



НАРОДНА УКРАЇНСЬКА АКАДЕМІЯ

О. В. Тарасова

**SOME GUIDELINES TO A SUCCESSFUL
INTERVIEW
(with useful tips and sample answers)**

Методичний посібник
для студентів 4–5 курсів факультетів «Бізнес-управління» та
«Соціальний менеджмент» ХГУ «НУА»

Видавництво НУА

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Харків
Видавництво НУА
2019

УДК 341=111(075.8)
Т19

*Затверджено на засіданні кафедри іноземних мов
Народної української академії.
Протокол № 01.09.19.*

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Т19 **Тарасова, Олена Владиславівна.**

Some Guidelines To A Successful Interview (with useful tips and sample answers) : навч. посіб. для студентів 4–5 курсів фак. «Бізнес-управління» та «Соціальний менеджмент» ХГУ «НУА» / О. В. Тарасова ; Нар. укр. акад., [каф. іноземних мов]. – Харків : Вид-во НУА, 2019. – 58 с.

Пропонований посібник – є своєрідним помічником здобувачам, мета якого – допомогти претендентам як найкраще «продати» себе на сучасному міжнародному ринку праці, навчити їх навикам саморепрезентації. підготувати їх до відповідей на найбільш типові запитання, що їх ставлять потенційні роботодавці під час інтерв'ю, а також коректно оформлювати CV та резюме.

Посібник адресований студентам факультетів «Бізнес управління» та «Соціальний менеджмент» ХГУ «НУА» і пропонує практичні поради та рекомендації щодо підготовки та проходження співбесіди із потенційними роботодавцями кандидатам, що претендують на працевлаштування у відповідній компанії чи організації.

УДК 341=111(075.8)

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Данное методическое пособие предназначено для студентов факультетов «Бизнес управление» и «Социальный менеджмент» ХГУ «НУА» и представляет собой практические советы и рекомендации по подготовке и прохождению собеседования с потенциальным работодателем при устройстве на работу.

Актуальность и своевременность пособия вытекает из того, что в сложившейся сегодня экономической ситуации молодые люди, в том числе, студенты вузов, вынуждены рано выходить на рынок труда. В случае студентов это означает, что многие из них начинают трудовую деятельность, не успев закончить полный курс обучения в университете и получить полноценное профессиональное образование. При этом они зачастую не имеют ни малейшего представления о том, как правильно подготовиться и вести себя на интервью, особенно если они претендуют на работу в международных компаниях, где требуется знание английского языка.

Предлагаемое пособие – это своего рода «шпаргалка соискателя». Ее цель – помочь претенденту выгодно «продать себя» на рынке труда, научить основам саморепрезентации, потренироваться в ответах на наиболее типичные вопросы, задаваемые на интервью, и составлении CV и резюме.

Кроме того, предлагаемые методические рекомендации могут быть использованы на практических занятиях по устной практике для более углубленного изучения таких входящих в программы по английскому языку факультетов «Бизнес управление» и «Социальный менеджмент», как «Personal profiles», «In the market place», «HR management», «PR management», «Leadership qualities», «Personnel management», «Prioritizing», «Conflict resolution», «Employee performance management» и др.

При подготовке пособия были использованы материалы следующих интернет-сайтов:

Happy Monday Talks [Электронный ресурс] : [онлайн-журнал]. – 2019. – Режим доступа: <https://talks.happymonday.com.ua>.

Фурдак В. Как готовиться к собеседованию, чтобы получить оффер. И еще одна жизненная история [Электронный ресурс] // Dou : сайт. – 2018. – 20 сент. – Режим доступа: <https://dou.ua/lenta/articles/advice-for-interview>. – Название с экрана.

Как подготовиться к собеседованию [Электронный ресурс] // HeadHunter : [сайт]. – 2015. – 30 марта. – Режим доступа: <https://hh.ru/article/16507>.

Emory Continuing Education [Electronic resource] : site / Emory University. – 2019. – Available at: emory.edu.

Все примеры и образцы ответов на вопросы и резюме почерпнуты на интернет-платформе британских работодателей Indeed.co.uk.

Introduction

Everyone has at least once attended or will attend one interview in his life. Interview is an important step in the course of job finding. If you do well in the interview, you will get the job; otherwise you may not. Some people think that interviewing is easy because they fit the employer's job description. The matter is however that employers look at more than your CV or resume. That is why, when preparing for a job interview, an individual should attempt to present him/herself in a way that highlights his/her most attractive personal traits, as well as professional potential.

For the most part, all of us know how tough it is to go on a job interview. Job interviews can be one of the most stressful and nerve wrecking experiences in an individual's life. But they needn't be, if interviewing is looked at as more of an interactive exchange than a daunting and often anxiety-producing evaluation of ones' abilities relative to the requirements of the position being interviewed for. Some find it easy while others do not. Therefore, the question is how to do well at a job interview, to know about the do's and don'ts. In this, well-informed, good preparation is certainly a must. We hope that in the following sections you will find some ideas and suggestions that will make the job-hunting process easier for you and help you to land a job of your dreams.

Section I
Important Things to Consider Before the Interview
(general guidelines and useful tips)

a. Five Questions to Ask Yourself Before a Job Interview

To set yourself up for success in any interview environment, spend time on self-reflection during your job search and application process. Here are the five questions you should ask of yourself before any job interview:

1. What past accomplishments are you most proud of?

These accomplishments may or may not be from your work. Pick out the ones that are appropriate for the situation and that you'd be comfortable sharing. Consider how those moments have affected who you are as a professional. Is there a time when you made a choice that had a positive outcome for a group of people? What about a new skill you weren't sure you could master, but with practice became better at? Or, maybe a mistake you made and how you recovered and learned from it? If you're in need of a confidence boost at any point during the job search, consider writing down the things you're proud of on a piece of paper. Put it on your refrigerator or near your desk—somewhere visible so you can be quickly reminded of what you bring to the table. The success stories you choose can become the foundation for your answers to generic questions about your skills, values or aspirations. For example:

Interviewer: Tell me about yourself.

Candidate: In a nutshell, I'm someone who's driven by curiosity and enjoys working with others to solve problems. For example, in my last job, I noticed that in large team meetings, the same few individuals would consistently speak up while others stayed silent. I was friendly with most everyone on the team and I knew that many of the folks who were quiet still had great ideas to contribute, and that we were at risk of only pursuing projects proposed by more outgoing people. I suggested to my manager that we give the team a prompt 48 hours before these meetings and invite them to write down their ideas in a shared document. In the meeting, she would then

invite some people to give more details on the idea they had shared. The change in team culture was incredible. We saw a greater diversity of ideas, and we also saw people become closer as everyone found a way to participate.

What three things do you want to get better at this year?

Start with the things that are related to your job, but also consider branching out into other areas of your life. Working on this question will help you be realistic about the jobs you're ready for and practice the language you use to describe your skill level. Here's an example of how that could play out in an interview:

Interviewer: *Can you tell me about a time you delivered excellent service to someone?*

Candidate: *Yes. In a past role, I was responsible for dealing with upset customers. I found that if I could give people time and space to express themselves, we could get to the root of what was troubling them. Once, after speaking with a customer for ten minutes, he revealed he was stressed because his wife had been recently hospitalized. Through interactions like that, I learned that my job was to make interactions as seamless as possible because our customers want to get back to the important things and people in their lives. We were able to resolve his issue, and now because we knew him better, were able to send him and his wife a get well card. In fact, listening attentively to people and understanding them is one thing I'm interested in getting better and better at. It's a skill that doesn't have a ceiling and will always be important to me, in life and career.*

What skills do you have that you've noticed differentiate you from your peers?

There must be something that sets you apart from the people around you. Maybe you've been in a situation where you realized you were better prepared to solve a problem than anyone else, because you were very quick and creative, or perhaps more thorough, logical or methodical.

What would your past or present colleagues say is the best thing about working with you?

Think back on any peer feedback you've received or try to identify why you have good working relationships with those around you. You may want to reach out to former supervisors, colleagues or classmates to get their opinion. If you can't recall any specific peer feedback, think about when peers have come to you seeking help. What were you the go-to person for? And, what would you imagine others would say about you based on those experiences?

Where do you want to be in three years? In five?

There are many interview questions that probe at how you see yourself growing. Interviewers won't be looking for a specific plan or timeline, but rather a general idea of your aspirations. It is advisable to focus on the skills and competencies you want to develop. Here's an example:

Interviewer: *Where do you see yourself in the next few years?*

Candidate: *I know that developing my leadership skills is something that's really important to me. In the last few years, I've learned a lot from great managers, and I'm eager to continue learning about effective decision-making and measuring and reporting on progress towards stated goals. It's not something I necessarily see tied to a title but rather something I want to focus on as a skill.*

I also know I want to grow my expertise in this industry. New innovations are changing the way we work every day. I want to stay on top of that change, taking on new challenges as they arise, whether it's learning new technical skills or new approaches to time management and productivity.

As you spend time answering these questions for yourself, you'll become more confident about the interview process overall. The key is to know specifically where you've come from, what you have to offer, and where you want to go next.

b. What to bring to a job interview?

You've applied to a job and received the callback. Take a moment to congratulate yourself at this stage — it's taken a lot of hard work and persistence to get here. Once

you've mentally prepared and chosen what you're going to wear, the last step is making sure you're bringing the right items. They are:

Copies of your resume. Bring at least five resume copies. Keep them in a separate folder or professional folio so they don't bend or wrinkle and are easy to access.

Pen and paper. Take notes on the questions your interviewers ask or surprising insights they share. You can use these notes to follow up later in a thank you call or email.

Pre-written questions for your interviewers. When you are putting the resume copies and the blank paper in your folder or folio, also add at least two or three pre-written questions for your interviewers to have on hand. It's good to write them down ahead of time in case your mind suddenly goes blank when you get the question, "Do you have any questions?"

A list of references. Your interviewers may not ask you for a list of references, but it's good to be prepared in case they do. References should be people who can speak to your professional abilities and achievements. If you don't have much work experience or can't easily identify people to be your references, consider any groups or volunteer activities you've been a part of. Former teachers or community leaders who can address your commitment and work ethic are strong options as well (do not include family members and avoid listing friends). List out their name, title, department, organization, phone number, and email address. Also, include a short sentence about their relationship to you (For example: *I reported to Monica for two years in my role as a Sales Associate.*). If you have time before your interview, get in touch with the people on your list. A call, email, or coffee date is a great opportunity to ask them what stood out about working with you in the past, what areas they see for improvement, and what advice they'd give to your next manager. Print out five copies and keep them in a folder so they don't bend. If you aren't asked for your references during the interview, you can ask if they are needed at the very end.

A bag, briefcase or portfolio that neatly contains all your items. Once you have the things you need to bring to the interview, you should decide how you'll organize and carry them. The goal is to look unburdened. Choose a handbag, briefcase, messenger bag or portfolio that can hold everything and looks professional. Backpacks are

appropriate for some settings but not for others. Use your best judgment based on the company research you've done and what you know about their culture.

c. Directions on how to get to the interview

After all your careful preparation, don't let a late arrival undermine your chances of getting the job. You should plan to arrive 10–15 minutes early, and you should study your route to the interview beforehand. If you're using public transportation, add extra time to account for delays or unexpected interruptions. If you're driving, be sure you have information about parking — if you're working with a recruiter, you can ask them to provide these details. If after all this preparation you are still running late, call the office or recruiter you are working with and let them know. More often than not they will be understanding, but it is important to be respectful of their time.

Questions and tasks to Section I

1. Make a list of five of your accomplishments you are particularly proud of.
2. Think of three best things your classmates/co-workers/friends can say about you.
3. Think of three worst things your classmates/co-workers/friends can say about you.
4. Recollect a time when you did somebody a great favor.
5. What three things about yourself would you like to change for the better?
6. How many copies of your CV/resume should you bring to the interview?
7. What for would you need pen and paper at the interview?
8. What would you do, if you are being late for the interview?

Section II

Job Interview Guidance and Tips on How to Make a Great Impression

You have your job interview scheduled—congratulations! Now there are a few next important issues to bear in mind.

How to Introduce Yourself in an Interview

First impressions are important. During the interview process, there may be several times when you'll introduce yourself: at the front desk or reception area, to a recruiter, to the hiring manager and so on. There are a few guidelines you can follow on how to introduce yourself in any interview setting.

Before the interview

When you first enter the building where your job interview will take place, you may need to check in with reception. Step forward and introduce yourself with your full name, interview time and job title of the role you're interviewing for. This should be quick and simple, e.g.: *"Hi, my name is Max Taylor. I'm here for a 12 pm job interview for the Program Manager role"*. Once you've checked in, you may be asked to wait while the interviewer - recruiter or HR representative, comes to meet you. It's good etiquette to avoid taking out your phone to pass the time while you wait. When someone arrives to greet you, stand to meet them and follow these steps when introducing yourself:

- Smile and give them a firm handshake (but don't grip their hand too strongly).
- Introduce yourself with your full name in a confident voice.
- When the interviewer introduces him/herself, respond with, "It's nice to meet you..." and then repeat their name out loud—you'll be more likely to remember it if you repeat it back to them when you first hear it.

If you've spoken to this person by phone or email prior to your job interview, you can say something like, *"It's nice to meet you in person."* When you're talking, smile and look them in the eyes and be sure to thank the person who showed you to the interview room before they leave.

During the interview

Typically, you'll be seated in a room to wait until your interviewer comes to meet you. You may want to use this time to get out your pen and paper for notes, take a drink of water and a couple of deep breaths to relax your body. When your interviewer enters the room, greet them confidently by standing up, extending your hand to shake theirs, stating your name and smiling.

Once introductions have been made, you can give them a hard copy of your resume, if they don't already have one. You will likely exchange a few pleasantries and get into the interview questions. If they begin the conversation, let them take the lead. If there's a bit of silence, don't be afraid to take the lead yourself with your own *pitch* that quickly summarizes your professional background and interest in the job. Here's an example that someone applying for a Graphic Design position might use: *"I'm a graphic designer with over five years of experience specializing in creating beautiful, unique website experiences that make users' time with a brand more enjoyable. I'm looking forward to growing my management skills to hopefully develop and inspire a team of my own."*

After the interview

No introduction is complete without a goodbye. After your interview has ended, follow the lead of your interviewer: stand when they stand, shake their hand again and thank them for their time with a smile. You can prepare to say a few phrases that will end the conversation on a positive note, like, *"It was a pleasure meeting you, I appreciate your time today"*; *"Thanks for a great conversation, hope you enjoy the rest of your day"*; *"It was great to hear more about your role here, I hope to be in*

touch in the future”. If you have multiple rounds of interviews, be prepared to stand and greet your next interviewer, repeating the steps above.

Here are a few additional interview introduction tips that can set you up for a successful introduction beforehand.

- *Dress appropriately.* Appearance plays an important role when meeting someone new. Different offices have different dress codes, so you’ll want to do some research on the company culture before you go to your job interview. For example, a financial consultant interview will likely require more formal dress than that of a tech startup. If you’re unsure, reach out to your recruiter or office contact beforehand and ask. This shows that you’re paying attention to the details and care about making the right impression.
- *Be yourself.* What you wear is a part of who you are, so use it to communicate your personality where appropriate.
- *Keep the focus on your personal self.* Try and avoid distracting visuals like extravagant jewelry or busy prints to ensure your interviewers pay attention to your conversation.
- *Be comfortable.* Being professional doesn’t mean you have to be uncomfortable—make sure you’re feeling good in your clothes when you leave the house.
- Being prepared ahead of time can help calm your nerves, so *do some research* on the company or organization you want to work for and, if possible, your interviewers. Presenting yourself as knowledgeable and confident shows your potential employers that you’re the right choice for the opportunity. It’s appropriate *to write down notes* as the conversation progresses to show them you were attentive and value your time with them.
- *Be authentic, concise and upbeat.* Respond truthfully to the questions you’re asked. Tie your answers back to your skills and accomplishments by providing

examples of solutions and results you've achieved. Keep your answers short and focused, making sure that you actually answer the question you've been asked. Your time with each interviewer is limited so be mindful of rambling. Let your interviewer lead the conversation.

- *Don't speak negatively* about current and former employers or colleagues. Companies want to hire problem solvers who overcome tough situations. If you're feeling discouraged about your current job, focus on talking about what you've gained from that experience and what you want to do next.
- *Remember to breathe* and take the conversation one step at a time. If you cannot immediately think of an appropriate answer, say "Let me think of the best example to share," pause as you collect your thoughts and then respond. It is quite appropriate to pause to collect your thoughts and say, "Let me take a moment to think about that" before beginning to answer—in fact, this can send a positive signal to your interviewer, who might appreciate your effort in trying to give them the best possible response.
- *Be aware of body language.* Nonverbal communication is important to keep in mind. When you're meeting people during the interview process, remember the attributes you want your body language to display. For example, if you want to communicate confidence, keep your shoulders back, chin raised and chest high. Keeping eye contact as you introduce yourself is another good practice, showing interviewers you're engaged in the conversation and capable of communicating well with your potential future colleagues. If for some reason you are unsure about yourself during introductions, a good idea would be to recruit a friend or family member for practicing introducing yourself, including your dress, body language, even your handshake. The mirror is a great practice tool, too.
- *Prepare smart questions to ask the interviewer.* Interviews are a two-way street. Employers expect you to ask questions: they want to know that you're

thinking seriously about what it would be like to work there. Here are some questions you may want to consider asking your interviewers:

- *“Can you explain some of the day-to-day responsibilities for this job?”*
- *“How would you describe the characteristics of someone who would succeed in this role?”*
- *“If I were in this position, how would my performance be measured? How often?”*
- *“What departments does this team work with regularly? How do these departments typically collaborate? What does that process look like?”*
- *“What are the challenges you’re currently facing in your role?”*

To sum up Section II:

You’ve probably met a lot of people in your life. Please remember that a job interview involves much of the same etiquette you would use when meeting any new person and want to make a good impression. Your interviewers want to hire a great teammate just as much as you want to be on the team—which means they want you to succeed. So, just practice! Actually practicing your answers out loud is an incredibly effective way to prepare. Say them to yourself or ask a friend to help run through questions and answers. Ask your friend for feedback in your answers. You’ll find you gain confidence as you get used to saying the words, and keep in mind that, when introducing yourself at an interview, confidence, preparing ahead of time and a smile will go a long way.

Questions and tasks to Section II

1. Why are first impressions important?
2. Why may you have to introduce yourself more than once when you come for an interview?

3. What steps should you follow when introducing yourself to the recruiter/HR representative?
4. What can you do before the interview in order to calm your nerves during the interview session?
5. What does it mean “to be authentic, concise and upbeat during the interview?”
6. What does it mean “to dress appropriately” for the interview?
7. Why is non-verbal communication, body language including, important during the interview?
8. What “smart questions” would you prepare to ask the interviewer, and why is it advisable to have them prepared?
9. Make a list of five smart questions if you are applying for the position of:
 - the mètre d'hôtel of a popular restaurant;
 - a model in an international Haut Couture House;
 - an operator at a calling center in your town;
 - a personal assistant (PA)/secretary to a CEO;
 - a bodyguard to a famous politician;
 - an HR/recruiting officer manager in a big company;
 - Chief accountant at the Accounting Department of a private university in your country.

Section III

How to Deal With Typical Interview Questions: Job Interview Guidance and Tips on Giving the Right Answers

Interview Question: "Tell Me About Yourself"

Open-ended questions like “Tell me about yourself” are frequently asked at the beginning of interviews to get the conversation started. Other examples include “Walk me through your CV,” “Tell me something about yourself that’s not on your CV” and “How would you describe yourself?” It’s natural to be thrown by these kinds of questions: they are ambiguous, and it can be hard to identify what the interviewer really wants to know. But on the other hand, this ambiguity is an opportunity for you to choose how to respond.

How to Get Started

Sometimes it can be hard to get started. To keep you on track, here are a few questions to ask as you brainstorm ways to respond and structure your answer:

- *What qualities make you a great fit for this position?* Think of what makes you stand out as a job applicant for this role. Perhaps it’s your years of experience or some highly desired specialization, training or rare technical
- *Why are you interested in the role?* Think about why this position excites you, how it fits into your larger career goals and why you feel it’s the best next step.
- *Why are you interested in the company or the industry?* After you’ve spent time researching the company and the industry, you should be relatively well-informed of their mission, goals and trends. Explain how these align with the professional goals that you’ve set for yourself? What do you like and respect about the company as a whole? What excites you about the future of the industry? As you start building your story, tie together similarities between your own professional goals and the future vision of the company and industry trends you feel are especially important.

- *What is a positive trait or characteristic that I've had for a long time that will serve me well in this role?* For example, have friends or colleagues described you as especially organized? Curious? Entrepreneurial? Generous? Think about how you've long thought of yourself or how others have seen you. Then, think of recent examples from your life when you embodied that characteristic.

While answering the “Tell Me About Yourself” Interview Question, please be aware of the following things.

What Not to Do

In answering the “Tell me about yourself” interview question, there are a few important tips about what to avoid. Here are a few things to remember when you begin building a script for your response:

- *Avoid* mentioning personal information such as marital status, children, political or religious affiliations, etc. These can be highly sensitive topics that might work against you as a candidate, not to mention such details should not be factors for the employer in determining your ability to perform the job.
- *Don't* list multiple, vague strengths without supporting examples. Instead, you may want to choose two or three qualities about yourself. Support each with short, polished stories that can be supported by your work experience.
- *Don't* summarize your CV word for word. Instead, discuss high points that are relevant to the position.
- *Don't* rush into conversations regarding what you're looking for in the role or how the company can benefit you—save such topics for the final stages of the interview process when they are “sold” on you as a candidate and you have more leverage.

How to Structure Your Answer to the “Tell Me About Yourself” Question

How you respond to the “Tell me about yourself” question can set the tone for the rest of the interview. In your response you'll probably want to tell a great story about

yourself. The problem is, however, that, in practice, you have no more than two minutes to share it. So try to concentrate on the following:

- Mention past experiences and proven successes as they specifically relate to the position. Begin by re-reading the job description. Take note of the required skills that you have, and identify recent stories that demonstrate that you have those skills. Ideally, you should draw primarily from recent professional experience; however, volunteer work can also support your narrative while demonstrating a commitment to your community.
- Consider how your current job relates to the job you're applying for. Is it a more senior role? If so, explain how you are taking on more responsibilities in your current position. If you are making a lateral transition to a role with different skills, describe how your current skills translate into the new position.
- Focus on strengths and abilities that you can support with examples. When you start building the script of each example, focus on details and outcomes that you can quantify if possible. For example, stating that you “improved customer service” is less impactful than “increased customer service response rates each quarter by 10–15%.” If you don't have the exact information, estimate a realistic value.
- Highlight a bit of your personality to break the ice—but not personal details. You may want to briefly mention hobbies that demonstrate intellectual development and/or community engagement (e.g., scope of reading, preferred music, sports league, volunteering) or those that showcase personal discipline and achievement (e.g., learning a new skill, training for a half marathon). Discussing personal interests is a good way to wrap up your response while maintaining a professional tone.

How to Provide Examples

Below is a short script showing how this question can highlight someone's strengths supported by successful results in just under two minutes:

Example 1. *I began my career in retail management, but a few years ago, I was drawn to the healthcare space. I've always been skilled at bringing people together and working towards common goals. My experience successfully leading teams and managing stores led me to consider administration, and I've been building a career as a health administrator for the last four years.*

Example 2. *In my current role at XYZ..... , the efficiency of the office has been a personal focus—especially as it relates to patient outcomes. I set and oversee goals related to department budget and patient volume. Last year, I worked with our IT department to implement a communication system for scheduling procedures and protocols to ensure that all departments were adequately staffed at all times. With our new online scheduling portal, we increased communication efficiency by 20%. In my role, I also manage marketing and advertising efforts on behalf of the Centre. I've been really enjoying that part of my work and I'm especially interested in bringing the experience I've gained as well as my commitment to efficiency to the team at ABC Outside of the office, I'm an avid reader and I love to hike. On weekends, you might find me at the local bookstore or exploring hiking trails in the area.*

Fundamentally, “Tell me about yourself” could also be asked as, “What do you want the interviewer to remember about you?” Answering this question effectively gives you the power to make a good first impression and structure the rest of the interview for your benefit.

Questions and tasks to **Interview Question: "Tell Me About Yourself"**

1. What qualities would make you great for the position of
 - the mètre d'hôtel of a popular restaurant;
 - a model in an international Haut Couture House;
 - an operator at a calling center in your town;
 - an HR/recruiting officer manager in a big company;
 - a PA/secretary to a CEO;
 - a bodyguard to a famous politician;

- Chief accountant at the Accounting Department of a private university in your country.
2. What is one positive trait or characteristic that will serve you well in the position/role of:
 - the mètre d'hôtel at a popular restaurant;
 - a model in an international Haut Couture House;
 - an operator at a calling center in your town;
 - a PA (secretary) to a CEO of a big corporation?
 - A bodyguard to a famous politician?
 - an HR/recruiting officer (manager) of a big company;
 - Chief accountant at the Accounting Department of a private university in your country;
 3. What “don’ts” are there to remember while preparing to answer the “Tell me about yourself” question?
 4. Why is it advisable to quantify (give an exact estimate or realistic numeric evaluation) as you provide examples?

Interview Question: “What Are Your Strengths and Weaknesses?”

At some point during the interview process, you may be asked to describe your personal strengths and weaknesses. Many job candidates are unsure how to approach this question. However, by establishing the appropriate context, you can give hiring managers an honest, thoughtful answer that highlights both your self-awareness and professionalism. Preparing in advance for this question is a valuable use of your time before the interview. With the talking points at the ready below, you’ll be able to give a confident response to this question.

You may be asked about your strengths and weaknesses in one question, or you may be asked about them in two separate questions. In the event that you are asked about

strengths and weaknesses at the same time, *discuss your weakness first* so that you can end on a positive note. When addressing your weaknesses, draw upon examples relating to either skills, habits or personality traits. You may want to choose which to focus on depending on the type of job you're interviewing for. For example, discussing a skill or habit may be highly relevant for a technical position. For a sales or customer service role, your interviewer may be more interested in hearing about your personality traits. Neither choice is strictly right or wrong. Re-read the job description for clues on what may matter most for this specific role.

The formula for your answer is easy to follow: First, state your weakness. Second, add additional context and a specific example or story of how this trait has emerged in your professional life. That context will give potential employers insight into your level of self-awareness and commitment to professional growth. In the example answers below, you'll see the weakness followed by context sentences in italics.

Personality Traits

Example 1: *"I can be too critical of myself. A pattern I've noticed throughout my career is that I often feel I could have done more, even if objectively, I've done well. Earlier in my career, this led to burnout and negative self-talk. One solution I've implemented over the last three years is to actively pause and celebrate my achievements. Not only has this helped my own self-esteem, it's helped me genuinely appreciate and recognize my team and other support systems."*

Example 2: *"I'm naturally shy. From school and into my early professional interactions, it prevented me from speaking up. After being a part of a workgroup that didn't meet our strategic goals two quarters in a row, I knew I owed it to my team and myself to confidently share my ideas. I joined an improvisational acting class—it's fun and has really helped me overcome my shyness. I learned practical skills around leading discussions and sharing diverse perspectives. Now, in group settings, I always start conversations with the quieter team members. I know exactly how they feel, and people can be amazing once they start talking."*

Example 3: *“I default to believing that I can solve any problem on my own. This works well in some situations, but in many cases, I need the help of others to overcome factors beyond my control. In one instance last year, I was organizing a client event that had a lot of different components. It wasn’t until after the event that I realized how narrowly I had pulled it off. I was trying to manage everything from the strategic plan down to the tiniest details, like table settings. I did a lot of self-reflection afterward. Since then, I’ve been training myself to take a step back before diving into problem-solving mode and I identify people or groups that can be resources to me.”*

Skills and Habits

Example 4: *“I’m not familiar with the latest version of [insert name of non-critical software]. Instead, I’ve focused on [insert name of preferred software] because user-centric design has become a strong passion of mine. In my last few jobs, that’s where I’ve spent time learning and growing.”*

Example 5: *“I’ve always been a procrastinator. I used to think it wasn’t such a bad habit because I was only creating stress for myself. But when I was working for XYZ Company several years ago, I was on a group project where I could see how my putting things off to the last minute created stress for everyone else. It was a wake-up call. I started creating daily schedules that held me accountable to my team, and I broke the habit. It was hard at first, but using the Agile process was a real breakthrough in my workflow and mindset.”*

Example 6: *“I tend to be a perfectionist and can linger on the details of a project which can threaten deadlines. Early on in my career, when I worked for ABC Inc., that’s exactly what happened. I was laboring over the details and in turn, caused my manager to be stressed when I almost missed the deadline on my deliverables. I learned the hard way back then, but I did learn. Today I’m always aware of how what I’m doing affects my team and management. I’ve learned how to find the balance between perfect and very good and being timely.”*

Example 7: *“Maths wasn’t my strongest subject in school. To be honest, as a student, I didn’t understand how it would be applicable in my adult life. Within a few years of being in the working world, though, I realized that I wanted to take my career in a more analytical direction. At first, I wasn’t sure where to begin, but I found some free online courses that refreshed the important basics for me. In my most recent job, this new foundation has enabled me to do my own goal setting and tracking. Actually, getting over the maths anxiety I had when I was younger has been incredibly empowering.”*

What Are Your Greatest Strengths? Examples and Answers

It’s surprisingly difficult for many people to talk about their strengths during an interview. It may be challenging to balance your modesty with the need to project confidence. As with weaknesses, you can generally choose between skills, habits and personality traits. Here is an Example List of Strengths for you to choose from:

- Creative
- Patient
- Empathetic
- Determined
- Flexible or versatile
- Honest
- Enthusiastic, passionate or driven
- Collaborative
- Disciplined or focused
- Committed or dedicated
- Respectful
- Innovative
- Attentive or detail-oriented
- Action-oriented or entrepreneurial

If you aren't sure about your strengths, ask some of your friends or colleagues what they see as your best qualities. Refer to any written feedback you've received in the past from peers or managers. And here are some real-life examples to get you started:

Personality Traits

Example 1: *"I've always been a natural leader. With over ten years of experience in finance and sales, I've exceeded my KPIs every quarter and have been promoted twice in the last five years. I look back at those successes and know that I wouldn't have reached them if I hadn't built and led teams composed of highly skilled and diverse individuals. I'm proud of my ability to get cross-functional groups working efficiently together. I've regularly honed my management skills through 360 reviews and candid discussion sessions with my team, and I know continuing to build my leadership skills is something I want from my next role".*

Example 2: *"I'm very collaborative and have always preferred to work in groups. In the project teams I've directed, members work with a variety of people and are motivated by diverse creative tasks. Since I began managing my current team, I've increased productivity by 15 per cent and retention by 25 per cent over three years."*

Example 3: *"I'm an empathetic person who's skilled at relating to people and making them feel heard. In one memorable instance from earlier this year, I was on a support call with a customer whose contract we had terminated. Reinstating the service agreement would have increased her rates dramatically. She was understandably upset and felt trapped because she couldn't be without car insurance for her and her family. It became clear very quickly that we couldn't meet her needs but I wanted her to walk away with a favorable impression of the service we had provided. I talked her through some of her other options, even letting her know of other providers who might be able to offer her a lower rate so she could avoid a lapse in coverage. In the feedback survey from that interaction, she specifically mentioned that she would still be recommending our services to others. In my career*

in customer support, I've had many interactions like this—they are complex but end with the customer still feeling positive.”

Skills and Habits

Example 4: *“I’m obsessed with the newest version of [insert name of new software]. I started pushing the boundaries of what it could do as soon as it was released. I’m excited about applying my passion and abilities to this position and utilizing the best features of this program for your company.”*

Example 5: *“I’m thorough and tenacious. When I’m on a project, I keep track of the details. Because I have a comprehensive understanding of the components, I can spot the essentials and rigorously advocate for them to meet deadlines. I regularly see this reflected in my peer and management feedback.”*

Example 6: *“I never miss a deadline. I’m highly organized, and I’ve applied my natural skill for organizing people and projects to all aspects of my work. After seven years of working as a project manager, I’ve had only one delayed product launch—we were one week delayed. From that experience, which took place three years ago, I learned a crucial lesson about trade-offs. I spent time addressing a crucial design need and that pushed everything else back. I wouldn’t trade the lessons I learned from that experience for anything—being sure to communicate to stakeholders about upcoming roadblocks is chief among them”.*

Example 7: *“I have extremely strong writing skills. I’ve worked as a copywriter for eight years in several industries, and am committed to both creative excellence and performance metrics when it comes to my work. I’ve had to learn how to find the perfect balance between creativity and analytics, and it’s a personal passion of mine to demonstrate what good writing can achieve for the bottom line—in advertising or otherwise”.*

When you prepare your script of your strengths, it would also pay to keep in mind a few additional tips:

- *Don't* list multiple, vague strengths. Stay focused on one or two key qualities that relate directly to the role and support them with specific, relevant examples.
- *Don't* make jokes.
- *Don't* be arrogant, inflate your strengths or lie about your abilities.
- However, *don't* be too humble or underestimate yourself.
- Just be honest and sincere.

Even though the question about your strengths and weaknesses is one of the most dreaded interview questions, when you take the time to prepare a thoughtful response, you can create a unique story about who you are and where you want to go. As you prepare your answers, turn weaknesses into challenges that you're working hard to meet and overcome and strengths into the reasons you're a great fit for the job.

Questions and Tasks to the Interview Question: "What Are Your Strengths and Weaknesses?"

1. If asked about your strengths and weaknesses in one question, which should you start with?
2. What are your weaknesses that belong in the categories "Personality Traits" and "Skills and Habits"?
3. Look at the list of strengths in Section III and single out those that you think you possess. Please, elaborate on them and provide examples from your experience.
4. Make a list of "don'ts" you should keep in mind while talking about your strengths and weaknesses.
5. Recall a situation/event from your experience, when one of your weaknesses turned into a strength (if applicable).

Interview Question: "How Do You Handle Stress?"

If you've ever held a job, or even if you're new to workforce, you're probably familiar with feelings of stress at work. Potential employers may sometimes ask about stress in a job interview, and a common way to phrase this question is, "How do you handle stress?". When they ask this question, interviewers are looking for information on how you will react in stressful moments, and how your reaction may affect your teammates and the company overall. To prepare for this question, consider how you've dealt with stressful work experiences in the past. Then, think about how those moments may have helped you better understand your strengths and weaknesses. Here are helpful tips to guide your answer:

Why do interviewers ask about how you handle stress?

Because they want to make the best hire for each role. If they know that a certain role sometimes involves stressful situations, they may want to verify that a candidate can react to that environment in a constructive rather than destructive manner. Employers may not want to hire candidates who:

- Outwardly express stress in the form of anger or sadness
- Are reactive to stress in a disruptive way
- Allow stress to impede or degrade the quality of work
- Become overwhelmed or shut down as a result of stress
- Put themselves and/or others in unnecessary and stressful situations (as a result of procrastination or poor attention to detail, for example).

On the other hand, employees will appreciate a candidate who:

- Is motivated by *healthy pressure* and uses it to produce quality, efficient work
- Avoids stress by planning ahead and prioritizing work
- Keeps open lines of transparent, constructive communication with managers and colleagues
- Has healthy boundaries

- Takes note of their stressors and reactive tendencies to work on possibilities of improvement.

How to answer interview questions about stress?

As you start to prepare your answer to this question, think of a time you experienced stress in the workplace. Consider the following questions to help you plan a positive, interviewer-focused answer that shows you've thought about your attitude to stress:

- What were the causes of the stressful situation?
- If you contributed to creating a stressful situation, what could you have done differently to avoid it?
- What was your reaction like?
- How did you reduce or mitigate the stress?
- If you could react to that situation again, what would you have done differently?
- In what ways did stress help or hurt your work?

From the stressful work situations you can recall, focus on the stories and examples where you can identify *a moment of personal growth*. This will help any potential employer understand how you turn stress into a positive—especially if you give examples where stress has actually helped your work in some way. Here are a few examples of a good response to this question:

Example 1. *“Planning is an important tool in handling stress for me. Drawing up detailed plans for projects and even my daily work helps me to get ahead of stressful situations. When stress does inevitably arise, planning helps me to tackle the situation one step at a time to prioritize what needs to be done in an efficient way for myself and my colleagues. In fact, some of my best work in streamlining processes has come from a stressful situation. I’ve been able to design simpler, more efficient workflows with less room for error.”*

Example 2. *“Stress can be a big motivator for me. A healthy amount of pressure helps me produce efficient, quality work by giving me a picture of what my colleagues need from me and when. I’ve experienced stressful situations that bring my team together, and have seen some of our best work come from pressure.”*

Example 3. *“For me, communication is key in stressful situations, if even over-communicating to ensure everyone is on the same page. For example, I was working on a project with another team and we found there was a lot of duplicate work being done. By scheduling a weekly standup and keeping open lines of honest communication with our teams and managers, we pushed the project forward and ended up moving the needle on a company goal in a big way.”*

What to avoid when you answer questions about stress

There are a few things you’ll want to avoid if this question comes up in the interview, for example:

- Avoid saying that you don’t experience stress. While it may seem attractive to position yourself as someone who is always calm, the interviewer will probably “not buy it”. Avoiding a substantive answer or making yourself seem stress-resistant might seem unrealistic or off-putting. □
- If you provide an example, try not to focus on the emotions of the situation. Give a high-level overview of the situation, explain how you handled it, and how that will benefit their team and the company. □
- Additionally, choose an example that wasn’t caused by you or could have been easily avoided—for example, you’d want to avoid saying, “I was in a stressful situation because I forgot about an assignment with a strict due date...”.

Questions and Tasks to the Interview Question: "How Do You Handle Stress?"

1. How is stress usually manifested in the workplace?
2. How can you avoid/reduce stress at work?

3. What are your own ways of mitigating stress?
4. How can you describe a stress-resistant person?
5. In what situations can stress be helpful? Can you recall any such situations from your past working/studying experience? Provide examples, if possible.
6. What are the things to avoid if you are answering the question about stress?

Interview Question: "What Are Your Future Goals?"

Along with your qualifications, background and professional experience, an interviewer will want to know your plans for the future. Employers may ask this question in different ways. Some of these include:

- What are your future goals or what are your career goals?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What are your future plans if you get this job?

Your response to this kind of question will help recruiters and hiring managers to know you better and understand if your professional goals and expectations of the role match what they can provide. If things go well, this context enables them to put together a job offer that is exciting for you. The way you answer this question may vary depending on the company and position, but there are a few things you can consider as you decide how to respond in any situation:

How to define your career goals

An important practice for this interview question is to assess what you want in the next five years of your career. You can even plan further, thinking about the next decade, too. This is just one of a few questions you should ask yourself before an interview. Set some time aside to write down your career goals, both short term and long term. Here are a few *key questions* to get you started:

- What are you good at?
- What do you want to be good at?
- What do you enjoy most about your current job?
- What work are you most proud of?

- What jobs or projects look appealing to you?
- What skills or opportunities will be available in the next few years, or even decades?

Once you've identified your answers to the above questions, here are examples of more tangible goals that may suit you:

- Managerial or leadership experience
- Industry expertise
- End-to-end project management
- Project conception or leadership
- Developing and streamlining new processes
- Having strong relationships with clients
- Providing excellent service or care
- Becoming an expert at one specific skill or a set of skills

Some additional helpful tips:

- Research the company and position you're interviewing for. Your response to "What are your future goals?" should be focused on how your long-term career goals match with how this company is growing and the opportunities this job provides. In your research, look for information about company structure, mission, expansion, focuses or new initiatives. Start by visiting their company website. Reading the "about" and "press" pages can uncover items like press releases that will highlight the company's most important announcements. You may want to find someone who works there, or someone who can connect you with an employee for a more intimate look into the company's development and goals.
- Answer with career-focused goals. Often, our career goals are just one part of our larger life and personal aspirations. For this answer, focus on just your career goals. If some of your personal goals happen to align with attributes that will make you a stronger candidate (like being a better writer or learning a new

language), you can certainly include those as well. While promotions or salary can also be related to your career goals, avoid including these in your answer and focus on the skills, abilities or experience you want to achieve instead.

- Give a broad answer. Though there can be many details to your future plans, keep your answer short and at a high level. Making your goals too specific might limit you to certain opportunities or make you appear less well-rounded than other candidates. As in all interview questions, be conscious of how much time you're taking to answer the question and avoid rambling.

As you define what your professional goals are, you can use the below career goals examples as a guide:

Example 1. *“In five years, I’d love to be a true apparel industry expert with successful end-to-end project management experience under my belt as I look to grow into a more senior market analyst role. It’s exciting that your company has a strong focus on hands-on experience and continued learning opportunities.”*

Example 2. *“A few of my future goals include leading a finance team in some capacity. I’m excited about the prospect of working with teams like legal and procurement on developing streamlined processes—this is a natural fit with my business administration background. One reason this job stood out to me was that it calls for a candidate with organizational expertise. I’ve had inspirational managers that I really admired, and would love to manage my own team in a few years.”*

Example 3. *“In the short term, one of my goals is to continue developing my writing skills. I want to help brands become world-class publishers. In addition, I’ve been raising my hand for more public speaking assignments, since I know that written and verbal communication skills often work together. I would love to apply this skill set to establish your company as a thought leader in this industry.”*

Planning an interview answer in case you're asked about your future goals is a perfect opportunity to show why you're a great fit for the position. Understanding

what you want out of your career in the future will help potential employers see your ambition, your competence and how you're going to help their company grow.

Questions and Tasks to the Interview Question: "What Are Your Future Goals?"

1. Think of three things you are really good at.
2. Think of three things you are not at all good at.
3. What are the most enjoyable aspects of your present job/studies.
4. Look at the goals listed above and choose three that may suit you.
5. What motivates you to want to achieve these goals?

Interview question: "What makes you unique?"

There it is again, that horrific 'U' word - the big question in recruitment. The one that sends the majority of candidates into some kind of existential frenzy or early mid-life crisis. Despite the sheer terror attached to the single line, 'What makes you unique?' is an employer's best friend. When hiring a new employee, especially for large corporations, you're often fishing an individual out of a pool of potentially hundreds of applicants. Employer and employee alike need to know what makes people stand out. Employers want to hire the *crème-de-la-crème* of the job market just like employees want to be the icing on the employer's recruitment cake. An interviewer can tell a lot about a potential hire based on their answer to: 'What makes you unique?' For the potential employer this question invaluable because it is:

Timesaver. One of the main reasons interviewers should ask what makes the candidate unique is that they need to find out *who* the candidate is in a short space of time. Interviews can often be as short as 10 minutes. Recruiters don't have much time, especially when they need to get through hundreds of applicants. 'What makes you unique' gets to the nitty-gritty without beating around the bush.

Pressure Test. The notorious 'U' also throws the interviewee off guard. This might not seem like a positive thing for the candidate – apologies – but for the employer,

this is a good way to judge how well the interviewee deals with uncomfortable situations. Employees need to know that they are hiring an employee that can work well under pressure. While it is completely normal for interviewees to be nervous during an interview – in fact, it’s a good thing if they are, because it shows employers that they care about the job they’re applying for – if they’re so thrown off by the mention of unique that their response is mainly silence, this flags up their inability to deal with pressure early on in the recruitment procedure.

Prep Test. Well-prepared candidates will have a good response to this question, a question which can invite some delightfully curious responses: ‘I can balance on my head with my eyes closed’, ‘I can make a delicious roast’ or ‘I once nearly got trampled by elephants in South Africa’. Indeed, very unique – but not responses that you need to hear as an employer (these can be saved for the annual staff blast).

Test in how well they have done their homework. Likewise, it’s also a good way to test how well an interviewee is able to filter their response so that it suits the job. The question should allow the candidate to not just flaunt what they think makes them interesting, but what value they can bring to the company. The candidate shouldn’t only show what makes them valuable as a person, but also as a potential member of the corporation. In this way, ‘what makes you unique’ is a great way to find out if the candidate has truly done their homework. This will be clear if they list things that match your company’s ambitions, rather than just ticking off a mental list of attractive traits they might have. ‘What makes you unique?’ should elicit a response which correlates with the abilities needed for the job, not just any interesting features of their personality. What is more, regarding how someone assesses the particular job role, someone can be incredibly talented in their sector, uniquely so, but their unique talents don’t necessarily align with the job they’re applying for.

A quick insight into the candidate’s past experiences. Along the same lines, it’s an interesting way to encourage candidates to talk about their past professional experiences. Another way that employers can phrase the query is: ‘tell me about a time where you had to think outside of the box’. If an employee can prove they think

outside the box, this is a great sign for employers. It shows how the employee's uniqueness can be used constructively in the workplace. This is ideal for a recruiter thinking ahead to how they will integrate "the new buy" into already established management strategies.

Efficiency. While drawing on past experiences is a good sign for employers that the candidate is experienced, employers should also watch out for candidates who overshare. Waffling on is not a good trait – it shows a lack of ability to be concise and to communicate efficiently. Employers want to get a good idea of the candidate's skill set and their ability to self-assess. It's a great skill to be able to be specific. Ambiguous responses show a lack of self-assurance. As an employer, you should not look for ambiguous or generic responses in interviews.

So, to help employers remember why this question is an invaluable one in any interview, we've summed up the importance of it with a few simple, er... unique letters:

The code of unique recruitment:

U – Unbeatable in their field

Unique means that they have something that the other candidates don't. Asking what makes someone unique is giving them the chance to truly shine and prove that they are unbeatable in their field of work.

N – Not put off by pressure

Unfortunately, the workplace does come with a lot of pressure and anxiety from time to time. It's never pleasant, but recruiters do need to know that they're hiring people who can deal with a little stress – not that interviews aren't stressful enough.

A solid answer shows the ability to deal well with uncomfortable, burdensome questions. This might be useful when dealing with difficult clients in the future.

I – Interested in the job they're applying for

This is also a good question to see how enthusiastic the candidate is about the job. A good response shows they've done their homework, they think their unique abilities make them right for the role, and they're sure of this!

Q – Quality responses shows good preparation

Q is for quality of response. Just like the latter point states, this is a great question to pull out because it shows how prepared the candidate is for the interview. Quality over quantity – you, being the employer, don't want an essay, you want a 'BAM' response that'll leave you thinking 'this kid knows his stuff.'

U – Unambiguous

Employers don't want to play guessing games. In an interview, the candidate should lay themselves bare. What makes you worth the risk? Why should you be hired?

Because you're unique for this, this and this reason. Bish, bash, bosh.

While, as an employer, you want to look for someone who will integrate well and conform to the company standards, you also don't want to hire someone who is a bit of a sheep, only follows the herd, and doesn't really have anything to see for themselves.

E – Energy

Don't think that this is a repeat of I. Discussing uniqueness in an interview is a conduit to revealing how enthusiastic the employee will be in the future if they join the company. A good energetic response, shown through their interest and confidence, is a reassuring and welcomed sign for employers.

Likewise, positive energy shows that the candidate is grateful for being invited to the interview in the first place and highlights how they potentially feel about themselves.

What's more, employers should look out for whether the employee talks enthusiastically about themselves. It's an honest remark that most people don't particularly enjoy talking about themselves, but employers need to trust that the candidate has enough self-confidence to sell themselves before they can trust they'll be able to sell the company's image.

If your candidate is ticking all the above boxes, you may just have found your hire.

Questions and tasks to the Interview Question “What makes you unique?”

1. Why is this question invaluable to employers?
2. What makes this question
 - a timesaver?
 - a prep test?
 - a test in how well the candidate has done his/her homework?
 - an insight into the candidate’s past experiences and efficiency?

Interview Question: “Where Do You See Yourself in Five Years?”

“Where do you see yourself in five years?” is a question about your future plans or goals that you may be asked in an interview. Employers ask these types of questions for many different reasons, but in general, they are looking for insight into how this job fits into your overall career aspirations. You may or may not have an exact picture of where you want to be in five (or ten) years. Either way, there are a few guidelines you can follow to help you answer in a way that communicates your enthusiasm for the job.

What are employers looking for in your answer?

When employers ask about where you want to be in five years, they’re likely looking for a few key pieces of information, among them:

Do your expectations align with what the employer can provide?

Employers want to know that your goals fit with the job they’re offering. For example, if you’re interviewing for an accounting associate role and eventually see yourself in a management position, they may be able to share more information about professional growth at the company. Alternatively, if you’re interviewing for a marketing role and you want to be a UX designer in five years, you might not be considered a good fit for the position. Employers may also use this question to gauge whether you are over or under qualified for the position. If you want to reach a more

advanced job title in five years than is available at this company, the employer may determine that you are overqualified. Alternatively, if you seek to be at a lesser level than employers might expect from you in five years, you might seem underqualified.

Do you see yourself at the company in five years?

The length of time people spend with the same company varies based on age and industry. On average, 54% of people stay in the same role for at least 5 years. Most employers will be seeking candidates who plan on being at the company *long-term* since turnover is costly. They will listen closely for clues that you could potentially see yourself here for more than five years.

Do you have a sense of ambition or drive?

Employers will also be listening for your sense of ambition during your answer. While it can be difficult to know or even plan for what you will be doing in five years, employers want hire candidates who have a clear sense of how they want to grow and progress.

What are your interests?

Finally, employers might simply be curious about your interests. This could include nearly anything, from seeking to be an industry expert in a certain topic, taking on leadership and management roles or incorporating some other areas of interest into your role. Understanding your passions and interests can be helpful for employers to see where you might fit in the team both short and long term.

How to answer “Where do you see yourself in five years?” question

It can be helpful to do some prep-work before answering this question in an interview. When preparing your answer, consider the following best practices:

- *Think about how your goals fit with the job description.*

When crafting your answer, remember to carefully review the job posting. Consider which of the required skills and traits you already have and would like to gain more

experience in. It can be helpful to look at the specifics of what the job entails and think about what it would mean to advance your knowledge and expertise in these areas over the next five years.

- *Envision the experiences you'd like to have on your resume in five years*

It can also be a helpful practice to think about what your ideal resume might look like five years from now. Think about the following categories and how they might look in the future:

- Would you like to attain a specific job title?
- Do you want to be able to list certain skills (technical or soft) listed?
- Will you have received specific awards or certificates?
- What do you want to have achieved in your career?

Remember, you don't necessarily need to include these specifics in your answer during the interview. However, thinking about what your future resume might look like can help you shape your response.

- *Reflect on your interests and how they might evolve*

In any profession, there is room to grow and continue learning. There might be a particular area of interest you want to focus on in the role you're interviewing for, and it might reasonably take several years for you to reach expert level. For example, a cosmetologist might be interested in nurturing client relationships and learning about the technology that other businesses use to do that. As a result, she might start learning more about customer relationship management software and marketing communications. Thoughtfully reflecting on tasks, subject matter and industries you have an interest in can help form ideas for where you see yourself in five years.

Example answers to "Where do you see yourself in five years?" question

While not being specific can seem harmful in answering other interview questions, it is acceptable (and possibly helpful) to keep your answer to this question *more*

general. Outlining a few key areas that you feel are interesting, achievable and relevant to the role can provide sufficient information for the employer while also making your future seem flexible. Because goals, interests and dreams can change, it is reasonable to present categories instead of specific details. Your answer might sound like this:

Example 1. *“In five years, I would love to be an industry expert that others can go to for ideas, help and strategy. I’ve had amazing mentors and managers in my past positions, so I’d like to be able to provide similar guidance, potentially taking on a leadership role. Finally, I’d like to have taken the lead on a projects I’m passionate about. I’m motivated by connecting my initiatives to the company’s larger goals, and I’m excited by the prospect of getting more experience in that.”*

In this example, the candidate notes her desire to (1) increase her industry knowledge, (2) take on leadership roles, and (3) head-up projects she’s passionate about in the next five years.

Example 2. *“A few of my future goals for the next few years include leading a design team in some capacity. I’m excited about the prospect of working with product and events on developing streamlined processes—this is a natural fit with my project management background. I’d also like to develop my skills in user experience to aid in creating more user-focused designs all around.”*

In this example, the candidate includes (1) creating their own team, (2) more experience working with other departments and (3) developing skills that will strengthen his expertise.

Thinking of not only your plans for the future but also how to communicate them in an interview can seem intimidating. Taking time to consider where you want to be in five years based on the job description, your interests and your goals can help you craft an answer that communicates why you’re the best person for the job.

Questions and tasks to the Interview Question “Where Do You See Yourself in Five Years?”

1. Name three of your interests or hobbies.
2. Would you be happy to stay with the same company/in the same job for life/till retirement or would you rather look for other options, if they present themselves?
3. What would you do if your long-term career plans and ambitions do not align with the mission and goals of the company you are applying for a job in?
4. Give your own answer to the question “Where do you see yourself in five years?”

Interview Question: "Do You Have Any Questions?"

Your job interview is almost over and the hiring manager has given you a lot of valuable information about the position. As the conversation is coming to a close, they ask, “Do you have any questions for me?” This question is typically asked at the end of interviews and it is *a critically important part* of the conversation. Resist the temptation to say no, even if you’re confident the job is a good match for you. In fact, interviewers *expect* you to ask questions—it signals that you’re serious about the job. Use the tips and sample questions below to learn how you can ask smart, meaningful interview questions.

Why is it important to ask questions?

It is your chance to learn more. Your interview gives the hiring manager insight into your professional experience, qualifications and accomplishments, but it’s also a great time for you to learn more about the company and job. Focus on asking questions about topics that weren’t covered, or topics you would like to discuss in greater detail.

It shows your interest. Asking thoughtful questions in your interview reaffirms your interest in the job. It also shows the hiring manager that you've thought seriously about what it would mean to be employed in this role at this company. With the right questions, you'll be able to illustrate your knowledge of the company and industry, along with your drive to excel in the new position.

It gives a memorable final impression. Getting to the interview stage is already a sign that you're a top candidate. With thoughtful questions, you can continue to stand out from other contenders and demonstrate that you're a great fit for the role.

How many questions should you prepare?

Because the hiring manager will cover a lot of information in the interview—and may unknowingly answer the questions you plan to ask—consider preparing up to 10 questions. You may want to write your questions down in a notebook or portfolio that you bring to the interview. Refer to this list when the interviewer asks, “Do you have any questions?” and select two or three questions that weren't covered earlier in the interview. Choose questions that demonstrate you were engaged and listening, and ones that can help you learn more about the job.

Why research the company beforehand?

Researching the company is an easy way to understand the company's history, mission and values. A great place to start is by browsing the company's website. You can also search the internet for recent news articles. Use the information you find to help shape your questions. Your initiative will be well-received because it proves you took the time to learn about the company and industry.

Why rehearse your questions?

Think of the interview as a conversation between yourself and the hiring manager. Practicing your questions in advance can make you more comfortable and give you a confidence boost the day of the interview. Spend time in a quiet place rehearsing your questions out loud, in front of a mirror or with a friend or family member.

What types of questions to ask?

About the job: the hiring manager may have already covered information about the job's functions, but this is the ideal time to get more details about the day-to-day responsibilities, expectations and goals. You could ask:

- *What does a typical day look like for a person in this position?*
- *What are your short- and long-term goals for a new hire with this job title?*
- *How has this role grown or adapted to suit the needs of the organization?*

Why ask questions about the company?

Asking questions about the company reveals that you've done your research and gives you a better picture of the company's outlook, values and culture. Plus, it gives the impression that you're interested in growing with the company long-term.

Consider asking:

- *Why do you enjoy working here?*
- *How would you describe the company's culture?*
- *What kind of growth does the company expect to see within the next five years?*
- *Can you describe some of the company's recent challenges and achievements.*

What questions to ask about your qualifications?

Make sure the hiring manager doesn't have unanswered questions about your qualifications. If they do, this is a prime time to emphasize how your talents align with the role. These types of questions could sound like:

- *What qualities do you look for in a candidate?*
- *Do you have any concerns about my experience or skill set?*
- *Are there reservations regarding my fit with the role or company?*

What questions to ask about the next steps to take following the interview?

Save your final question to ask about the next steps in the hiring process. You'll convey your interest in the job one last time as well as learn about the hiring timeline, potential additional interviews or when you can expect to hear from them. You might say:

- *I've really enjoyed learning more about this opportunity. What are the next steps in the hiring process?*
- *Thank you for explaining the role to me in such depth. When might I hear back from you regarding a decision?*

What topics to avoid?

If you're still in the early stages of the interview process, avoid asking questions about: salary, benefits, vacation time or company perks. Questions about these topics should be saved for when you are formally offered the job. If you ask about these things too early, you could send the message that you're more interested in how the company can benefit you, not how you can contribute to the company.

Questions and tasks to the Interview Question: "Do You Have Any Questions?"

1. Why asking questions by the candidate important? What are the benefits for the candidate? For the potential employer?
2. What topics should the candidate avoid while asking questions at the end of the interview?
3. What questions would you ask the hiring manager, if you were applying for the position of
 - the mètre d'hôtel at a popular restaurant;
 - a model in an international Haut Couture House;
 - an operator at a calling center in your town;
 - a PA (secretary) to a CEO of a big corporation?
 - A bodyguard to a famous politician?
 - an HR/recruiting officer (manager) of a big company;
 - Chief accountant at the Accounting Department of a private university in your country;

By way of general conclusion: *How to Ace Your Final Interview*

Before your final interview, you'll likely have been through a phone screen and potentially a more formal in-person interview. Your final job interview is your last

chance to impress a hiring manager and/or members of a search committee before they make their choice between you and a group of other top candidates.

At this stage, it's important to strike the right balance between confidence and modesty. You should congratulate yourself on having made it here, but do not assume you have the job yet. Don't let your guard down or act too comfortable. Approach each conversation with the same degree of professionalism you relied on to get this far.

How to prepare for your final interview

Before your final interviews, think back on your earlier interviews and re-read the job description. If you're talking to the same person, they may want you to elaborate on an answer you gave earlier. If you're talking to someone new, it can help to fill them in on what you've shared in your other conversations. At this point, you need to demonstrate that you've thoughtfully considered what it would really be like to work in this job and at this company. From your previous interviews, reflect on what your day-to-day would look like in this role. What questions would you have on the first day? In the first month? These are good starting points for questions you may want to ask your interviewers. If there is an answer you want to modify from a previous interview, this may be your chance to offer a different perspective or additional information. Identify new anecdotes based on the skillset you know they're looking for. This can demonstrate your focus and continued attention to detail.

Get a full night's sleep before your interview. Some final round interviews are drawn out over several hours as you meet with different people in the company. It's crucial that you keep your energy level high in each conversation. Remember that it's ok to ask for restroom breaks or a drink of water between interviews.

Hiring decisions are made differently at different companies and you don't know who on the interview committee may be able to veto a decision to hire you. Treat everyone with the utmost respect and don't let your stamina drop as the day goes on. As you head into your final interview, take a deep breath. Your preparation has paid off so far and by thoughtfully engaging your interviewers in this last conversation, you will continue to excel.

Section IV

How to Write a Resume Employers Will Notice

How can you make your resume stand out to potential employers? There are a few guidelines to follow that can help your resume shine.

What employers look for in a resume

Your resume is often your first and best chance to get noticed by recruiters and hiring managers. Your goal is to make it easy for them to see that you have the qualifications they're looking for. Often, employers have several *core skills* that they want candidates to demonstrate. Because they may be reading through hundreds of applications, a recruiter or hiring manager might quickly scan your resume to see if those qualifications jump out.

The importance of resume keywords

It's also important to note that online job applications are often sorted through software called an applicant tracking system. This software scans resumes and cover letters for relevant experience, skills and other keywords so that qualified candidates are easy for employers to identify. Follow these guidelines to write a resume that's easy for employers to find and read:

- Read job descriptions closely to identify required skills and experience. You may want to make a list of the requirements you see. Refer back to this list as you're writing your resume. If you have these skills, list them prominently (more tips on this below). If you don't meet the exact requirements, list your related or similar skills. For example, if a job description asks for three to five years of experience and you have two years, write "2+ years of experience in your job or industry."
- Use a simple format. This means leading with contact information (your name, email address, phone number and the city where you live), followed by an optional summary, your work experience, skills and education.
- Use a standard font. Arial, Calibri and Georgia are good options. Use 10, 11 or 12point font.

- For most resumes, it's best to keep it to two pages maximum. Carefully consider if everything you've included is necessary.

How to write your resume headline or summary (with examples)

Beginning your resume with a headline *or resume summary* statement (sometimes known as a *resume objective*) is one way to clearly indicate your most relevant qualifications. This short description should quickly advertise your skills and professional goals to any recruiter. A headline is the shortest version: sum up your achievements in one line. In a summary or objective statement, you can get a little longer: one or two sentences is typically a good length.

To get started, think back on your proudest career accomplishments and what defines who you are in the workplace. Carefully read the job descriptions that you're considering. Do they require a specific certification or years of experience? Your headline is the place to let the employer know you meet these requirements. Here are a few examples:

Example 1.

- ***Headline:*** *Customer success professional with 3+ year experience delighting clients in the retail industry.*
- ***Summary:*** *Experienced in resolving client concerns via chat, email and phone; routinely recognized by management and peers for assertive and enthusiastic spirit. Excited to continue my career in ecommerce.*

Example 2.

- ***Headline:*** *Certified dental assistant with 12+ years in direct patient care.*
- ***Summary:*** *Extensive experience in charting, scheduling and delivering best in class customer service. Vast knowledge of clinical procedure and dental terminology. Looking for new opportunities in private dental practice.*

Example 3.

- ***Headline:*** *Aspiring financial services professional with degree in Business Administration.*

- **Summary:** *Advanced Excel and intermediate SQL skills, excellent written and verbal communication, pursuing entry-level roles in financial services.*

Example 4.

- **Headline:** *Graphic designer with strong experience as creative lead in an agency setting.*
- **Summary:** *Mastery of Adobe Creative Cloud and familiarity with Sketch, InVision, HTML, CSS and Javascript.*

How to write out your work experience

Once you've written your resume summary, the next step to take on is your work experience. (Note: in some cases, your education may be listed before your work experience. Today, it's more common for education to come at the end of the resume, though it depends on your industry and when you received your education).

Listing out your experience is not as simple as writing down everything you've done in your career. Instead, you want to only include the details of your past work that are especially relevant to the work you want to do next.

Review our *resume samples* or follow the guidelines below when listing out your work experience:

- Use bullet points rather than paragraphs. Writing out your experience in a list has the double benefit of using fewer words and making it easier for employers to read.
- Lead with *strong action verbs* and stress an accomplishment rather than a task. Employers are interested in what you've achieved, not just what you've done. What's the difference between an accomplishment and a task? Here are a few examples:

Task: *Greeted customers*

Accomplishment: *Provided friendly and helpful service by greeting customers.*

Task: Analyzed marketing campaign performance

Accomplishment: Reported on ROI of marketing campaigns, improving campaign efficiency by 20%.

Task: Took patient vitals and updated charts

Accomplishment: Performed routine clinical procedures while ensuring patient comfort and updating charts via an EMR system.

- Add *quantifiable results* whenever possible. This helps employers better understand your contributions. For example, an operations manager might write, “*Identified and implemented supply chain improvements which decreased fulfillment costs by 17%.*” Similarly, a retail sales associate might say, “*Regularly evaluated showroom inventory and refreshed displays with stock, increasing daily sales by 22%.*” Not every bullet point on your resume will have a quantifiable result. For everything you include, however, ask yourself if there is an applicable number that can help potential employers see your achievements clearly.
- Include more details about your most recent jobs and fewer details from roles you held earlier in your career. If you have many years of experience, it’s reasonable to only include information from the last 10 to 15 years. Employers are most likely to be interested in your current accomplishments. If you can, fill employment gaps with other experiences such as education or freelance work. Did you take classes, earn any certifications or volunteer during the time you weren’t formally employed? If you worked on personal projects or as a freelancer, you can put “*Self-employed*” where you would otherwise list an employer. The same guidelines about how to write out your accomplishments apply here, too.

What to include in the education section

These days, it’s common for education to be listed at the end of your resume.

Exceptions to this may be if you’re applying for jobs that require specific certifications (as in the healthcare industry, for example), or *if you are a recent*

graduate. In the education section of your resume, list all of the relevant degrees or certifications that make you qualified for this job. If you have attained a degree, list your degree type and field of study followed by the name of your educational institution and the city and state. List honors, if you have them. You don't need to include your GPA, especially if it's under 3.5. Unless you're a recent graduate, you don't need to list your graduation date. For example:

B.A. in History

University of Arizona, Tuscon, AZ

Honors: *magna cum laude*

A.A.S. in Cardiac Sonography

Bunker Hill Community College, Boston, MA

Honors: Dean's list

If you have multiple degrees, list your highest level of education first. If you have attended a program of study but didn't graduate, you can list the years you attended and the credits you received. For example:

Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN

2010–2012; Completed 75 credits towards a Bachelor's in Business Administration

If you are currently in a program of study, you can list the degree you're pursuing and your expected graduation date. If you're still in school and applying for internships, potential employers may want to know your GPA. For example:

B.S. in Computer Science, degree anticipated May 2020

Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA

GPA: 3.8

What to include in your skills section

In your skills section, you want to list the *professional skills* you have that make you qualified for the jobs you're applying for. Employers will indicate the skills they are

looking for in their job descriptions. Look closely at the posting, and if you have the required skills be sure to list them.

In general, there are two types of skills: soft skills and hard skills. Soft skills include things like interpersonal communication, organization or attention to detail. Hard skills are more often tied to specific tools, software or knowledge (speaking a foreign language, for example). Hard skills will vary by industry or job type while soft skills tend to be more universal. You can list your skills in a single paragraph with each skill separated by a comma. Start with the skills you're most proficient in. You may choose to call out your levels of mastery, for example:

Advanced in Excel, Quickbooks, ProSystems. *Some familiarity with* SAP and Checkpoint.

Pro-tip: If you're applying for a job where a specific skill is often taken for granted, don't list it. For many jobs, one example is Microsoft Office. Instead, focus on proficiencies within that skill. For instance, instead of listing "Microsoft Office," you could list "Macros, pivot tables and vlookups" if you know how to do these things in Excel.

Proofreading your resume

After taking the time to write a great resume, you don't want typos and spelling mistakes to get in the way of submitting a winning application. Reread your resume from top to bottom and then from bottom to top, correcting mistakes as you find them. It's also a good idea to ask a friend or family member to read it for you—they will look at it with fresh eyes and may find mistakes more readily.

Questions and tasks to Section 4

1. What are "core skills"?
2. What is the function of the "applicant tracking system"?
3. What is an optimal size of a resume?

4. What information about you should the headline (also known as “resume summary” or “resume objective”)?
5. What is the difference between a headline and a summary?
6. What is the difference between an accomplishment and a task?
7. Why is it advisable to provide quantifiable results and accomplishments?
8. What must be included in the education section of a resume?
9. Write the education section for your resume.
10. What must be included in the skills section of a resume?
11. Write the skills section for your resume.
12. How to best proofread your resume when it is completed?

Appendix to Section 4: Resume Samples

Applicant for the position of Business Manager

Cody Fredrickson

- Farwell TX
- (123) 456-7891
- cfredrickson@email.com

Summary

Enthusiastic Business Manager with over three years' experience envisioning and creating commercial solutions, collaborating to develop a brand, and supervising the development of ergonomic systems to ensure customer loyalty.

Education

- Coral Springs University (Aug. 10 – May. 14)
- Business Management/Accounting
- Bachelor's in Business Administration

Experience

- TradeLot Senior Manager (Jul. 15 – current)

- Investigated 100+ inventory items to guarantee appropriate levels of available stock
 - Utilized the services of 30+ personal shoppers and department managers to promote opportunities to enhance the business
 - Optimized 30+ events by inviting dormant clients to see the company's products and progress
 - Generated 40+ optimal outcomes by analyzing issues, formulating plans, and providing solutions
- Cloud Clearwater Operations Manager (Jan.14 – May. 15)
 - Collaborated with tenants to resolve issues involving 150+ single family homes
 - Increased revenue growth by 15%
 - Implemented 15+ development efforts and processes to increase revenue

Skills

- Project Management
- Payroll

Awards

- Lean Six Sigma Green Belt

Applicant for the position of HR Manager

Sofia Flores

- Nashville TN
- (123) 456-7891
- sflores@email.com

Summary

Organized and empathetic HR Manager with 3+ years of experience overseeing human resources duties including benefits management, onboarding and exit interviews. Increases employee satisfaction by advocating for expressed needs.

Education

- **HAWAII WESTERN** (Aug. 2004 – Aug. 2008)
- Bachelor of Science in Human Resources Management
- Professional in Human Resources (PHR) Certification

Experience

- **RIVER TECH** (Mar. 2015 – Jan. 2010)
- **Human Resources Manager**
 - Manage HR departments (payroll, benefits & recruiting) for 200+ employee company
 - Approve leaves of absence, tuition reimbursement and workers' compensation requests
 - Regularly update employee handbook with changes to background check requirements, onboarding and benefit packages
 - Implemented new benefits program to increase healthcare coverage, resulting in 15% spike in employee satisfaction
- **CLOUD CLEARWATER** (Sept. 2010 – Mar. 2015)
- **HR Generalist**
 - Helped with recruiting candidates for roles across the organization, collaborating extensively with department managers to understand requirements
 - Streamlined onboarding process for new hires, reducing average time from 10 to 4 days
 - Answered employee questions on 401(k) offerings, PTO and health plans

Skills

- Payroll & benefits
- Microsoft Office & QuickBooks

Навчальне видання

ТАРАСОВА Олена Владиславівна

**Some Guidelines To A Successful Interview
(with useful tips and sample answers)**

Навчальний посібник
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та «Соціальний менеджмент»

(англійською мовою)

В авторській редакції
Комп'ютерний набір *О.В. Тарасова*

Підписано до друку 1.10.2019. Формат 60×84/16.
Папір офсетний. Гарнітура «Times».
Ум. друк. арк. 3,02. Обл.-вид арк. 2,39.
Тираж пр. Зам. №

План 2019/2020 навч. рік, поз № ... в переліку работ кафедри

Видавництво
Народної української академії
Свідоцтво № 1153 від 16.12.2002

Надруковано у видавництві
Народної української академії
Свідоцтво № 1153 від 16.12.2002

Україна, 61000, Харків, МСП, вул. Лермонтовська, 27