



Association for  
Talent Development

## Top Ten Tips to Prepare for a Job Interview

By Alan DeBack and Lisa Spinelli

**Know your resume** and develop specific examples to support its content. Be able to speak on a real return on investment (ROI) that you created for your company, or how your skills, actions, and hard work made your company/department/team better.

**Use the job description to identify required skills.** Develop specific narratives about how you have used or developed those skills to the benefit of your previous company and your career.

**Practice a mock interview with a friend or colleague.** If possible, take video to analyze both your strengths and areas for improvement, or practice in front of a mirror. Make sure you practice eye contact, and keep nervous laughter to a minimum.

**Research the organization** with which you will be interviewing, the person interviewing you, and your new potential direct supervisor. Use LinkedIn to see if you have any personal connections like an alma mater, shared colleague, or sport interest. Making an emotional, yet professional, connection during the job interview can significantly improve your chances of landing the job offer.

**Develop a list of questions** to bring with you to ask the interviewers. These questions should contain your must-haves, such as telecommuting flexibility or training and professional development opportunities with the organization.

**Research the job title and pay scale for the position** at this company and in your area. You can find comparable salaries on the ATD Job Bank, under the Research tab. Have a salary range in mind, as opposed to a specific number, and think of it as your market value.

**Make a practice trip to the interview site**—if possible, at the same time of day you will be traveling for the interview. On the day of, allow for double the travel time your GPS indicates. Better to sit in your car and do some last-minute preparations than get to the interview late.

**Print copies of your resume, list of references, and examples of your work**, if applicable. Be sure to print them on resume or stationery paper. Presentation and first impressions go a long way.

**Make sure you prepare the right clothing, shoes, and portfolio case ahead of time.** There is nothing worse than rushing to get ready for an interview in the morning and realizing your only appropriate outfit has a stain in the middle of it. If you are not sure what to wear, default to a suit.

**Try to identify someone you know who already works for the organization.** They'll be able to give you an insider's view of what the culture is like and what you should emphasize during your interview. Depending on their position, they may also be able to advocate for you internally.

Good luck!





Association for  
Talent Development

# 12 Tricky Interview Questions & How to Answer Them\*

By Peter Studner

- 1. What Is Your Greatest Strength?** Answer with the strength you feel best fits the position being discussed, and be sure to offer the anecdote that goes with it. With all of your responses, strive to keep your answers to 60 seconds or less so that your interviewer's attention doesn't wane.
- 2. What Is Your Greatest Weakness?** Tie a weakness back to what could also be considered a strength. For example, "I'm a stickler for details, but I do not want to be a micro-manager. So at my last job, I asked each staff member to devise their own checklist of weekly tasks. It gave them some autonomy and satisfied my desire for quality control."
- 3. Can You Work Under Pressure?** Indicate that you can and ask the interviewer how much pressure is involved in the position. Learn what the interviewer means by pressure. If you are a pro at pressure jobs, describe a few accomplishments.
- 4. What Did You Think of Your Last Manager?** Whatever your true feelings might be, stay positive. This is not the time or place to list your boss's shortcomings or frustrating behaviors.
- 5. What Motivates You?** Resist the temptation to joke, "A steady paycheck!" Tie your motivation to the work being performed at this specific company. In addition, you could mention things like the opportunity to learn and grow, working with smart people who are passionate, and contributing to the success of an organization.
- 6. What Do You Not Like to Do?** This is a loaded question. 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."
- 7. How Would Your Boss, Co-Workers, and Subordinates Describe You?** Be ready to give some examples of the kind of team player you are. Contact your references before the interview stage to talk through your career goals so your references can best support them.
- 8. What Has Been Your Biggest Failure?** Discuss this question with friends, mentors, and possibly your references before the interview. If at all possible, think of something you were later able to correct. Then the story isn't just about a failure, but also about a learning experience.
- 9. How Do You Feel About the Progress You Made in Your Last Position?** Don't discuss your feelings, per se, but do stress your accomplishments.
- 10. Did You Have Any Frustrations in Your Past Job?** Frustrations are a normal part of any job, and interviewers know this—so don't claim you didn't have any. Relate some of the bottlenecks you experienced, but more important, indicate what you did to overcome them.
- 11. Why Do You Want to Work for Our Company?** The most important thing is to avoid generic answers. Know their products, policies, and potential for growth to highlight.
- 12. Why Should We Hire You?** If you know the job requirements and can match them with some accomplishments, briefly share those anecdotes. Then say, "If there are opportunities to do that and more here, then this is a great fit."

\*These tips are edited from an ATD Insights post: <https://www.td.org/insights/12-tricky-interview-questionsand-how-to-answer-them>