



One interview question candidates frequently hear in a job interview is, “What motivates you?”

Interviewers love to ask this question because a candidate’s answer can reveal whether they may be a good fit for a position. For candidates, this question provides an opportunity to reveal more about themselves.

How should a candidate answer the "what motivates you" interview question?

We asked human resource professionals, business owners, and job seekers for their best insights. Here are nine tips to craft an answer to the interview question, “What motivates you?”

- Ensure You’re Authentic
 - Incorporate The Company’s Mission Statement
 - Include Personal Motivators
 - Rewrite Your Resume in Stories and Themes
 - Tie it Back to the Company’s Service
 - Have the Interviewer’s Intentions In Mind
 - What Motivates You to Better Yourself?
 - Share a Story
 - Discuss What Motivated You to Apply to This Job
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Ensure You're Authentic

When answering this question, the most important thing is to ensure that your answer is authentic. Recruiters can tell when you are simply telling them what they want to hear, so spend some time thinking about what truly motivates you and how that creates value for your employer. The best answers are always true to the candidate but also exemplify why they are a great cultural fit as well.

Kristy Bach, [BestCompaniesTexas](#)

Incorporate The Company's Mission Statement

The best way to answer this question is to find a way to incorporate the company's mission statement into your answer. For example, my company's mission statement is to connect small businesses with customers... and have a good time doing it. If I was asked this question, I would say that I am motivated by creating true value for my clients by generating high-quality leads for them that allow them to prosper and expand their business.

Nikitha Lokareddy, [Markitors](#)

Include Personal Motivators

I always like when people answer genuinely and personally about what motivates them in their work. Money, success, and status are things that motivate everyone. I love when parents answer this question and talk about their kids or their spouse and tell me a story that allows me to get to know them on a deeper level. It builds connection and makes the candidate stand out!

Ryan Nous, [TruPath](#)

Rewrite Your Resume in Stories and Themes

The real question is how do you prepare to answer that question. The answer lies in understanding what deeply, intrinsically motivates you at work. That means you need to be able to honestly and confidently talk about where you find purpose.

To do that, rewrite your resume. Instead of titles and accomplishments think in terms of a story. Write down why you made the decisions you did and how they made you feel and how they turned out. Then look for the themes. Those themes are your key to understanding where you really found purpose in your work. Now go back and look at the investments you made in developing your skills to support that purpose. Last, reflect on the level of freedom you expected

in a role where you found great purpose and had the skills to do the job. You're now prepared to answer the question. Talk about motivation in terms of purpose, your drive to develop skills to realize that purpose, and your desire to be given the autonomy to deliver results.

Dr. Jeb Hurley, [TrustMetryx](#)

Tie it Back to the Company's Service

This is the perfect chance to convey that you're a culture fit for a potential employer. Rather than picking your brain for the perfect trait that will wow hiring managers by how motivated you are—focus on the product or service that they offer. You can always lead with: "I am motivated to support a great product"—and then proceed to list why you adore what they have to offer. And be honest, rather than a fib. Focus on the company's values for their current customer base (why people love the product), future opportunities, and why *you* can contribute to support its long-term growth once you get the job. Recruiters interview dozens of candidates before making an offer—and they can differentiate the motivated ones who actually like the product from those who keep things generic. And so, don't forget to dive deep into why you love the product on offer.

Hung Nguyen, [Smallpdf](#)

Have the Interviewer's Intentions In Mind

When someone asks "What motivates you?" in an interview, they're not just looking for another random tidbit of information about you. They're also trying to figure out whether you'd care about what you'd be doing and bring the full weight of your abilities to bear in this particular role at this particular company. They want to know if you'll be an engaged, happy, and productive worker inspired to do your very best in that environment. What they're ultimately looking for is, does this person in some way align with the things that we believe in here, our values and behaviors, and our company mission. Reflect on past experiences that align with the role and company. Be authentic and honest and share an example.

[Mark Christensen](#), People & Partnerships

What Motivates You to Better Yourself?

As a Recruitment Leader, I look for someone to address this question with an answer focused on intrinsic motivation. As in, what motivates them is along the lines of working to better oneself. Those who are intrinsically motivated and compete to become their best self are self-starters, hungry to be coached and learn, and are not focused on external social comparisons. It is human nature to compare our bloopers to others' highlight reel.

Steven Brown, [DP Electric Inc](#)

Share a story

Let's face it. A lot of a job interview just scratches the surface. The "what motivates you" interview question can unlock some key insights to help an interviewer determine whether a candidate may be a fit. For me, I'm looking for a story to support an answer. When candidates just say they're motivated by money, or family, or to be the best, I'll look for a story to help justify their answer. Candidates should be prepared to have a story to support their motivation so that interviewers can then share their story with their decision-making team.

Brett Farmiloe, [Best of HR](#)

Discuss What Motivated You to Apply to This Job

This question speaks to the candidate's drive and that is not easily measured. A great way to figure out what motivates you and in turn would be a good answer would be to consider the reasons behind why you applied for the job in the first place. Did some element of the company's culture stand out to you? Do you think you have some unique insights that you can share to help the business achieve its goals? Examples can come from experiences that can be seen as motivating such as meeting deadlines, learning new skills, and leading a project from start to finish.

Ronald Kubitz, [Forms+Surfaces](#)

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