



Three Basic Questions

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Let's talk about interviewing and networking in the context of a job seeker. One thing I've noticed is that some individuals I present to my clients are inexperienced at interviewing. I think this is a good thing in some ways because it means I am bringing talent that has not actively been interviewing with many companies to my clients. The downside of this is that many individuals I work with need to be trained on the subject of interview preparation. Given that the interview is the vehicle by which an individual will ultimately get a job offer, it is pretty important that the job seeker spend time prepping for this important event.

There are three basic questions that will get asked in some way or another in every interview. They are as follows...

- 1) "Tell me about yourself." – I counsel those I work with to prepare a 1 ½ to 2 minute response to this question. If you find yourself speaking longer than this, you are making a mistake (i.e. – rambling). Stick to your professional background and make sure to touch on those aspects of your experience/job history that makes you a fit for the role you are interviewing for. Write this out on paper, say it in front of a mirror, and look yourself in the eye when you rehearse it. Time your response and trim it back to no more than the 2 minute limit. If you do these things, you will always have a ready answer to any question of this type.
- 2) "Why are you looking?" – If you are unemployed, it could come in the form of "Why did you leave your last employer?" Think about why you are looking. If you are looking to pursue a new challenge, advancement or stability, then those are acceptable responses to the question. If you are looking to get more money or to get away from the people at your current role, then you need to think long and hard about your search. No potential employer wants someone who is leaving a job for more money or because they don't get along with their current manager; it is too much of a red flag.
- 3) "What do you know about our company?" – It's critically important that you learn everything you can about the company before the interview. What is their current situation? Future? What plans/strategies do they have? What's the culture like? Check out annual reports, websites, articles, etc. Any insight you can gain here will pay big dividends in an interview.

If a job seeker comes to an interview with at least these three questions answered and rehearsed beforehand, it will greatly improve that individual's interview performance.

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