



Practicing for an interview

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 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.

Try answering the sample questions below with a friend or family member to give yourself a boost of confidence.

One of the most common questions is, "Tell me about yourself." 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 resulted in a positive outcome and that demonstrates your skills and abilities. Or mention an award you received or a situation with a positive outcome that demonstrates your abilities.

What are your strengths or weaknesses? Identify which tasks you could do really well for the job. If you believe 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 want 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 believe 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 products or services.

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, talk about a challenging project that could be applicable to the company and position for which you are applying.

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? Your answer should be honest and straightforward, avoiding any negative comments about your last employer. Keep your response short so that you can move on to 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 and that also show how you might fit with this job. For what you liked least, avoid negative statements and choose a task that you did not necessarily like but did well.

Once you have thought about your responses and practiced answering these with a friend or family member, be sure to get valuable feedback and advice about how to perfect your interviewing technique.

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 May 1, 2016.

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