

## QUESTIONS ASKED IN JOB INTERVIEWS

### ① Tricky questions frequently asked in job interviews

#### Why do you want to work for our company of all companies? Why in this position/job?

**Response:** Show them you have done some research, have carefully selected the company, give reasons for your interest, show them that you know the company well. However avoid flattering them and never pretend you don't care ("I don't know", "It happened by chance", etc.)

In this connection you will frequently be asked with how many companies you have applied already. Your interview partner wants to find out if his/her company has been your first choice or only a stopgap solution.

It goes without saying that very often you will have applied with some other companies before. In that case it is even more important to signal the interviewer that you have thorough background knowledge about the company and real interest in the position.

#### Why should we recruit you prior to other applicants?

**Response:** Present yourself, your abilities, skills and interests; above all, you should underline that your abilities match the company's requirements. However, avoid any exaggerations (and understatements), and hide your light under a bushel either. Above all you should focus on supra-disciplinary skills and qualifications such as the ability to work in teams, independence, reliability, trustworthiness, commitment, analytical thinking, etc.

Remember that it will not be enough to just maintain you have particular skills but also have to prove / furnish evidence, which means you should think beforehand about which of the abilities and skills you have already applied in practice.

**A tip:** There is one question that may help you find out what you are particularly good at, namely: What are the situations in which your friends approach you and say: "You should do that, you are the best in it!"

#### What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?

When the interviewer asks these questions, he or she mainly wants to test your self-confidence and examine whether you are well-prepared. – Also here, you must stick to the truth by all means!

**Response:** List your strengths, but only those that are of relevance for the job. This question is also an opportunity to bring your social skills (confer question 2) into play.

## What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?

Regarding weaknesses, interviewers want to find out if there is anything that makes you unsuited for the position.

**Response:** Select some innocent weaknesses that have no bearing on work performance or are not relevant for your career wish (for example, when applying for a secretarial position, lacking handicraft skills would not be a weakness of any relevance for the job). List reasons why you don't like to have these weaknesses.

## What are your salary expectations?

Should you apply for an apprenticeship post, the remuneration for apprentices will usually be predetermined by collective bargaining agreements. But also here you have the opportunity to show you're well prepared by telling the interviewer how high the remuneration is for your apprenticeship occupation.

In the rest of cases, you should be well prepared for this question. The line is thin between "selling yourself too cheaply" and "overshooting the mark", i.e. asking for an unreasonably high pay.

This means you should have a clear picture of what to expect (e.g. how much you need to earn to make a living) as well as what would be a realistic salary for this job in the respective sector of industry. Collective bargaining agreements, for example, will serve to provide you with some orientation. Additional factors playing a major role in this context are your professional experience, other skills and qualifications, your age and frequently the sector and region where the company is located.

## ② Some other questions which you should be well prepared for:

- What do you know about our company? Do you know what fields our company is active in?
- How do you imagine your work in this occupation?
- What previous experience do you have in this field?
- Do you prefer working alone or in a team? What sort of people do like working together with?
- What were your favourite subjects at school? (always state reasons)
- What were the subjects you didn't like? (always state reasons)
- Why were your marks in e.g. German, mathematics so poor?
- How do you see your professional future (in 5 or 10 years)? What does your personal life planning look like?
- What would you do if you didn't get this job?
- What do you do in your spare time? What are your hobbies? NOTE: Don't list too many hobbies, because that would signal that leisure time is more important to you than your work (two to three hobbies, which ideally will be connected also with skills that are important for the vacancy).
- What should you have done differently in your life from today's viewpoint?

This is, of course, merely a selection of possible questions. Always remember that also your interviewers have their limits. If you have the impression that a question would take you too far afield and does not play a role for the filling of the position (or should not play a role), and is none of the interviewer's business, point this out to him or her politely but in a self-assured manner (such as questions about political views, religion, etc.).

### **③ However, you should by all means also ask questions yourself, including e.g.**

- Which development opportunities does your company offer?
- What are the continuing and further training options your company supports/finances?
- In which department will I work? How many colleagues will I have in the department?
- Who will be my next point of contact (trainer)?
- What are my working hours, overtime regulations, regulations on annual leave/holiday?
- Are there any special work clothes or clothing regulations?
- When will be my first day of work?
- Could I have a look at my future workplace?
- And, particularly important: What will happen next in the application procedure?