Common interview questions

By The N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions

For the Journal

Each interview is unique and specific to the job opportunity; however, there are some common questions that you may be asked during your job search. One way to walk into an interview well-prepared is to brainstorm responses to some of these questions beforehand. Always answer questions with job-related answers. Try practicing answering the sample questions below with a friend or family member to give yourself a boost of confidence.

“Can you tell me about yourself?” This is one of the most common questions. Have a short statement about your skills and knowledge and how you could use them in this job. Do not ramble or get off track with personal stories.

“What is your greatest accomplishment?” If possible, describe a prior work related situation that demonstrates your skills and abilities for which you had a positive outcome. Otherwise, mention an award you received or a situation with a positive outcome which demonstrates your ability to perform well at this job.

“What are your strengths or weaknesses?” Identify what tasks you could do really well for the job. If you feel there is a requirement in the job advertisement that you may not meet, now is the time to mention it. Be brief about the weakness, as you wish to focus on how well you would fit the job description.

“Are you a team player, or do you prefer to work alone?” Be honest. Answer the question based on how you work best and how that fits the stated work environment.

“How do you respond to criticism?” Not everyone takes criticism well all the time, but everyone learns from their mistakes. Be honest in your answer, as the interviewer is looking at how you would fit in with the team and organization.

“Where do you want to be five years from now?” If you have an objective statement on your resume, this would be a good time to elaborate on that objective. Put together a thoughtful statement that fits your career goals and that encompasses any educational plans that you have.

“What do you know about our company?” Employers feel you are really serious about them if you have some knowledge about the company. Be sure to research general information about the company and the industry before the interview. You should know the company’s mission and the company’s products or services. At the very least, mention something from their website or an article you have read about them.

“Can you describe one of your most difficult or challenging assignments?” Describe a work-related situation where you can emphasize your skills and abilities. If you have recently graduated and do not have a great deal of work experience, describe a challenging project that could be applicable to the company and position you are applying for.

“Why did you leave your last employer or have you ever been fired?” It is likely that you will be asked questions about former employment. Answer honestly and straightforwardly, avoiding any negative comments about your last employer. Keep your response short so that you can move onto the more positive parts of the interview.

“What would your previous supervisor say about you?” Tell the interviewer about a situation with your previous employer where you received positive feedback. If you had an evaluation in which your previous supervisor said good things about you, make sure to tell the interviewer about it.

For additional information about interviewing, resume tips, and resources available to job seekers, visit the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions at www.dws.state.nm.us and the New Mexico Workforce Connection at www.jobs.state.nm.us.

Don’t forget, you can also attend employment events at the New Mexico Workforce Connection Center in Albuquerque. The next employment event will take place August 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at 501 Mountain Road NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

This is a regular column written by the N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions. For more information, go to www.dws.state.nm.us.

Published July 29, 2018.

The NMDWS column can be found in the Albuquerque Journal’s Classifieds section featuring Real Estate, Automotive, and Careers every Sunday.