

Interview questions & answers

Question

Tell me about yourself.

What's Really Being Asked

What is it about you that would make me want to hire you?

Preparation Exercises

List 20 accomplishments, in or outside your professional career, that demonstrate your strengths. Find patterns (perseverance, rising to challenges, good under pressure, etc.).

Question

What is your greatest weakness?

What's Really Being Asked

What aspect of our role will you have difficulty handling?

Preparation Exercises

The "best" weaknesses are strengths to a fault. Too detail oriented, apprehensive about delegating, etc. Everyone has weaknesses but don't use this question as an opportunity to air all of your dirty laundry.

Question

Where do you see yourself in five years?

What's Really Being Asked

Do your five year goals correspond to the position we have open?

Preparation Exercises

Think about how your goals fit with the position – will this position help get you to where you want to be? Keep your goals grounded in reality, not wishful thinking.

Question

Why should I hire you?

What's Really Being Asked

Why should I hire you?

Preparation Exercises

What can you offer this organization? Experience? If not, what skills do you have that they'd want to pay for? Be able to demonstrate with concrete examples. Research the firm you're interviewing with to find out about the practice, and how your skills fit in/can be an asset.

Question

Why do you want to work here?

What's Really Being Asked

What motivates your decision to seek a job here? Do your reasons corroborate your career goals?

Preparation Exercises

Ask not what the company can do for you, but what you can do for the company! The best relationship is one where both parties benefit. Ask yourself what they can do for you and what you can do for them.

Question

I see from your resume that _____.

What's Really Being Asked

Can this person have a normal conversation?

Preparation Exercises

You have interests listed on your resume, here's your chance to talk about them. Speak enthusiastically and intelligently.

Question

What sets you apart from your peers?

What's Really Being Asked

The firm seeks to understand how conscious you are of performance – are you “run-of-the-mill” or do you strive to perform higher than expectations?

Preparation Exercises

Put yourself in your current manager's shoes – how, and in what ways, would he or she say you are better than you peers?

Question

What else do you think I should know about you?

What's Really Being Asked

How interesting is this person?

Preparation Exercises

Prepare an additional skill or accomplishment that is not on the resume. Make sure you have something else to say!!!

Question

Do you have any questions I can answer?

What's Really Being Asked

This is designed to probe the candidate's interest in the position, and, overall understanding of the position and the company. Employers want to know that you're researching them, just as they are researching you.

Question

How would you describe your ideal working environment?

What's Really Being Asked

The firm is trying to get an idea as to your overall compatibility with their team/group.

Preparation Exercises

Answer honestly. Most studies show that employees feel most happy in an environment that is fair, offers excellent learning opportunities, career growth and a feeling of being a part of something.

Question

How much money are you looking for?

Preparation Exercises

Most engineering firms stay within the guidelines of the Engineering Association salary guidelines. Know where you are presently so you have an idea of whether you should be in the higher percentile or average. Be prepared to respond, confidently.