

## **Common interview questions**

By The N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions

For the Journal

Each interview is unique and specific to the job opportunity, but there are some common questions that you should be prepared to answer during your job search. Brainstorm responses to some of these questions beforehand so you can walk into the interview well-prepared. Always answer questions with job-related answers. Try practicing your answers to the sample questions below with a friend or family member to give yourself a boost of confidence.

One of the most common openers used by interviewers is, “tell me about yourself”. Have a short statement prepared that explains how you would use your skills and knowledge in the potential job position. Do not ramble or get off track with personal stories.

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

“What are your strengths or weaknesses?” Identify which 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 weaknesses, 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 with the work environment.

“How do you respond to criticism?” Not everyone takes criticism well, 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.

“Describe one of your most difficult or challenging assignments.” Describe a work-related situation which emphasizes your skills and abilities. If you have recently graduated and do not have a great deal of work experience, describe challenging project that is applicable to the position you are applying for.

It is likely that you will be asked questions about former employment. “Why did you leave your last employer or have you ever been fired?” Answer honestly and avoid 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. What did you like most about your last position? What did you like least? Pick overall tasks that you liked which also show how you might fit with this job. For what you liked least, avoid negative statement, and choose a task that you did not necessarily like but did well.

This is a regular column written by the N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions. For more information, go to [www.dws.state.nm.us](http://www.dws.state.nm.us).

Published August 16, 2015.

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

