

A Better Job Interview Questions and Technique Answer Book (Mini-Abridged Version)

Using the technique HR people don't want you to know

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Words from the Editor:

This book is dedicated to all job seekers and employers, providing a useful reference for dealing with interviews effectively.

In July 2002, we published the book called "A Better Interview – Questions and Technique" which has quickly become a popular download at download.com. The book is a lucid consolidation of 101 questions; distilled from among nearly 1,000 questions we have asked our candidates and employers in the past three years' preparation.

The idea of this answer book came about after we received a lot of enquiries on how to answer the questions listed in the original question book. Most of the questions are already covered in the answer book, with the exception of those which have been consolidated for easier reading. A lot of additional information has also been added to make the book more comprehensive and informative for job seekers and HR professionals alike.

It is my intention to keep this book constantly updated and revised. You are welcome to join our mail list to get all latest news or updates from our company, simply by sending a blank email to bookupdate@itotalsearch.com.

Any comment? Please send to editor@itotalsearch.com.

A job interview can last anything between 30 minutes to more than two hours. Apart from verbal discussion, interviewee may also be requested to perform specific writing test and demonstrate public speaking skills to assist in the assessment.

We are here to help. We hope you find this book useful.

From the desk of

Damen L.C Choy

Editor

FOR CANDIDATES

WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR

Are Employers interested in you? Definitely! They are interested to know what you can contribute to the company, i.e., how your ability relates to their personal and corporate interests. They are not concerned about you as a person, but about the qualities you have that may be of interest to them.

Employers are looking for your:

- ◆ Thinking**
- ◆ Work history**
- ◆ Performance track record**
- ◆ Motivation to become part of the company**
- ◆ Communication skills**
- ◆ How attractive you present yourself**
- ◆ Qualifications**

Candidates should try their best to prepare themselves for interviews. We will discuss more on this area in the subsequent section.

FOR EMPLOYERS

WHAT CANDIDATES ARE LOOKING FOR

Employers who want to have a fruitful interview with the candidates should understand the concerns that go on in the candidates' minds in the first place.

Candidates are trying to find out what you think. They are interested in how you treat your employees, and whether they can get along with you if they are hired for the job.

- Are you capable of providing a warm and comfortable working environment?
- Are you displaying a sense of urgency in recruiting the right people to fill the position?
- Are you open-minded enough to let him/her to know every hidden agenda behind the opening?
- What is your impression of him/her?

CANDIDATES: How To Get Prepared For An interview.

- It has been said that the chemistry between candidate and employer happens very early in the interview – as early as the first 15 minutes. Yes, it cannot be any truer. For job candidate, make sure you have done the followings before you go for an interview:

- Study your potential employer
- Study the interviewer's details including his/her full name, position and correct pronunciation of his / her title.
- Dress "properly"
- Arrive punctually or before the scheduled time of your interview
- Bring all relevant documents in support of your academic qualifications and work history
- Be open minded and smile

Study your Potential Employers

Internet provides a useful source of information when it comes to researching your potential employer. Here are some good resources:

- Hoovers.com
- Prnewswire.com
- Quicken.com
- Companiesonline.com
- Jobvault.com
- Businessweek.com

Try the search engine to locate the website of the company you are looking for. Business.com and google.com are good options.

Interview Dress

Make sure your dress code matches! Wearing a tie or executive suit may not be mandatory. In truth, there are employers who concern little about what the interviewees wear. We have clients who wear very casually at work, especially those from the technology, advertising and financial fields. Therefore, the best thing is to ask before you go. Still, the traditional attire remains the safest choice if you are not sure how to dress for the interview. Men should wear a dark suit, white shirt with black shoes. Women? A skirted suit or tailored dress with a matching jacket makes the best impression.

First impression is very important. Bring along your smile and present yourself decently to everybody you may run into over the course of the interview, from the receptionist and secretary to the interviewer....

Bringing the Documents

In the western world, and probably some international cities, human interactions build upon a measure of trust. Many people simply don't bother to bring their personal documents to interviews because they expect the interviewers to "trust" them.

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Yes, this is very true but the fact is that bringing along relevant documents does address many issues other than "trust":

- ◆ You are ready to meet whatever requirements the interviewers may have because you have proof.
- ◆ You understand your potential employer's requirements clearly because you have all "supporting" documents.
- ◆ You are showing your sincere desire for the job and you are well prepared for it.
- ◆ You can clarify at once any interviewers' doubt about your work history, academic qualifications or whatever information related to your application for the job. Chances are you may have only one opportunity to showcase your ability to the interviewers.

Interview is a two-way process. Not only does employer want to get a clear picture of the candidates' suitability for a particular position, it also offers an important chance for job seekers to evaluate whether this potential employer is the one he/she is looking for.

It is not easy to accomplish such a demanding task within just a matter of hours. It encompasses certain skills. These skills are what you should equip yourself with in preparation for the conversation that follows.....

THE QUESTIONS.....

I am trying to formulate the discussion according to the most commonly asked questions during an interview. At times, however, I would elaborate more on certain areas during whichever I think necessary. There altogether 20 chapters covering most of the

101 questions in our original question booklet “A Better Interview – Questions and Techniques”.

Chapter 1 Breaking the Ice

Why do you think you are a good fit for this job?

Why do you apply this job/ Why do you come to this interview?

Can you give me a reason why I should offer you this opening?

There are two aspects in which you can answer this question. The first one is how well you understand the specifications of the job. The second is how you think you fit the required specifications.

Before presenting your suitability for the position, elaborate your understanding of the opening. You can break down the specifications into areas like academic backgrounds, technical skills required, previous specific experiences, aptitudes, talents and characters. More importantly, how you think a particular area of skills or other missing elements from the candidate that can further contribute to the opening.

Then you can go on to discuss your personal attributes, especially your talents or skills in special areas that can fill in the missing piece of the puzzle you mentioned earlier.

The interviewer may or may not agree with you. That does not matter. The true intention is to let them know that you have studied the job specifications thoroughly and you have gone through a thinking process before you come to the interview. If the interviewer does not agree to your interpretation, he/she will voice out his/her opinion. That is good because you can understand more about the opening. This helps you identify the “unsaid” requirements/qualities they look for that you also possess but have overlooked before.

This is a good time to break the ice and engage the interviewer in the conversation.

To answer the question “ Can you give me a reason why I should offer you this opening”, you can thank for the interviewer’s time to meet with you at the beginning, and then show him/her you are confident that your qualifications and experiences can satisfy their requirements, Prove to the interviewer that you are the right person. Express your sincere attitude by answering their questions with enthusiasm and, remember, that is the reason you are here for the interview!

Why did you quit you last job? Why do you want to quit your present job?

Interviewer who asks this question might not be looking for the truth of your quitting. Rather, he is trying to find out your attitude at work – is it your personal goal or the company's interest that you give priority to?

No matter what motivates the interviewer to ask this question, do not black mouth your previous employer(s). You should not directly criticize your employers, no matter how bad or unfair you have been treated. This is not professional and it serves as a bad proxy for how you would behave after he/she employs.

Rather, you should focus on your career goals/objectives and present an objective narration of your present or previous job. Try to discuss with the interviewer about possible "misalignment" of your expectations with your present job and how hard you have struggled in vain to improve the situation.

Speak about the positive aspects (no matter how bad it actually is/was) of your present/previous job that helps your learning and increases your exposure (Sometimes, surviving a difficult situation in your company like massive layoff, restructuring or pay cut can be a “good” exercise because it helps you grow and become more hardworking and proactive).

In this way, the employer would have a good impression of your maturity and endurance to overcome difficult situation. That is just the quality that every employer looks regardless of the position you are applying for.

Chapter 2

Sell Yourself By Your History

Why did you choose your college/school?

Why did you choose to study abroad? Did you learn anything from that experience?

This is not a difficult question to answer. In fact, employers tend to favor people with independence. Therefore, if you happened to travel thousand miles away for your study, do emphasize it on your resume. They are interested to know how you manage to get through the time when you have to live on your own and have no one but yourself to depend on.

Regarding the reason for your choice of college/school or specialisation of study, always remember to bring up your desire to grow and learn. You may have a million of reasons to engage in a particular field of study, but the one that catches the employers' attention is your plan for life, your determination to succeed and your view on learning.

This question is a good chance to share with your potential employer how aggressive you are in pursuing your personal endeavour. Your perseverance to get things done properly is an important asset you can offer to your employer.

Chapter 3

Are You Multi-lingual?

Do you speak French, Spanish, and Mandarin or other languages...?

Do you use other languages in your work?

Do you perform public speaking in languages other than your first language?

It is always good to master more than one language. Therefore if you know more than one language, do discuss it with your potential employer.

Be honest and do not exaggerate your language ability. If you can speak, read and write a foreign language fluently, do emphasise it in your interview. If not, don't pretend that you can. Chances are, the interviewer would test your ability to speak a particular language on the spot. There is no point cheating here.

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If you learn some new languages by chance during your previous travels, do discuss it casually with your interviewers. Even if you know just a few words for greeting people, ordering food or asking for direction, it is always interesting to share with them. It brings you closer to the interviewer and shows your openness and interest in other cultures.

If you can deliver public speech in other languages, it shows that you have already developed an in-depth understanding of these languages. If

you can write your customers a proposal/report in other languages, it further confirms your competence in communicating in writing. It is always a good strategy to demonstrate it in the interview.

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