

JOB PREPARATION

1. UPDATED RESUME.
 2. UPDATED COVER LETTER.
 3. 60 SECOND COMMERCIAL.
 4. ABILITY TO ANSWER INTERVIEWERS QUESTIONS.
 5. BODY LANGUAGE.
-

1. Tell me about yourself.

- This is the classic way for you to tell them your 'elevator speech' in 60 seconds or more.
- Give them "your synopsis about you" answer, specifically your Unique Selling Proposition.
- What makes you different than everyone else?
- Research the job description so you can interject how you can assist the new company with your job skills..
- Be specific.
- Be prepared. This is a deal breaker if not done properly.

2. Why should we hire you?

- The best way to respond is to give concrete examples of why your skills and accomplishments make you the best candidate for the job.
- Take a few moments to compare the job description with your abilities, as well as mentioning what you have accomplished in your other positions.
- Be positive and reiterate your interest in the company and the position.

3. Why do you want this job?

- Give a couple of examples of why you would like this job:
- I want this job because it seems tailored to what I do best, which include: _____ and _____. PECO/Excelon is a phenomenal opportunity to work and learn with the best, further my career, and achieve new skill sets.

4. What were your responsibilities?

- The best way to respond is to describe your responsibilities in detail and to connect them to the job you are interviewing for.
- Try to tie your responsibilities in with those listed in the job description for the new position.
- That way, the employer will see that you have the qualifications necessary to do the job.
- Focus most on your responsibilities that are directly related to the new job's requirements.

JOB PREPARATION

5. What did you like or dislike about your previous job?

- When you're asked what don't like about your previous job, don't be too negative.
- The reason is that you don't want the interviewer to think that you'll speak negatively about the new job or the company when you're ready to move on, if you get this job.
- Rather, it makes sense to talk about yourself and what you're looking for in a new role.

Sample Answer:

- I enjoyed the people I worked with. It was a friendly and fun atmosphere and I actually enjoyed going into work each morning. I felt the leadership team was great as well. They knew all of their employees on a first name basis and tried to make those personal connections. I also enjoyed that fact that the office tried to do community outreach with local organizations.
- One of the reasons I am leaving is that I felt I was not challenged enough at the job. As a fresh face in the working world, the company offers a great opportunity for a good entry level position; however, after being there for so many years, I felt I was not able to reach my full potential because of the lack of challenge and there was no room for advancement in the company. While I did enjoy working there and appreciate the skills I developed while with the company, I feel my skill set can be better utilized elsewhere, where my capabilities are more recognized and there is the opportunity for growth.

6. What were your starting and final levels of compensation?

- Interviewers expect a candidate for employment to be able to provide the details of their compensation history. Be prepared to tell the interviewer how much you earned at each of your prior positions.
- Make sure that what you tell the interviewer matches what you listed on your job application. Refresh your memory prior to the interview by reviewing your salary history so, you can speak in detail and accurately. Don't exaggerate or inflate your earnings. Many employers will check references and confirm your salary history prior to making a job offer. A discrepancy between what you reported and what the employer says could knock you out of contention for the job.

JOB PREPARATION

7. What major challenges and problems did you face? How did you handle them?

- Try to give 3 examples.
- These challenges and solutions can be integrated into your 60 second or longer commercial.
- When asked the job interview question "How did you handle a challenge?" be sure to include specific examples of how you handled a particular difficult situation. Discuss how you researched the issue and contributed to finding a solution. Examples of good responses include:

Sample Answers

- During a difficult financial period, I was able to satisfactorily negotiate repayment schedules with multiple vendors.
- When the software development of our new product stalled, I coordinated the team which managed to get the schedule back on track. We were able to successfully troubleshoot the issues and solve the problems, within a very short period of time.
- A long-term client was about to take their business to a competitor. I met with the customer and was able to change how we handled the account on a day-to-day basis, in order to keep the business

8. What is your greatest strength?

- This is one of the easiest questions that you will be asked in the interview.
- It is important to discuss attributes that will qualify you for the job.
- Describe the skills and experience that directly correlate with the job that you are applying for.

Sample Answers:

- When I'm working on a project, I don't want just to meet deadlines. Rather, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule.
- I have exceeded my sales goals every quarter and I've earned a bonus each year since I started with my current employer.
- My time management skills are excellent and I'm organized, efficient, and take pride in excelling at my work.
- I pride myself on my customer service skills and my ability to resolve what could be difficult situations.

How Will Your Greatest Strength Help You Perform?

- As a follow up to being asked about your greatest strengths, you may be asked about how your greatest strength helped your performance on the job. When you respond, relate your strengths to both the job description and your ability to perform.

JOB PREPARATION

9. What is your greatest weakness?

- When you're asked what your greatest weakness is there are several different ways you can answer, including mentioning skills that aren't critical for the job, skills you have improved on, and turning a negative into a positive.

Non-Essential Skills

- An alternative approach is to analyze the key skills and strengths required for the position you are interviewing for and then come up with an honest shortcoming which is not essential for success in that job. For example if you are applying for nursing job, you might share that you are not particularly adept at conducting group presentations. In this case it will be critical to underscore your strength in one to one communication with patients while providing an example of your difficulty with presentations to large groups.

Skills You Have Improved

- Another option is to discuss skills that you have improved upon during your previous job, so you are showing the interviewer that you can make improvements, when necessary. You can sketch for employers your initial level of functioning and then discuss the steps you have taken to improve this area and then reference your current, improved level of skill.
- If you use this strategy be sure not to mention anything that you improved upon that is related to the job for which you are interviewing. You don't want your qualifications for the job to be questioned.

Turn a Negative into a Postive

- Another option is try to turn a negative into a positive. For example, a sense of urgency to get projects completed or wanting to triple-check every item in a spreadsheet can be turned into a strength i.e. you are a candidate who will make sure that the project is done on time and your work will be close to perfect.
- Note that the term "weakness" isn't used in the sample answers - you always want to focus on the positive when interviewing.

JOB PREPARATION

Sample Answers

- When I'm working on a project, I don't want just to meet deadlines. Rather, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule.
- Being organized wasn't my strongest point, but I implemented a time management system that really helped my organization skills.
- I like to make sure that my work is perfect, so I tend to perhaps spend a little too much time checking it. However, I've come to a good balance by setting up a system to ensure everything is done correctly the first time.
- I used to wait until the last minute to set appointments for the coming week, but I realized that scheduling in advance makes much more sense.
- Sometimes, I spend more time than necessary on a task, or take on tasks personally that could easily be delegated to someone else. Although I've never missed a deadline, it is still an effort for me to know when to move on to the next task, and to be confident when assigning others work.
- I had difficulty with calculus during college, but I persevered with tutoring assistance and extra effort and completed 2 levels with a B minus average.
- I've learned to make my perfectionism work to my advantage at work. I am excellent at meeting deadlines, and with my attention to detail, I know my work is correct.
- I used to like to work on one project to its completion before starting on another, but I've learned to work on many projects at the same time, and I think it allows me to be more creative and effective in each one.

10. **How do you handle stress and pressure?**

A typical interview question, asked to get a sense of how you handle on-the-job stress, is "How do you handle pressure?" Examples of good responses include:

- Stress is very important to me. With stress, I do the best possible job. The appropriate way to deal with stress is to make sure I have the correct balance between good stress and bad stress. I need good stress to stay motivated and productive.
- I react to situations, rather than to stress. That way, the situation is handled and doesn't become stressful.
- I actually work better under pressure and I've found that I enjoy working in a challenging environment.
- From a personal perspective, I manage stress by visiting the gym every evening. It's a great stress reducer.

JOB PREPARATION

- Prioritizing my responsibilities so I have a clear idea of what needs to be done when, has helped me effectively manage pressure on the job.
- If the people I am managing are contributing to my stress level, I discuss options for better handling difficult situations with them.
- I find that when I'm under the pressure of a deadline, I can do some of my most creative work.
- I'm not a person who has a difficult time with stress. When I'm under pressure, I focus, and get the job done.
- I find it exhilarating to be in a dynamic environment where the pressure is on.
- I find a past pace to be invigorating, and thrive when the pressure is on.
- I've done some of my best work under tight deadlines, where the atmosphere was very stressful.
- I'm the kind of person who stays calm under pressure, and handles stress fairly easily.

It's a good idea to give examples of how you have handled stress to your interviewer. That way, they get a clear picture how well you can work in stressful situations.

11. Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it.

- There is no right or wrong answer to questions like "What are the most difficult decisions to make?" or "Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it." These are [behavioral interview questions](#) designed to discover how you handled certain situations. The logic behind these types of questions is that how you behaved in the past is a predictor of what you will do in the future.
- Give concrete examples of difficult situations that actually happened at work. Then discuss what you did to solve the problem. Keep your answers positive ("Even though it was difficult when Jane Doe quit without notice, we were able to rearrange the department workload to cover the position until a replacement was hired.") and be specific. Itemize what you did and how you did it.
- The best way to prepare for questions where you will need to recall events and actions is to refresh your memory and consider some special situations you have dealt with or projects you have worked on. You can use them to help frame responses. Prepare stories that illustrate times when you have successfully solved a difficult situation.

JOB PREPARATION

12. **What was the biggest accomplishment / failure in this position?**

- Your potential employer will want to know what you accomplished, and what you didn't, in your current or last position.
- The best way to respond is to give an example of something you accomplished that is directly related to the job you are interviewing for. Review your resume and review the job posting. Find the best match and use that to show how what you accomplished will be beneficial to the company you are interviewing with.
- If you wrote a targeted cover letter when applying for the job use the information you included to create your response. For example, if you are interviewing for a job at a school where you will need to manage student registration, explain to the interviewer how you registered students for courses, designed and managed registration software, and solved customer problems.
- If you didn't fail at anything, say so. If you can think of an example, be sure that it's a minor one and turn it into a positive. For example, if you were working on a project that was behind deadline, explain to the interviewer how you adjusted the workload and the timeline to get back on track and ahead of schedule.

13. **How do you evaluate success?**

- Best answer to the interview question "How do you evaluate success?":
- I evaluate success in different ways. At work, it is meeting the goals set by my supervisors and my fellow workers. It is my understanding, from talking to other employees, that the GGR company is recognized for not only rewarding success, but giving employees opportunity to grow as well. After work, I enjoy playing softball, so success on the field is catching the winning pop-up.

14. **Why are you leaving or have left your job?**

- One of the questions that is typically asked in an interview is "Why are you leaving your job?" or "Why did you leave your previous job?" if you have already moved on. If you were fired from your job, use [these answers](#) to respond. If you left of your own accord, review these suggestions on how best to answer and tailor your response to meet your particular situation. Be direct and focus your interview answer on the future, especially if your leaving wasn't under the best of circumstances.

JOB PREPARATION

Don't Badmouth Your Boss

- Regardless of why you left, don't speak badly about your previous employer. The interviewer may wonder if you will be bad-mouthing his company next time you're looking for work. I once interviewed a person who told me that her last employer was terrible. They didn't pay her enough, the hours were awful and she hated the job. That company happened to be my company's biggest, and most important, customer. And there is no way I would have hired someone who felt that way, justified or not, about our valuable client. So, she gave up any opportunity of getting the job as soon as she answered the "Why did you leave?" question.

Prepare answers to typical job interview questions, like this one, in advance. Practice your responses so you sound positive, and clear, about your circumstances and your goals for the future.

Sample answers to the interview question "Why did you leave your job?"

- I found myself bored with the work and looking for more challenges. I am an excellent employee and I didn't want my unhappiness to have any impact on the job I was doing for my employer.
- There isn't room for growth with my current employer and I'm ready to move on to a new challenge.
- I'm looking for a bigger challenge and to grow my career and I couldn't job hunt part time while working. It didn't seem ethical to use my former employer's time.
- I was laid-off from my last position when our department was eliminated due to corporate restructuring.
- I'm relocating to this area due to family circumstances and left my previous position in order to make the move.
- I've decided that is not the direction I want to go in my career and my current employer has no opportunities in the direction I'd like to head.
- After several years in my last position, I'm looking for an company where I can contribute and grow in a team-oriented environment.
- I am interested in a new challenge and an opportunity to use my technical skills and experience in a different capacity than I have in the past.
- I recently received my degree and I want to utilize my educational background in my next position.
- I am interested in a job with more responsibility, and I am very ready for a new challenge.
- I left my last position in order to spend more time with my family. Circumstances have changed and I'm more than ready for full-time employment again.
- I am seeking a position with a stable company with room for growth and opportunity for advancement.
- I was commuting to the city and spending a significant amount of time each day on travel. I would prefer to be closer to home.
- To be honest, I wasn't considering a move, but, I saw this job posting and was intrigued by the position and the company. It sounds like an exciting opportunity and an ideal match with my qualifications.

JOB PREPARATION

- This position seemed like an excellent match for my skills and experience and I am not able to fully utilize them in my present job.
- The company was cutting back and, unfortunately, my job was one of those eliminated.

15. **What are your goals for the future?**

- The best way to respond to the interview question "What are your goals for the future?" or "Where do you see yourself in five years?" is to refer to the position and the company you are interviewing with.

Don't discuss your goals for returning to school or having a family, they are not relevant and could knock you out of contention for the job. Rather, you want to connect your answer to the job you are applying for. Examples of good responses include:

- My long-term goals involve growing with a company where I can continue to learn, take on additional responsibilities, and contribute as much of value as I can.
- I see myself as a top performing employee in a well-established organization, like this one. I plan on enhancing my skills and continuing my involvement in (related) professional associations.
- Once I gain additional experience, I would like to move on from a technical position to management.
- In the XYZ Corporation, what is a typical career path for someone with my skills and experiences?

More Interview Questions About Your Goals

- What are you looking for in your next job? What is important to you?

One of the interview questions you may be asked is what you are looking for in your next job. The interview wants to know whether your goals are a match for the companies needs.

Best Answers

- You can begin your answer with this question: Tell me, Mr./Ms. Interviewer, what is a typical career path at OPL for someone with my skills and experience?
- (Based on the answer you can then respond to the original question using the phrases from the answer to frame your response).
- What is important to you? Two things are very important to me. One is my professionalism at work; the second is my family life.

JOB PREPARATION

- **Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?**
 - When you are interviewing for a new job, it can be hard to articulate where you would like to be in your career next year let alone five years down the road. Even when you do know, it's important to be careful how you respond because you'll need to tailor your answer to the job for which you are interviewing.

Here are tips for responding to questions about the next stage of your career, while affirming your interest in the role you are being interviewed for.

Where Do You See Yourself 5 Years from Now?

Outline a Career Path

- In order to prepare well for this question, research a reasonable career path which will flow from the position for which you are applying. How long does one ordinarily spend in that job? What are the next steps within five years?
- Some employers will clearly outline pathways in the career section of their website. However, you may need to approach professionals in the field through alumni, family, friends or professional associations to gain an accurate picture.

Start With Your Interest in This Job

- It is often advantageous to emphasize your interest in thoroughly mastering the initial position before moving on. If it seems like you are rushing past that first job, employers might question how motivated you are to carry out those duties.
- After all, the hiring manager will probably want someone who will be happy and competent in that role for at least a year or two. Integrating a clear rationale into your answer regarding how your interests and skills equip you to do the job you are being considered for can help to alleviate any concerns about how long you will want to stay at the job.

When There is No Clear Career Path

- Not all jobs are stepping stones to higher positions. For positions like counseling, sales, event planning, teaching and computer programming, for example, it will be perfectly appropriate to emphasize mastery of that job as your five year goal. Think about components of the job in which you can excel. For example for a sales job: "Within 5 years I would like to be recognized as an expert in terms of product knowledge, have developed very close relationships with clients, have significantly expanded the client base in my region and perhaps have been assigned some major national clients."

JOB PREPARATION

Goals = Results

- Stating your goals in terms of results which you would like to produce is another angle for responding. So, for example, a prospective teacher for a district which is trying to upgrade performance on standardized tests might say "I would like to significantly increase the percentage of students reading at or above grade level through creative instructional methods." Of course, you would need to be able to share some examples of how you would achieve this.

Moving Up the Career Ladder

- There are a few jobs where you are expected to move on after a couple of years, including some analyst positions in investment banking and consulting, as well as legal assistants and scientific research assistants (for new college grads). In those cases, you will have more leeway in your answers, but you will still want to establish how the job at hand makes sense given the skills and interests you would bring to the employer.

- **What are your goals for the next five years / ten years?**

The best way to respond to the interview question "What are your goals for the future?" or "Where do you see yourself in five years?" is to refer to the position and the company you are interviewing with.

Don't discuss your goals for returning to school or having a family, they are not relevant and could knock you out of contention for the job. Rather, you want to connect your answer to the job you are applying for. Examples of good responses include:

- My long-term goals involve growing with a company where I can continue to learn, take on additional responsibilities, and contribute as much of value as I can.
- I see myself as a top performing employee in a well-established organization, like this one. I plan on enhancing my skills and continuing my involvement in (related) professional associations.
- Once I gain additional experience, I would like to move on from a technical position to management.
- In the XYZ Corporation, what is a typical career path for someone with my skills and experiences?

- **How do you plan to achieve those goals?**

- As a follow-up to the interview question "[What are your goals for the future?](#)" the interviewer will often ask how you plan on achieving those goals. A good answer to this question will speak specifically about what you are going to accomplish and how you are going to accomplish it. Examples of good responses include:

JOB PREPARATION

- I plan on gaining additional skills by taking related classes and continuing my involvement with a variety of professional associations.
- I noticed that XYZ company (the company you are interviewing with) provides in-house training for employees and I would certainly be interested in taking classes that would be relevant.
- I will continue my professional development by participating in conferences, attending seminars, and continuing my education.

16. What are your salary requirements?

Before you start talking pay (and salary negotiations) with a prospective employer, you need to find out how much the job (and you) are worth. You will need to take the time to [research salaries](#). That way you will be prepared to get what you're worth and to get a [job offer](#) that's realistic and reasonable.

Salary Negotiations

Once you know what you *should* be earning, how do you go about getting it? Start by being very patient. When interviewing for a new position, do your best not to bring up compensation until the employer makes you an offer. If you're asked what your [salary requirements](#) are, say that they are open based upon the position and the overall compensation package. Or tell the employer you'd like to know more about the responsibilities and the challenges of the job prior to discussing salary.

Another option is to give the employer a [salary range](#) based upon the salary research you've done up front. Once you've received the offer you don't need to accept (or reject) it right away. A simple "I need to think it over" can get you an increase in the original offer.

And if you're ambivalent about the position a "no" can bring you a better offer too. I turned down a position I knew I didn't want, regardless of salary, and received three follow-up phone calls upping the compensation package. Be careful though, if you do definitely need that new job there's a risk that the employer may accept your declining the position and move on to the next candidate.

17. Who was your best boss and who was the worst?
18. What are you passionate about? - [Best Answers](#)
19. Questions about your supervisors and co-workers. - [Best Answers](#)