

Tackling the Toughest Interview Questions

Job interviews can be daunting experiences for even the most experienced of professionals.

Most people usually prepare for their interview by researching the company to understand more about the role they've applied for. However, learning how to answer the most common behavioural and competency-based questions with confidence can really set you apart from other candidates in the running.

With January just around the corner, this month's Guardian Jobs blog explores everything you need to know about interview questions – what to look for and how to respond with the answers that will land you your next dream job.

How to answer behavioural interview questions

During a job interview, the hiring manager will want to understand more about the candidate's personality and intangible qualities, as well as their hard skills. Is the candidate a good team player? Will they demonstrate leadership qualities in the role? What motivates them, and what sort of energy will they bring to the position if they were chosen?

In a hiring round where several candidates are all equally qualified, employers will look to hire the best cultural fit for the role – the candidate who best aligns with the company's values and would adapt most naturally to the team dynamic.

Behavioural interview questions are a great way for hiring managers to find this information out from candidates in front of them. If you're looking for a new role or are currently interviewing, understanding these common questions can help your chances of appealing to hiring managers.

These can appear in a range of topics, and include:

- **Conflict resolution:** Can you give me an example of a time where you've resolved conflict between two colleagues?

- **Time management:** Share with us an example of when you've needed to manage multiple competing priorities in your career.
- **Leadership:** How would you define your leadership style?
- **Teamwork:** What is your strategy for working with others, and how would you manage a project to get the best out of your team members?
- **Overcoming challenges:** What is the most challenging project you've faced in your career, and how did you handle the adversity?

Approaching each question with the STAR method (situation, task, action, and result) provides structure to your answers and can highlight your contributions effectively to hiring managers.

[CTA] [Read more about answering behavioural interview questions](#)

How to answer management interview questions

Team managers play an important role in any workplace and any profession. They bring colleagues with contrasting personalities and skill sets together to achieve a common goal, and work with others to help them deliver their best work.

Many professionals become managers through experience, working their way up into leadership roles over time. However, you can still apply for management roles without experience if you can prove you have the professional qualities to succeed.

The role of a manager is complex and requires a diverse range of skills. During an interview, you can expect to be asked questions and share examples about your leadership style, conflict resolution skills and people management skills.

Here are some common management interview questions you should master responses to for your next interview:

- **What is your management style?**
- **How do you like to delegate tasks?**
- **Share with us an example of when you've dealt with a challenging employee.**
- **How do you inspire and motivate others in your team?**
- **How do you handle conflicts of opinion between colleagues in your team?**

Preparing honest and specific answers to each common question with relevant and detailed examples from past successes throughout your career will help recruiters and hiring managers see how you can fit into their work environment and how you could be the best candidate for their position.

[CTA] [Read more about how to answer management interview questions](#)

How to answer interview questions about professional weaknesses

Nobody's perfect. While it may be easy to convince ourselves that we need to present as the perfect candidate during an interview, hiring managers won't share this expectation. Instead, they are looking for the best candidate with the skills required for the job and the interpersonal qualities to thrive in their work environment.

That's why many recruiters and hiring managers like to ask the "what is your greatest weakness" question. It presents an opportunity for the candidate to show some self-awareness and humility, allowing them to see a more authentic side to the candidate, and whether they have a desire for self-improvement.

It can be challenging as a candidate to answer this question without sounding insincere or incompetent. Yet when you prepare for interviews, it's important to reflect on your professional weaknesses and identify areas for improvement.

There's nothing wrong with having professional weaknesses — everyone does. Remember that hiring managers are looking for candidates with a genuine interest in personal development and growth.

Preparing a candid and authentic answer to the professional weakness question can improve your chance of securing a role, and help the employer advance on support to counteract the areas you are continuing to develop.

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