



While in an interview, you are bound to come across questions, which are very tricky and can leave you speechless. The questions can be related to anything, it maybe something personal about you, it may be something about the organization; it may be a situation in which your reaction will be judged or could be something simple but practical. You have to be very quick witted in these situations and with a calm

How to Answer Tricky Questions in an Interview

of weakness, there is a high risk that the rest of the interview can fall into the pit.



There are a few guidelines for every question, which provides a base for every question. Using these guidelines, one can easily create a possibly strong answer. Guidelines for most asked interview questions are given below.

Tell me Something About Yourself

Most of the interviews begin with this question. Obviously, every candidate is prepared for this question and answers this question in the most confident manner. However, it is necessary to keep in mind here that the HR manager only wants to know the relevant details that are actually necessary, if you go on about telling your life story from the time you grew up, there is no doubt that you will soon be hunting for another job opening in some other firm.

There are many different cases observed, where the candidate talks about his or her complex past situations and how there is no peace and harmony at his or her home. There should be nothing negative in your answer as these things are not meant to be brought up in an interview voluntarily. It creates a bad image; moreover, you should only be talking about your education, qualifications and career.

There is no point speaking more than needed. Restrict your answer to only details that are relevant. Ideally one should restrict answer to this question in five sentences.

- *My name is [First Name] [Last Name]*
- *I stay in [area name]*
- *I have completed [highest qualification... instead of M. Com. Say Masters in Commerce] in [Year] from [Institute Name].*
- *Overall I have [x] years of experience and am currently working as [current designation] with [company name] since [start of the current job e.g. March 2016]*
- *My manager and colleagues have always appreciated my [top two qualities that you have and are relevant to the job you are applying for – e.g. Communication Skills, Quick Learner, Positive Approach, Attention to Detail, Teamwork, Leadership, Focus on Numbers, Accuracy, Quick Turnaround Time, Multi-task, Creativity, Dedication, Research oriented, etc]*

The interviewer will then have an opportunity to ask questions based on these points and decide the course of interview. If there is anything else that the interviewer wishes to know about you, then he or she will ask you about it. I have provided an answer to this question below, which I explained to one of my students during the “Interview Success Workshop” that I conducted in Mumbai at one of our training centers.

What was the reason for leaving your last job?

This is one of the trickiest questions asked in an interview. Remember; do not bad mouth your previous employer in any scenario. You have to present yourself in an utmost positive manner and there should not be any negative signs from your side. Talking bad about your old boss, company or peers is considered as extremely unprofessional and can decrease your chances of getting the job by a large margin. The best way to answer this question is to talk about career advancement and the new company which you are applying for is the right choice for you.

Answering this question can be a bit different for the ones who were fired from their previous job. If you were fired, please do not try to cover it up or lie about it in the interview. There are great chances that the company will check your background

anyway, so it is better to come clean from the start. The best way to answer this question if you were fired is to keep it brief and simple. Turn your negative points into positive points by talking about how it was a learning experience for you and what did you do to make up for the mistakes then.

Talking about moving on with good confidence can give you extra points. For example, *“My skills were not too useful in my previous post. Also, my boss and I had a very different way of thinking and we decided that I should move on to a job where my skills were better used.”*



Which other companies have you applied for?

I suggest that you be relaxed when this question is asked. The main motive behind asking this question is to ensure that you are quite serious about finding a new job. If you have applied for a job in many different companies, remember not to give

out the entire details, you don't want to sound too desperate and give them the idea that you will take any job available.

You need to sound professional and confident, mention one or two good companies, offering a decent salary to give them an idea that you have capabilities and you aim high. More importantly convince them that you actually are very serious in getting a new job.

What are your strengths?

If you think of it, this question is one of the easiest questions that you might have come across. The mistake that most people make while answering this question is that, many people give very common answers. Now what does a very common answer mean? It means an answer that many or everyone usually gives- for example, "I'm pretty hardworking" or "I am very loyal to the company I work for" and so on. Your answer depends on the kind of job you're applying for. Like, if you are applying for an accountancy position, you cannot say that you are good at clerical work.

The answer that you give should ring a bell in the interviewer's mind and make him or her think that, you have something that the other applicants might not have. Use words that show that

you have skills which are useful for the job that you are applying for. Avoid words and behaviour that may look or feel very generic. Let us take an example of a graphic designer answering this question:

“As a graphic designer, my greatest strength is that I understand the need of various people and turn it into the final design work. My passion for creativity and mastery over most features of Photoshop add glitter to gold. Moreover, I can blend in with people easily and so I have great compatibility of working in a team.”

What are your weaknesses?

Where strengths may feel like the easiest questions to answer, undoubtedly one would say that answering questions related to weaknesses is also pretty easy. No. The questions related to weaknesses are the hardest to answer.

At the same time, if you think that saying you have little to none weaknesses might give you a stand in the interview, you are extremely wrong. If you say that you have nothing that you must work on, you will come out as being very much arrogant. Speak of a weakness that will not ruin your chances of getting selected, and that can also maintain a very good impression in front of the interviewer. When they are asking your weaknesses, it is one hundred per cent work related, so do not

talk of domestic weaknesses, such as helping in chores around the house and baking cakes.

These answers will sound extremely absurd and the interviewer will think that you cannot comprehend the questions and tasks given to you.

The best advice would be to tell a work related weakness and then follow it up by giving examples that you can work on it. If you admit your real weakness, and convince the person in front of you that you can work on it, the interviewer can trust you more. Again, the job that you are applying for will determine the answer you give. I would like to provide an answer that I gave to one of my students Sheetal Sharma during the “Interview Success Workshop” conducted in Hyderabad a few months ago.



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How do you handle extremely stressful situations?

One of the most common question asked in almost all the interviews across the world is, how you deal with stress. It is obvious that you will face many stressful situations in your personal life as well as work life. The interviewer wants to know how you handle that pressure in a healthy way.

No employer would like to have an employee in his office who shouts at other employees or talks rude with the customers just because he had a rough day. Make sure you give them an idea of how positive you are and give examples of how you handled stressful situations in your real life.

You are likely to encounter many stressful situations in jobs like customer service, call centre or other jobs where you have to deal with the customers directly. Therefore, if you are applying for one of these jobs, your interviewer will most likely ask you this question in order to understand if you can cope with different kind of customers who want to enjoy all the benefits the company has to offer.

It is important to emphasize that you are a very calm and have high tolerance for stress and give relevant examples of stressful situations in which you stayed calm, managed the situation and coped up with stress in a very healthy manner.

Here are a few tips that will help you answer this question.

- Everyone has their own way of dealing with stress and often all the ways are not healthy, so mention only the positive things you do to keep your cool.
- Narrow down your answer to the stress faced at workplace and try to avoid talking about the stress you face in your personal life.
- Please do not talk about how you will stop the angry babbling customer with your own dictionary.

Example answer –

“I usually have a very high tolerance for stressful situations and handle stress well. I try to keep my cool and understand the situation first, and then try to find a solution in a professional manner. To illustrate, once a customer was very irritated on the fact that the store’s return policy was only available for 30 days and she exceeded her time limit. She was quiet loud and was also using an abusive language. However, I remained calm and carefully explained the policy and why was it placed. When I had the situation in control, I

then showed her some other similar items that she could try. I believe that the only reason that the customer calmed down was because I remained calm and kept my cool."

Why should the company hire you for this job?

This is a very frequently asked question in most interviews. The answer is pretty simple, right? Just make the interviewer know what you already know about yourself. They should hire you because obviously you are the right one for this job! You have got to let them know about your competence, your skills that make you the right applicant to be hired. Well most of the candidates you are competing with, might have already put in their skills and competence.

But you have to showcase your skills that make you unique and the best of you! You have to show the interviewer that you are extremely enthusiastic to start working, and that you can create the best work environment, that other people or candidates cannot. You have to show them, how passionate you are about your work and your job. You shouldn't just say that you will do your job well, instead you should give them the assurance with specific examples, that at times of difficulties, you will be there for the firm you are working for, and can help other people do their jobs harmoniously.

When you are talking about your competence, put all your attention on your body language, since body language plays a very important role in how the person sitting in front of you perceives you. Body language is very easy to master if you follow the right steps. You have to sit upright in your chair, and your expressions must bring in a very positive atmosphere within the room and also within the mind of the hiring manager. When you are giving the answer, make sure you describe the importance of your job and also list out your previous accomplishments.

If you are a newbie, list out your accomplishments during our college term. Give examples while listing out your accomplishments. Make sure you talk about public relations and colleague relations as well.

"I am a financial analyst with five years of work experience. In the company I am working with, I have been promoted twice within 3 years as they recognized my analytical skills. I follow the highest work ethics and have a passion for analyzing data and companies. In addition, I have five years of experience with one of the best companies in industry. I think I am the best suited candidate for this position."

Author's Business Profile

Name of the Author: Piyush Bhatia

Business Activity: Founder & CEO, BM English Speaking Institute Pvt. Ltd.

Address: 125, Cinemax (Now PVR) Theatre Compound, Opp. Railway Crossing, Kandivali (W),
Mumbai - 400 067



Training Centers in Mumbai:

<p>BM English Speaking - Borivali (West) Center 201-202, Goyal Shopping Center, Opp. Borivali (West) Station, Mumbai - 400 092. Map: https://goo.gl/maps/DePPMc8cfVq Ph.: 97694 42224 kandivali@bmconsultantsindia.com</p>	<p>BM English Speaking - Andheri (East) Center A-204, Vertex Vikas, Opp. Jumbo Xerox, Opp. Railway Station, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400 049. Map: https://goo.gl/2aMkRw Ph.: +9198197 05203 andherieast@bmconsultantsindia.com</p>
<p>BM English Speaking - Dadar (West) Center 22, 2nd Floor, Bismillah Building, Opp. Suvidha, Ranade Road, Opp. Dadar (W) Station, Mumbai - 400 028. Map: https://goo.gl/M01of5 Ph.: +9198209 88846 dadar@bmconsultantsindia.com</p>	<p>BM English Speaking - Thane (West) Center 4-5, Patel Apartments, Opp. McDonald's, Gokhale Road, Opp. Thane (West) Station, Thane - 400 601 Map: https://goo.gl/fl9mAf Ph.: +919920237774</p>

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