Frequently asked interview questions and how to answer them!

Q. Tell me about yourself.
A. Focus on your experience and skills that relate to the position being offered. This is your opportunity to emphasize professional accomplishments. Use your resume summary as a starting point, and keep your answer short.

Q. Why do you want to join our company?
A. This is where your research about the company will pay off. Discuss how you can make a contribution. Be specific! Communicate your excitement about the chance to be involved. If you want more details about the business, ask!

Q. Where do you see yourself five years from now?
A. The interviewer is interested in whether or not you’ve set career goals. State your long-range goals related to the job. Your research into the company will help you determine whether or not its goals are consistent with yours.

Q. Describe your strengths and weaknesses.
A. Focus on your strongest skills, but make sure they are relative to the position being offered. If you’re discussing weaknesses, turn a negative into a positive; cite an example of a minor weakness and describe how you overcame it and how you are better for it.

Q. What salary are you looking for?
A. Try to avoid naming a number that could be too high for the company or too low to compensate you adequately. Instead, try answering with the question, “What is the salary range for similar jobs in your company?” Be sure to research beforehand what you’re worth in the marketplace. Contact staffing firms, trade associations, or search the Web to determine salary ranges in your area comparable to the position you’re considering. Know the going rate before you’re asked the money question!

Tips for negotiating your salary.

Tip #1: Know your worth before the interview. You’ll need to do some research to determine the typical salary range for someone with your experience and background in a similar job. Your state or county employment offices, professional associations and acquaintances, published job listings, and the Internet are excellent sources of data.

Tip #2: Negotiate carefully. If an offer isn’t what you expected, restate the value you can bring to the company and highlight your skills. Say that you were hoping for more, but don’t inflate your counter offer. Remember, money isn’t everything — there may be great benefits and opportunities for advancement to consider.

Keys to Successful Interviews