

## Practice Answering Questions

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You can improve your chances for success if you practice answering questions. Read the following questions and the coaching guidelines in parentheses. Write down your own personal answers, using the STAR method—Situation Task Action Result—as much as possible. Practice answering these questions with a partner.

1. Tell me about yourself. (Talk for approximately two minutes. Be logical. Be positive. Relate what you say about yourself to the job. Show some of your personality.)

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2. Why are you leaving your current position? Why did you decide to leave the military? (This is a critical question. Do not bad mouth your former employer, service branch, or previous supervisors. Remember, the person you are talking to may have served in the military or may have a child, spouse or sibling currently on active duty. It is good to state that after long personal consideration you and your family have decided it was time to consider opportunities in the civilian workforce.)

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3. What do you consider your most significant accomplishment? (This can get you the job. Prepare extensively. Tell a short story, which includes details and your professional involvement. Describe an accomplishment that was truly worth achieving. Include hard work, deadlines, overcoming obstacles, important company issues and relations with coworkers.)

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4. Why do you believe you are qualified for this position? (Pick two or three main factors about the job and about you that are most relevant. Discuss, with specific details. Select a technical skill, a specific management skill (organizing, staffing, planning) and a personal success story.)

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5. Have you ever accomplished something you did not think you could? (Show you are goal orientated and have a strong work ethic. Provide a good example of when you overcame difficulties to succeed.)

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6. What do you like or dislike about your current position? (Interviewer may be trying to determine your compatibility with the open position. Avoid complaining about your dislikes and keep the answer positive.)

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7. How do you handle pressure? Do you like or dislike these situations? (High achievers tend to perform well in high pressure situations. Conversely, this question also could imply that the position is pressure packed. If you perform well under stress, provide a good example with details, giving an overview of the stress situation. Try to relay the situation as a challenge rather than focusing on your ability to handle pressure. The interviewer will see you turn a negative into a positive situation.)

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8. Good employees can take the initiative and get the job done. Can you describe yourself in terms of this statement? (A proactive, results-oriented person does not need constant supervision. To convince the interviewer you know how to take initiative you must describe a situation in which you were self-motivated. Try to discuss at least one example in-depth. Demonstrate a strong work ethic and creativity.)

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9. What is the most difficult aspect about your career? How would you have done things differently in hindsight? (This is a question to find out if you are introspective and if you learn from your mistakes. The right answer indicates an open, flexible personality. Do not be afraid to talk about negative results or problem issues, particularly if you have learned from them. Dynamic, high-performance individuals learn from mistakes. End your story on a positive note.)

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10. How have you grown or changed over the past few years? (This is a question to find out if you are a well-balanced, intelligent individual with technical skills. Overcoming personal obstacles or recognizing manageable challenges can make you an approachable and desirable employee.)

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11. What do you consider your most significant strengths? (Know four or five key strengths. Be able to discuss each with a specific example. Select those attributes that are most compatible with the job opening. Most people mention management ability or good interpersonal skills in response to this question. If you cannot describe the specific characteristics of management, such as planning, organizing, budgeting, staffing, etc., do not say you have strong management skills. If you mention interpersonal skills you should be able to clearly explain what you mean.)

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12. What do you consider your most significant challenge? (Show by example how a weakness can be a learning opportunity. Balance any negative with a positive statement identifying how you are overcoming this weakness.)

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#### Additional Questions

- What goals have you set recently?
- What do you think of your current/past supervisor?
- What do your supervisors/employees think of you?
- Can you describe your management style?
- Why should I hire you?
- What jobs have you held? Why did you leave?
- Why did you choose this field of work?
- How do you spend your spare time?
- What personal characteristics do you feel are necessary for success in this field?
- Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?
- What kind of supervisor do you prefer?
- How do you respond to negative feedback?

The more you practice answering interview questions, the better you become.