

## 6 Tough Interview Questions Revealed by Employers

When you're competing against smart, qualified applicants – dazzling your future employer with a stellar interview performance is what's going to put you over the top!

Employers use the interview as an opportunity to weed out the candidates who just don't mesh well in terms of personality, culture and values. And they are going to toss some difficult questions your way to see if you're the person they want to hire.

We spoke with a bunch of hiring managers and asked them to reveal their toughest interview questions.

Prepare to answer these tough interview questions before your next big job interview:

### 1. "What are you most proud of in your career?"

Most of your life, you've tried not to brag. But, check your modesty at the door -- this is your chance to talk yourself up.

Executive recruiter Kimberly Bishop says this question often results in a deer-in-headlights stare from interviewees.

"I don't know. That's a good question," is a common response.

You've really got to pull out the big guns on this one and wow them with your greatest accomplishment. Prepare ahead of time to tell the story of your greatest feat, how you did it, what you learned and how you can duplicate it and build upon it.

Warning: To avoid crossing the line into cocky, jerk territory, make sure you talk about how achieved that success rather than just say "I'm so awesome, I did this and that!" Also, credit those who helped you along the way.

### 2. "Why do you want to work here?"

It's simple, straight-forward and cuts to the chase. This are sometimes the scariest questions. And it was one of the most popular questions among many employers we talked to.

In just seven words, this question targets so many different factors about you as an employee. Your answer will reveal, according to Vickie Austin, business and career coach.

- **Whether you did your homework.**
- **Your career focus.**
- **Whether you are self-oriented.**
- **How committed you are.**

“Answering this question also allows a candidate to give a confident response that basically says, ‘I picked *you!*’ ” Austin says. “Without being cocky or presumptuous, the person can boldly attest to the fact that they screened this company on their end and then express the desire to make a difference working for them.”

### **3. “Why are you asking for that salary?”**

This is coming from Barbara Bergin, M.D., who finds that her candidates are always a little tripped up when she asks them why they deserve the compensation they’re asking for.

“Employers want to know why the employee is worth a certain amount, not why he wants that amount,” she says.

Still, she has received plenty of poor responses:

- *“Because I have college loans.”*
- *“Because I have to drive a long way.”*

Save the excuses! Here are some better answers to that question:

- *“Because I get results.”*
- *“Because I have a track record of success.”*

(Remember, you’ll have to ready back up these statements with specifics).

### **4. “How long are you willing to fail at this job before you succeed?”**

Seems a bit confusing at first—but that’s exactly the point of this question. Jon Sterling, CEO at Interview Circuit, says it’s his favorite question because the type of answer he wants is not really clear from his question.

A good answer, he says, would be, *“I’m willing to stick with this job for as long as it takes to succeed.”*

“That answer would indicate they have endurance and they’re looking at this as a long-term opportunity.”

One poor way to answer is to dodge the question and talk about something else, which happens from time to time.

More bad answers: “*A few months,*” or, “*I don’t know, what do you think?*”

**5. “Which past manager has liked you the least, and what would this person tell me about you?”**

This is a fresh way of zeroing in on your weaknesses. Allison VanNest, head of communications at Grammarly, loves this question because it forces candidates to look introspectively and also from the perspective of their managers.

Don’t: cue the blame game, self-deprecate or get hung up on how you’ve been wronged.

Do: “be positive about your past relationships at work, be honest about your shortcomings and be candid about what you’ve learned,” VanNest says.

Better yet, come up with instances in which you worked well with someone who you didn’t get along with on a personal level.

**[[The Secret to Answering Tough Interview Questions: Stay Positive](#)]**

**6. “Tell me what you felt was unfair to you in your last job.”**

“If they say nothing, they are lying,” says Don Phin, president of HR That Works. And no one’s going to hire a liar. If you’ve been in the field for a while, you know that – at some point or another -- you’re bound to get the short end of the stick at some point.

Be honest – make sure you answer in a positive tone. Rather than playing the blame game, talk about what you did to make things right. Whether it was confronting your colleague or letting go of a petty thing, they want to hear what you did after the fact.