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Sample Answers to Questions

Interviewer's Questions and Purpose

Consider When Answering

Is the person prepared? Organized and concise?

1. Tell me about yourself.

Be on guard against the interviewer who gives you free rein. Don't spend too much time answering (1-2 minutes). Avoid details, don't ramble. Touch on four areas

- Born and Raised
- Education/Military Background
- Work Experience
- Current Situation

2. Did you bring your resume?

Yes. (Be prepared with 2-3 extra copies)

3. What did you Research about UT Tyler in prep for this interview?

Highlight products, services, revenues, problems, people, history. "But I would love to know more, particularly from your point of view. Do we have time to cover that now?"

4. According to your definition of success, how successful have you been so far?

Be prepared to define success for yourself and then respond.

Is this person mature and self-aware?

5. In your current or last position, what were your most significant accomplishments? In your career so far?

Refer to accomplishment statements.

6. Had you thought of leaving your present position before? If yes, what do you think held you there?

No job is perfect. Yet, there are pluses to each position. Refer to positive aspect of job, learning experience.

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Is the person mature and self-aware?

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| 7. Would you describe a few situations in which your work was criticized? | Give only one, and tell how you have corrected or plan to correct your work. |
| 8. If I spoke with your previous boss, what would he or she say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses? | Be consistent with what you think they would say as a reference. Position the weakness in a positive way (refer to #11). |
| 9. How would you describe your personality? | Keep your answer short, and relevant to the position and the organization's culture. |
| 10. What are your strong points? | Present three. Relate them to that particular company and job opening. |
| 11. What are your weak points? | Don't say you have none; give only one. Position it in a positive answer like, "I am sometimes impatient and do the work myself when we are working against tight deadlines." |
| 12. How did you do in school? | Emphasize your best and favorite subjects. If grades were average, talk about leadership activities or jobs you took to finance your education. |

Is the person motivated? What are his/her values, attitudes? Is there a fit?

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| 13. In your current or last position, what features did you like most? least? | Refer to your satisfiers for likes. Be careful with dislikes. Give only one and make it brief. |
| 14. What do you look for in a job? | Use information developed in satisfiers/dissatisfiers and ideal job and relate it to the job opening. |
| 15. How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our firm? | "Not long, because of my related experience, transferable skills, and ability to learn and adapt." |
| 16. How long would you stay with us? | "As long as the situation is mutually satisfactory, and the job is interesting and challenging. As long as I feel that I'm contributing and that my contribution is recognized." |

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| 17. If you have never supervised, how do you feel about assuming those responsibilities? | Be honest. If you don't want to supervise, emphasize that you can contribute more as an individual player. If you want to supervise, say so, and be enthusiastic. |
| 18. Why do you want to become a supervisor? | "To grow and develop professionally, to help others develop, to build a team, and to share what I have learned." |
| 19. What do you see as the most difficult task in being a supervisor? | Getting things planned and done through others. |
| 20. Why are you leaving your present job? | Refer to difference in style or opinion. Never personalize. Never be negative. Keep it short. When possible, give a "group" answer (e.g., "Our office is closing; the whole organization is being reduced in size.") Stick to one response... don't change answers during the interview. |
| 21. Describe your ideal working environment. | Refer to your ideal job and satisfiers and relate them to that particular company. |
| 22. How would you evaluate your present firm? | Be positive. Refer to the valuable experience you have gained. |
| 23. Do you prefer working with figures or working with words? | Be aware of the job requirements and position your answer in that context. |
| 24. How would your co-workers describe you? | Refer to your strengths and skills. |
| 25. What do you think of your boss? | If you like her or him, say so and tell why. If you don't like her or him, find something positive to say. |
| 26. Why do you want to work in a company of this size? Of this type? | Refer to ideal job and satisfiers. Explain how this size or type of company works well for you. |

Interviewer's Questions and Purpose

Consider When Answering

Is the person motivated? What are his/her values, attitudes? Is there a fit?

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| 27. If you had your choice of jobs and companies, where would you go? | Refer to ideal job. Say that this job and this company are very close to what best suits you. |
| 28. Why do you want to work for us? | You would like to be part of a company project, and solve a company problem.

You like what you've learned about the company, its policies, goals, and management. |
| 29. What was the last book you read? Movie you saw? Sporting event you attended? | Think this through ahead of time. Select one of the books you've read that matches the company culture. |
| 30. What are you doing, or what have you done to reach your career objectives? | Talk about formal studies, workshops, seminars. Also talk about reading, professional memberships, mentors, advisors. |
| 31. What was wrong with your last company? | Choose your words carefully. Don't be negative. Say that no company is perfect; that it had both strengths and weakness. Emphasize "mismatches", not failings. |
| 32. What kind of hours are you used to working? | "As many hours as it takes to get the job done," then ask, "What's an average working day or week here?" |

Does the person match job and criteria?

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| 33. What would you do for us? | Relate past experience which represents success in solving problems which may be similar to those of the prospective employer. |
| 34. What has your experience been in supervising people? | Give examples from accomplishments. |
| 35. Are you a good supervisor? Give an example. Why do you feel you have management potential? | Draw from your successes. "Because I have been told that I have management potential during evaluations; because I know what skills are necessary to be a manager, and I know that I have them." |

Interviewer's Questions and Purpose

Consider When Answering

Does the person match job and criteria?

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| 36. Did you ever fire anyone? If so, what were the reasons, and how did you handle it? | If you haven't, say so, but add that you could do it if necessary. Cite another example where you carried out an unpleasant but necessary task. |
| 37. How have you helped to increase sales or profits? Reduce costs? | Refer to accomplishments. |
| 38. How much money did you ever account for? Largest budget responsibility? | Refer to accomplishments. If you haven't had budget responsibility, say so, but refer to an accomplishment that demonstrates the same skill. |
| 39. Describe some situations in which you've worked under pressure or met deadlines? | Refer to accomplishments. Everyone has had a few of these pressure situations in a career. |
| 40. In your present position, what problems have you identified that had previously been overlooked? | Refer to accomplishments. |
| 41. Give an example of how you have been creative. | Refer to accomplishments. |
| 42. Give examples of times when you were a leader. | Draw examples from accomplishments. |
| 43. What are your goals in your career? | Talk first about doing the job for which you are applying, then talk about longer-range plans. |
| 44. What position do you expect to have in two years? | "A position similar to the one we're discussing or possibly by that time, the next step up." |
| 45. What are your objectives? | Refer back to question 43 on goals. Long range: Keep long range answers fairly general.

Short range: Be more specific: talk about a position like this with growth opportunities, maybe having more responsibilities or moving into management. |

Interviewer's Questions and Purpose

Consider When Answering

*How does the person handle stress?
What is his/her confidence level?*

46. Why should we hire you?

Relate past experience which demonstrates success in solving problems which may be similar to those of the prospective employer.

47. You may be over-qualified or too experienced for the position we have to offer.

Possible answers:

"A strong company needs a strong person."

"Experienced people are at a premium today."

An employer will get faster return on investment because you have more experience than required.

48. Why haven't you found a new position before now?

"Finding the right job takes time. I'm not looking for just any job."

49. Any objections to psychological tests?

"No, I don't mind."

50. If you could start again, what would you do differently?

No need to be too self-revealing.
"Hindsight is 20/20; everyone would make some changes, but I've learned and grown from all my decisions."

51. How would you structure this job?

"Not easy to answer without knowing more than I do about the job. I'd move carefully in making changes."

52. How much do you expect, if we offer this position to you?

Be careful. If you don't know the market value, return the question by saying that you would expect a fair salary based on the job responsibilities, your experience and skills, and the market value of the job. Then ask what salary range has been set for the job.

If you know the market value of the job, that may be the key answer. "My understanding is that a job like the one you're describing may be in the range of \$____. Is that in the ball park for you?"

Interviewer's Questions and Purpose

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What is this person's market value?

53. What kind of salary are you worth?

Actively probe the interviewer about the job and specific responsibilities and problems. In time you should get an idea of how important the job is to the company and its willingness to pay. Sum up and evaluate. Then when the interviewer opens the discussion of salary, you will be in a much better position to determine what the job is probably worth to both the employer and you.

Strive to delay all mention of money until the end of the interview. If your minimum requirement is sought early, try to counter with the "need to learn more about the scope of the job" since the service you can provide is the principal question, not income. If they insist, provide a range or broad area.

54. What other types of job or companies are you considering?

"I'm looking at similar positions in several companies." You don't have to be specific.

55. How have you kept up in your field?

Discuss reading, seminars or courses in or out of work, discussions with co-workers.

Practicing Aloud

Start by writing rough notes of how you would introduce your background, ask your questions, and answer the interviewer's questions. Whenever possible, put your practice interview on tape. Remember, rehearsing in your head isn't very helpful; experienced presenters know that the only way to really prepare for a presentation is actual oral practice. When reviewing your practice interview, pay attention to what you said and how you said it, and modify if necessary.

In any interview, you communicate on at least three levels:

Nonverbals:	Body language, inflections, tone of voice
Verbals:	Information conveyed by your words
Meta-Messages:	The message conveyed by your choice of words (and by those you omit), as well as by the sequence of your ideas when giving your answers.

For example, do you focus on what you didn't like in past jobs and are you defensive in your answers to questions, or do you emphasize what you would like better and find more fulfilling in a new opportunity? If someone makes a point of saying, "It's not that I hated what I was doing, it's just that I found the 9:00 to 5:00 routine tedious and boring," that person conveys a negative emphasis. If someone says instead, "I discovered that the flexibility required in such-and-such kind of work is much more stimulating to me," that person is conveying a positive emphasis. Which one do you want to convey?

The strength and beauty of the English language lies in its rich vocabulary and the subtleties through which we express our thoughts. If you want to portray yourself as an independent, hard working, positive self-starter, choose the appropriate words to convey that image.

MANAGING THE PRACTICALITIES OF THE INTERVIEW

Now it's time to look at the total interview situations, not just the exchange of information, to consider how you can best prepare to manage the entire process. This section includes such issues as:

- Getting there on time
- First impressions face to face
- Techniques for controlling content and flow
- Following up effectively