

Top 11 Interview Questions of 2011

After months of searching, the time has come. You have finally been asked to come in for an interview! Most recruiters will tell you, 2011 not only brings career changes for some, but changes in the interview process as well. With the help of Senior Recruiter Brian Dodd, Kforce staffing specialists narrow down the list of the top 11 questions employers may ask in interviews this year.

1. The non-question

Sometimes the most important question job seekers will come across is not a question at all! Dodd says that's because many employers first take notice of a candidate's behavior.

"Personality is bigger than it ever was, and I think that's because teams are working more collaboratively now," says Dodd. Attack this issue by researching the company thoroughly. If you don't feel as if you would be a good fit for the company, or the job for that matter, neither will the employer.

2. What about our company interests you?

Before you go in for an interview, most employers now expect you to know what their company does. This is a great chance for candidates to tell the interviewer what they have learned from their research of the company.

The staffing specialists at Kforce say go the distance with this one. Pick out five adjectives that describe the company, and try to align those details with your own values. If your answers are clear and enthusiastic, Dodd says you can shine when asked this question.

3. Tell me about yourself.

Another non-question, this statement allows potential employers to learn about your personality and background. Prepare a short statement ahead of time that lists your achievements and goals. As you research the company, match your traits with some of the values shared by your potential employer.

4. What are your best skills?

When responding to this question, don't just identify your skills. Similar to your answer about why you want to work for a particular company, think of five adjectives that would describe the ideal candidate, and align those skills with ones you highlight for yourself.

Connect with Kforce



Another tip: read through the company's annual report and compare your skills to the objectives and values that describe the Firm's leadership and employees.

5. What specific skills have you used that would relate to this position?

When a potential employer looks at your résumé, they may already have an idea of the types of skills you have used in past careers. Next, they want to know more details on how job seekers can use that knowledge to help their business.

If you can identify the company's challenges through research or just asking the interviewer, you are one step ahead on figuring out how you can contribute to the solution.

"Once you realize what their issues are, adapt your answers to those questions based on your own background," says Dodd.

6. What have you learned from your past jobs?

In this case, always remind the interviewer about the skills you excelled in. Then, recall what lessons you learned from any challenges confronted and how it would help you in a career with a potential employer. Otherwise, don't dwell on unpleasant experiences or air "dirty laundry".

7. Why do you want to leave your job?

Whether a career move means more money, a shorter commute or a better boss, Kforce's staffing specialists advise not to share those as reasons with a potential employer. Keep it positive by discussing what you want out of your next career move. If you did have problems at your last job, be honest, but discuss it as a learning experience.

8. If unemployed: What have you been doing since your last job?

For those who have been laid off, Dodd recommends taking continuing education classes or volunteering, especially in the industry you have experience in. Potential employers are likely to appreciate a candidate that can provide a good answer to the above, rather than: "I've actively been searching for jobs".

9. What makes you unique?

As always, a competitive edge is important in 2011. Employers want to know why they should hire you, and recruiters need to know why they should place you. With technology and candidates evolving, Dodd says it is understandable that skills will change, and recruiters should be kept up to date on how you stand out.

Staffing specialists at Kforce also say employers want enthusiastic candidates who understand the needs of the company. You should be prepared to convince the interviewer why you are uniquely qualified for the position. Focus on exclusive industry skills you have or how your outstanding experience and certifications will benefit the potential employer.

10. Odd-ball Questions

Recruiters can help you prepare for an interview, but no one can predict the unexpected. So when a potential employer asks “I’m thinking of a number between one and 100,” how do you answer?

“They don’t want somebody to guess,” Dodd says. “It is more about, how they [the candidates] are going to try and attack challenges and issues.” In the example, if you are asked to pick a number, ask a series of questions; is the number less than 50? Can it be divided by five? Does this number refer to how many clients you work with?

These problem-solving questions come up more and more in interviews, so get ready for the unknown in your next interview.

11. What are your weaknesses?

Last but not least, this is one of the most common questions you may hear in an interview in 2011. The staffing specialists at Kforce encourage candidates to tell the truth, but when asked about these “flaws”, always turn it into a positive. A few hints include: saying you’re detail oriented or you work late to get the job done right.

With the proper preparation, these tips may help you stand out in your next job interview. Just remember the old saying though, “you never get a second chance to make a first impression.”