

How to Answer Ten of the Most Common Interview Questions

Master the strategy behind the questions to become the candidate they can't wait to hire.



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Tell Me About Yourself

The Interviewer's Intent

The interviewer is trying to determine if you are a great fit for the job and the company. That's why you will focus what you share on demonstrating that you are a great fit.

Your Approach

Take 1-2 minutes to show how your background, skills, contributions, and career goals align with the job and company. Convey genuine enthusiasm.

Outline

1. Introduction

Open with a high level statement about your top relevant skills and the impact they make.

"I use my market analysis, content development, and social media skills to conceive, develop, and execute campaigns that significantly impact business results."

2. Give Specific Examples

Highlight relevant contributions.

"For the past three years as a digital marketer at XYZ Agency, I've led successful campaigns for clients in various industries, driving a 30% increase in online engagement for one of our major clients last year. The client was so pleased that they asked for me to lead their future campaigns."

I've also had the opportunity to manage the end-to-end marketing funnel for a number of key clients. By identifying the weak links and improving the conversion ratio for them, I enabled each of my clients to exceed their marketing goals."

One example involved an online retailer that was missing their revenue goals by 18%. After analyzing their web traffic, I developed a new purchase paths that enabled them to come in at 7% above goal after two quarters.”

3. Connect with the Company

Show how you resonate with the company’s mission, values, and/or culture.

“I’m especially excited about ABC’s emphasis on impacting bottom line results in a collaborative, win-win environment. I believe my optimistic, “let’s-dig-in-and-overcome-this-challenge-together” approach will enable me to fit right in and contribute at a high level from the start.”

4. Current Career Step

Explain how this role is the right next step for you in your career.

“I want to continue to develop my skills in digital strategy and analytics. I believe my background in data-driven marketing can contribute to your team's goal of expanding your online presence and customer engagement. I'm looking forward to bringing my passion for digital marketing and my experience in campaign optimization to your team.”

Pitfalls & Preventatives

Pitfall	Preventative
Wanting to tell the interviewer about all the amazing things you’ve done.	Show them instead how accomplished <i>and</i> emotionally mature you are by providing a response that powerfully and succinctly answers their question.
Talking too fast because you’re trying to cram in too much information.	Do you really want to sound like a used car salesperson?
Sharing experiences and contributions that aren’t relevant to the position.	Sometimes we call these people blabbermouths.

Analogies

- Don't take a shotgun approach, sharing all sorts of information with the idea that if you share broadly enough, some of it will hit the target. Some of it might, but the interviewer will probably be too bored to notice.
- Instead your answer should be like a rifle shot. Everything you share should be focused on and relevant to the position for which you are interviewing.
- Think about a time when you wanted to gather specific information about a major purchase. How did you feel when the salesperson went on and on about things that weren't important to you? Exactly. Don't be that salesperson.

In a Nutshell

The keys are to be genuinely enthusiastic about the position and to structure your answer around how your professional background, skills, and impact align with the position. Who wouldn't want to hire someone like that?

You Got This!

Let's assume you're applying because you have most if not all of the skills to be successful in the job. When they ask you, "Tell me about yourself," you're simply going to tell them about your relevant skills and back it up with examples that show the impact you had.

Variations

Variations of this question include:

- How would you describe yourself?
- What should I know about you?
- Tell me about your background.
- Go ahead and introduce yourself to me.