

# INTERVIEW INFORMATION



## INTERVIEWING TIPS

You will need to know the answers to 3 critical questions:

- Why do I want this job?**
- What do I have to offer?**
- What else do I need to know?**

Prepare and write the answers to the most common questions and then practice saying them with a friend or family member. The better you know your responses, the better prepared you will be.

### **Why do I want this job?**

Employers aren't just looking for bodies to fill in vacant positions. They want people who can bring something new and valuable to their business, therefore research the employer. Employers want to hear that you know exactly what his/her organization is all about. **\*Find out as much as you can!\***

Once you know the answers to why you want this job, you will be able to answer some important interview questions such as:

- How did you become interested in this field?
- Why did you submit your application to our company?
- What are your general career interests?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years?

### **What do I have to offer?**

Employers want to know why they should hire you. To find out, they ask a variety of questions to help them find out who you are and what you can do. To be prepared, review your experiences at work, at school and in volunteer activities.

- Keep a mental list of your accomplishments.
- Think about challenges you've faced and how you dealt with them.
- Remember times that you've been a problem solver.
- Consider mistakes that you've made as learning experiences.

General questions you could be asked:

- What skills/strengths do you bring to this position?
- How will you contribute to our organization?
- What was your most important job accomplishment?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What are your weakness?

## **Behaviour description questions:**

These questions test your ability to deal with work-related incidents. For example:

- Can you tell us about a school or work situation where you recognized a problem and took action to correct it?
- Give us an example of a presentation you made at work/school? How did you research it? What were your findings and conclusions?
- Can you describe a group situation where you were the only person who disagreed with a point of view or action? How did you handle it? What were the results?

When answering questions like these, answer them as if you were telling a story:

- Identify the skill that your story demonstrates.
- Identify the situation in which you used the skill.
- Describe your actions.
- Describe the results of your actions.

## **What else do I need to know?**

One of the final questions you'll be asked in an interview is: "Is there anything you would like to know about the organization or the job?"

Answering 'NO' sends the wrong message, that you're not really interested in the organization; don't know what is important to you in an employee/employer relationship, or lack confidence and assertiveness. Here are some questions you should be prepared to ask:

- What is the size of the department/branch/section?
- Do you have a training program? Could you describe it?
- What are my opportunities for advancement?
- What is the management philosophy?
- What are the company's goals?
- Does the company have plans for expansion?

# Q & A

## 1. What can you tell me about yourself?

### YOUR ANSWER:

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### POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

Make your answers short and sweet unless otherwise stated by the employer and tie your answer into professional attributes.

- “I work well with others. At my previous job I was chosen to train individuals on the punch press.”
- “I’m a hard worker who always gives 150%. I come in early or stay late to meet deadlines and complete assigned tasks.”
- “One of my key strengths is being organized. I was responsible for organizing all the scheduling for banquets and social gatherings at our restaurant.”
- “I am an effective communicator. While working at the customer service desk, I determined the nature of each client’s inquiry while directing them in an appropriate and easy to understand manner.”

## 2. Why did you leave your last job? Why are you leaving your present position?

### YOUR ANSWERS:

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### POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- If unemployed, state your reason for leaving in a positive context
- “Downsizing was in effect and this included me.”
- “I am looking to gain more experience and maybe add my own skills to your company.”

**3. What do you know about this company or what research have you done to prepare for this interview?**

**YOUR ANSWER:**

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**POSSIBLE ANSWERS:**

- Research the company’s website if they have one; go to the place of employment and talk to people working there.
- “Through my research on your company I have noticed that you have been in business for 20 years and are focused on customer satisfaction. Past performance reviews have indicated that I excel in this area.”
- “Talking with staff at your company, I realize that employees always serve customers with a smile. I think the extensive staff training that you provide is an indicator of why you have such a high rating of customer satisfaction and that is an important element that I look for in a new job situation.”

**4. Why do you want to work for this company?**

**YOUR ANSWER:**

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**POSSIBLE ANSWERS:**

Use the job description and your research on the company to prepare an answer for this question. Most of these examples should be expanded upon in a real interview.

- “I have 2 years’ experience in the customer service field with a diploma in accounting. My research tells me that your company promotes many entry level employees to other departments in a short time frame as I am ultimately looking for a job with increased responsibilities.”
- “I would like to work for your company because of your reputation in the technology field. I am excited to read that you have expanded into the computer chip market in Europe. Recently I have come back from France where I was privileged to work in one of the leading research labs for the ABC company. My experiences there along with my extensive knowledge of computer technology would make me an ideal candidate to help lead your company into this new market.”

**5. What are your strengths and weaknesses? Give me an example of something you would personally like to improve on?**

**YOUR ANSWER:**

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**POSSIBLE ANSWERS:**

- Read through the job description and identify the factors needed to do the job. What kind of person is the company looking for?
- Take a negative trait and turn it into a positive and then emphasize how you are actively working on improving the situation.
- **Strengths:** “ability to adjust and be flexible”, “solid communication skills”, “personable”, “team player”, “excellent organizational skills”
- **Weaknesses:** “I have a hard time saying no when co-workers ask for help on a project. This often results in overtime to complete my projects. I have learned to manage my time better through multi-tasking so that I can still assist my co-workers while completing my own duties.”
- “I find that I don’t express myself very well, however I am attending a communication workshop, reading more and making sure I talk to new people on a regular basis.”
- “I get lost easily when going to client’s homes for appointments. I now carry a map and cell phone and write out the directions clearly before I leave the office.”

**6. What was your last employer’s opinion of you?**

**YOUR ANSWER:**

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**POSSIBLE ANSWERS:**

- Think of previous performance appraisals and quote your boss
- “I scored high on my last performance appraisal and my supervisor had only positive feedback about my work. She especially made mention of my ability to be flexible when asked to move from one task and assist a fellow co-worker with another.”
- “My supervisor would say that I am a hard worker, very organized and a team player, especially after I took a leadership role in our last corporate project where we met a tight deadline.”

7. **What would you do if you witnessed a co-worker taking money from the cash register?**

**YOUR ANSWER:**

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**POSSIBLE ANSWERS:**

- This is a behavioural question. The employer wants to know more about your personality and how you react in certain work related situations.

8. **How would you handle a co-worker conflict? Have you ever had a conflict with a co-worker and if so, how did you handle it? What steps are you taking now to prevent a similar situation?**

**YOUR ANSWER:**

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**POSSIBLE ANSWERS:**

- Again, another behavioural question. The employer wants to see your reaction in this situation or the steps you took to prevent conflict.
- Just be honest! There really is no right or wrong answer to behavioural questions.

9. **When are you available to work?**

**YOUR ANSWER:**

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**POSSIBLE ANSWERS:**

- If in a factory/construction setting you should bring your work boots/ hard hat and tools at the time of the interview and leave them in your car to show you are ready to start anytime.
- “I brought my equipment with me today and could be ready to start immediately.”
- “I am available to work today or as soon as possible.”
- If you are currently working you may want to reply this way: “I would like to give my current employer 2 weeks’ notice. I could be ready to start as early as \_\_\_\_\_.” (give interviewer the date)

**10. Do you have any questions for us?**

**YOUR ANSWER:**

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**POSSIBLE ANSWERS:**

- This is an opportunity to ask them questions that they may have not covered in the interview and to show once more that you want to work for their company.
- “Do you have a training program available for employees looking for advancement?”
- “Whom would I report to and what is their role at your company?”
- “How would you describe a typical work day in this position?”

**11. What are your salary expectations?**

**YOUR ANSWER:**

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**POSSIBLE ANSWERS:**

- Try to deflect the question and say “I applied for the job because I believe I have the right qualifications for the position and would be happy to discuss any salary range when I am offered the position.”
- If you are pressed for an answer, try this: “I am sure that I am the candidate you are looking for. If you feel the same, then I'm sure your offer will be fair and commensurate with the value I can bring the company.”

**ILLEGAL QUESTIONS**

- Are you married?
- How old are you?
- Do you go to church?
- Do you have many debts?
- What is your sexual orientation?
- Do you own or rent your home?
- What social or political organizations do you belong to?
- Were you ever arrested? However if bondable is a requirement the employer has a right to be aware.
- How much insurance do you have?

### **PRE INTERVIEW RESEARCH:**

- Get full descriptions of the job applied for and the tasks and responsibilities involved. You want to relate your skills to the position.
- Do your research on the company. Find out what they are all about, what products and/or services does the company offer? Where is the main office located? Do a search through pamphlets, brochures and the Internet and talk to those who work at the company to find out what you can about the company.

### **BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:**

- Practice, Practice, Practice your interview the day before with someone. You will feel less nervous in the actual interview.
- Pick out what you are going to wear the night before. Dress for the job you are applying for.
- Find out how to get to the interview location, ask for directions or get a map.
- Arrive on time. Present yourself at the reception desk. Be polite and friendly, because other staff members may be asked for their impressions of you.
- Make sure you know how to pronounce the interviewer's name properly.

### **DURING THE INTERVIEW**

- Greet the employer with a hand shake and smile
- Maintain eye contact
- Be confident and appear relaxed
- Always be honest and respond to questions in a positive way.
- Stress your qualifications and be prepared to match your skills with the skills needed for the job.

### **AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

- Thank the interviewer by name and shake hands again with everyone involved
- Arrange to call the interviewer back in a week for follow up.
- Send a thank you letter to the interviewer, thanking them for their time and briefly reminding them why you are the perfect candidate.
- While waiting to hear back from the company you interviewed with, continue to job search!

## THE INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Use this worksheet to help you review your job interview and prepare for future ones. It will help you decide where you did well and assess where you need to improve your interview skills.

How would I assess my overall performance?

- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Poor

<u>Question</u>	<u>Yes ✓</u>	<u>Could have done better</u>
Did I arrive on time?		
Did I know the interviewer's name and use it correctly?		
Did I show interest and enthusiasm in my body language? I.e. leaning forward?		
Was my tone of voice pleasant and easy for the interviewer to hear?		
Did I show that I was listening by answering the questions that were asked?		
Did I demonstrate my qualifications in the areas of work experience?		
Did I convince the employer that I was qualified?		
Did I ask relevant questions when given the opportunity to do so?		

## **STARTING YOUR NEW JOB!!!!**



### **Before you start your job:**

- Have the right clothes for the job (uniform, boots, hard hat, office attire?).
- Have your child registered for daycare or babysitter (before/after school)
- Have a back up plan if your child is sick
- Have reliable transportation to and from work
- Know where to park
- Have a back up plan if ride falls through
- What will you do for lunch? (bring \$, pack a lunch, go home?)
- Know who and where to report to on the first day
- Remember what the employer had asked you to bring ( bank account #, paperwork, diploma)
- Know the policy regarding attendance, lateness, illness, and breaks.
- Have a contact name and number in case of emergency.

This hand out was created by the Municipality of Chatham-Kent Employment Resource Centre staff.