candidate to walk through that door will be the answer to his search. So many candidates sabotage their own chances by answering the above question from their own point of view rather than from that of the company's/interviewers. The company is only interested in how you can satisfy its needs and match its job requirements, your needs are secondary importance.

The best way to answer this question is to follow on from the "Tell me about yourself" answer and transfer those abilities into discussing the job in question and the contribution you can make to it.

The word 'contribute' is the magic word to a prospective employer. He/she is looking for what you can bring to the organization. If you have done your research properly and discovered what they do need then it will be hardly surprising when your attributes match their requirements! If you are

at all uncomfortable representing yourself as the perfect match - what are you doing at this interview?

### **“What salary are you looking for?”**

This can be a very dangerous question. At all costs you should try and avoid being the first to mention a number. You could sell yourself short, and miss an opportunity for a higher package or you could price yourself out of the running. Attempt to turn the question round. For instance: 'It's hard to discuss salary without knowing more about the job responsibilities'.

If a salary range has been tabled, relate your experience to the range without being necessarily precise: 'I think my experience would put me near the high end of the range, don't you?' (SAY IT - ASK IT).

### **“What was your salary in your last job?”**

You are under no obligation to reveal information about your past salary, however you will almost certainly be asked.

If you are in front of a recruitment consultant, tell him your salary package range. If you are in an interview, try to put the salary question to one side. A good reply is 'I was well compensated in my previous company but really do not wish to prejudice myself here by being too high or low. Can we delay this until after we've looked at all aspects of your current need? Or 'What is your range for this job?

### **“Have you been fired?”**

Throughout this book we have advised you not to lie. If you have been fired, a lie can look very tempting when faced with this question. However, lying is never a wise course of action; you would be amazed how often people are caught out. The best course of action is to present the truth in the most favorable (but honest) light possible. Have a good explanation worked out and tested with friends.

For instance: 'We had a change in general managers and although I had been doing a great job, as you can see from my achievements, I was replaced by one of his former associates'. Or: 'The company decided to close down its Edinburgh operation and offered me a job in Wales. We would like to stay in the area so that's why I'm looking around'.

### **“Can you work under pressure?”**

Indicate that you can, then counter: 'How much pressure is involved in this position?' Learn what she means by pressure. If you excel at pressure jobs, give her a few examples.

### **“What is your opinion of the last company you worked for?”**

Stay neutral or positive, no negatives. Try to focus on situations in which you learned and/or contributed something. Running down or insulting your previous employer will make you look far worse than them.

### **“What did you think of your supervisors?”**

As above, whatever your true feelings, be positive. 'He was the kind of person I could learn from'. Or: 'We were able to communicate well and things got done quickly'. Never insult or mock former supervisors, it paints a poor picture of you, not them.

### **“What is your greatest strength?”**

Recall your list of strengths and identify one that you feel would be particularly appropriate for the position in question. Tie it to an achievement and ask: 'Is that the kind of quality that would help you? Remember 'Say it – Ask it' at every opportunity!

### **“What is your greatest weakness?”**

Look at your list of weaknesses and relate the weakness (excess) back to your strengths 'I like to get things done quickly.... sometimes I get impatient but I'm learning how to overcome this.' Don't think you can get away with announcing proudly that you have no weaknesses, the interviewer will not be impressed. And don't declare that you're greatest weakness is that you like to work too hard. The interviewer has heard them all before and won't take you seriously.

### **“How much do you know about our company?”**

This should present no problems to the smart candidate who did their research properly. Confidently deliver the key points about the products, sales, profits, (or losses), news or personnel? Don't try and prove you know everything there is to know by rambling on for half an hour. The key elements will suffice.

### **“Are you willing to relocate?”**

Do not pause - have your answer ready, you should already know whether you are prepared to relocate or not. 'Yes, for a super opportunity. What did you have in mind?'

### **“What do you not like to do?”**

A very loaded question. Under no circumstances list tasks and responsibilities that you dislike, you'll rule yourself out of the running at record speed. A positive reply might be; 'I'm the kind of person who does whatever is necessary to get the job done. When I do run into something disagreeable, I try to do it first and get it behind me. I have no particular dislikes'.

### **“Do you know how to motivate people?”**

This is a classic leadership question. Do you know what it takes to be a good leader? In preparation, think of the best people you have worked for and identify their leadership attributes. Recognition and helping the people who depend on you often weigh as heavily in motivation as monetary reward. Recognize that management skills and leadership skills are often different.

### **“What are your short, medium and long term goals?”**

Tie your answer to goals that could conceivably be realized in the interviewing company. For instance, if your long-term goal is to set up your own company, this may not be the best forum to

discuss it. Limit your goals to just the short and medium range. Be realistic. A good reply is orientated toward growth and achievements.

### **“Why should we employ you?”**

You know and understand the job requirements, match them with some of your significant achievements. This demonstrates your ability to do the job. Round your answer off with another Say it – Ask it phrase. For instance: 'If there are opportunities to do that and more here, then this is a great fit. What do you think?

The section above suggested approaches to some of the most commonly asked interview questions. The section was by no means exhaustive, there are thousands of questions you might be asked, however they do tend to focus on the same areas.

You should also consider potential answers to the following questions and you will rarely be caught out. Even though the precise question may not appear, your thorough preparation will ensure you can cope with any “curve balls”. Do not attempt to memorize your answers, there are far too many questions and “learn’t” answers often sound too practiced and are inflexible, just think through how you would answer them and the impression that answer would make. Beware of the ‘easy’ questions - “Tell me about yourself” looks easy, but it is one of the most important answers you’ll ever give.