



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Career Services

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Answering the Interview Question: “Tell Me About Yourself”

One of the most dreaded interview questions is "So, tell me a little about yourself." This is a very typical approach to the beginning of an interview. Your response will set the tone for the entire interview. You should know that the interviewer is not asking about your personal life. You should be prepared to tell the interviewer about yourself relevant to the position and the qualifications outlined in the job description. Your answer to "Tell Me About Yourself" is your opportunity to immediately demonstrate to the interviewer you did your research and you're excited to let them know why they should hire you.

An easy approach to remember...

Tell them where you are now, where you've been, and where you are going.

Introduce your current situation; what you are currently doing; where you are right now. You can mention your educational background perhaps highlighting an area of concentration or your minor. Mention academic accomplishments if relevant – scholarships, awards, recognition.

Briefly discuss your past experiences relevant to the strengths necessary for the position. You don't have to talk about every job you've ever had and you shouldn't. Highlight the jobs and accomplishments that are relevant and that allowed you to demonstrate the skills they are looking for. Mention campus activities, leadership, and past internships.

And finally tell them how you see yourself in the future with this employer. This is a good time to show you have done some research on the organization and have specific ideas of how you plan to make a contribution when they hire you. You can also share long term career goals that will motivate you to be successful.

Preparation

Identify 3 or 4 strengths you have that are relevant to the position. Review your past and present for examples demonstrating these strengths. Consider preparing a script that includes the information you want to convey.

Practice

Practice so you feel confident about what you want to emphasize. Your script can help you outline your answer. However you don't want to sound over-rehearsed. It should sound natural and conversational.