

THE RIDDICK GROUP

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Interviewing Tips II

Advanced General Questions:

- How did you hear about this position?
- Tell me about the specific job responsibilities you had in your last job or internship.
- In what ways do you feel your present or most recent job has developed you to take on even greater responsibility?
- Give me an example of your work that illustrates the extent of your written communication skills.
- What are some of the problems you encountered on your present or most recent job? What did you usually do about it?
- Do you prefer working alone or in groups? Why or under what circumstances?
- Give me an example of a time when another person really tried your patience.
- What kind of people do you like to work with? Not work with? Why?
- Explain two creative methods you have used in solving a problem.
- Describe a high-pressure situation and explain how you handled it.

Accomplishments

- Tell me about projects, assignments, and project teams you have worked with/ on to improve certain operations within your current and/or prior work assignments-positions. **(This is possibly the most important question of the entire interview. You must be able to describe a work situation; tell how you made improvements; tell how the business or operation has benefited from the improvement and to “quantify” that improvement. (e.g. The company saved \$XXX per year...; reduced headcount by XXX... ; operation being run XXX% more efficiently; ... profitability improved by \$XXX on a monthly or yearly basis).**

Technical Questions:

- What exposure have you had to (software, hardware, product marketing, budgeting, etc.)?
- Briefly describe a technical project that you found challenging or rewarding.
- How do you approach a technical problem? Give an example.
- What have you done above and beyond class or course work especially in an area related to your major?
- Have you published any papers or projects?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you found yourself without the specific technical knowledge to perform a task essential to your project? What did you do?
- Please describe any technical hobbies or interests you have.

Personal Strengths:

- Apart from knowledge or experience, what traits or qualities do you feel could be strengthened or improved upon?
- What would you say are some of the basic factors that motivate you?
- What kinds of things do you feel most confident in doing?
- What do you feel less confident about doing?
- In what way do you feel you have grown most in the past two or three years?
- What are some of the things you are either doing now or have thought about doing that are self-development activities?

- Why aren't you farther along in your career?

In addition to behavior related questions, many interviewers include situational questions in which a specific scenario is staged and you are asked to react. There are many types of questions (close ended, open ended) and many types of interviewers. The most important thing is to be yourself and to be honest. And remember, this is a two way street, you want to find out if you want to work for this company just as much as they want to find out if they should hire you. Be sure to ask questions during the interview so you can find out if this company is a "fit" for your skills and goals. Also, it looks good in the employer's eyes if you have done some reading about the organization in preparation for the interview.

What To Wear

Women:

1. Think professional and reserved. Preferably a dark or tan suit (jacket and skirt), conservative shoes, and no flashy jewelry.
2. A dark outfit calls for dark or nude stockings with low pumps.
3. Don't stop by the perfume counter on the way to the interview -- and don't give the interviewer the impression that you have.
4. When it comes to make-up, forgo the heavy hand in favor of some simple styling. It's OK to wear make-up; just keep it as natural looking as possible.
5. This is a personal interview; leave friends and family at home.

Men:

1. Wear a freshly pressed jacket and tie. If you feel the environment doesn't necessitate a full suit, wear a nice sports jacket and slacks with a tie.
2. Have your shoes polished.
3. Make sure you have a clean shave or trimmed beard.
4. Make sure your hair is neat, clean, and trimmed including your side burns.
5. This is a personal interview; leave friends and family at home.

Remember To Bring

1. Two copies of your resume. (Ask your recruiters advice)
2. A nice pen and note pad.
3. Prepared questions that you would like answered. (See below: How to Phrase Your Questions)
4. A portfolio of your work, if appropriate.
5. Your references.
6. A positive attitude.

After the Interview *****

Write individual (e-mail is fine) thank you notes immediately following your visit to the people you interviewed with, thanking them for the opportunity to meet with them and to present your credentials.

How To Phrase Selected Questions (Taken from Knight Ridder Newspapers article)

If you want to know... Will I be able to have a life outside of work, or do expect everyone to work 80 hour weeks?

Ask... What is your company's work cycle? Are there certain times of year that require more work than others? How would you describe the culture here? When you say, 'We have a lot of fun and we work really hard,' can you tell me what you mean?

If you want to know... Am I going to get any training or time to learn my new job?
Ask... If I took this job, what would I be expected to accomplish in the first 30 days, 60 Days, and 90 days?

If you want to know... Can I take an afternoon off occasionally to watch my daughter's soccer games? Will I appear uncommitted if I leave at 5 p.m. to pick up my son at daycare?

Ask... Can you describe situations in which people at this company have flexible work hours?

If you want to know... Are you an authoritarian micro-manager or will you be an easy boss to work for?

Ask... How would you characterize your management style? How do you communicate with people? I'm the kind of person who has a lot of ideas and opinions -- how do you feel about hearing suggestions and ideas from your employees?

If you want to know... Why did my predecessor in this job leave/quit?

Ask... Why is this position open?

If you want to know... How soon can I be promoted?

Ask... What's a typical career progression from this position?

If you want to know... When will I get a raise?

Ask... How do you measure and reward employee performance?

Most companies today are using a Behavioral Interview process.

Behavioral Interview questions examples/ samples.

Communication

Tell me about a situation when you had to speak up in order to get a point across that was important to you.

Tell me about a specific situation where you had to get something across to someone he or she found difficult to understand.

Leadership

Have you ever had difficulty getting others to accept your ideas? What was your approach?

Describe a work situation when your example served as a model for others.

Motivation

Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.

Give me an example of when you have worked the hardest and felt the greatest sense of achievement.

Interpersonal Skills

What have you done in the past to contribute toward a teamwork environment?

What are some of the best ideas you have ever sold to a superior? What was your approach?

Planning and Organization

How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time?

What method do you use for setting and achieving your goals?

Decision Making

What were the most difficult decisions you made in the last six months? How did you formulate these decisions?

Sometimes we make decisions with our heart and other times with our head. Tell me a time when you chose to go with your head rather than your heart.

Additional Interview Tips/Questions

You should be prepared to show a “managerial overview” - understanding of your current employer’s business(s) and how your department/division relates to the total corporation. (The assumption is that no proprietary information will be disclosed)

For example you should be prepared to discuss things such as the following:

Total annual revenues generated by current employer?

(Are revenues rising, stable, or declining... why?)

-What is the relationship of revenues in your department/division to that of the corporation?

(Percentage relationships for revenues, profitability, etc to the corporate totals)

-What products are produced by your department/division?

-What industry group includes your department/division?

(Is this a growth, mature, high tech, etc. industry, and why?)

-What are most visible technologies used in you division/department?

-What government regulatory agency has oversight responsibility for your industry, or manufacturing processes in your department/division? Have you had direct dealings with the respective agencies?

Note: Even if you are not asked questions such as the ones suggested above, it would be helpful to in some way display to your potential “new” employer that you have a strong understanding of your current employer’s business and its industry group by incorporating the above in you discussions.

Surviving the "panel" interview

Hiring squad

Job-seekers' newest hurdle - multiple interviewers

When it comes to interviewing job candidates, employers are getting everyone into the act these days.

Four or more managers now participate in a hiring decision at one in three companies, according to a survey by XXXXXXXXXX, a job-search and resume-posting Web site. Almost 60 percent of firms put potential hires through interviews with two or three managers.

Whether it's meeting with a senior executive, an immediate manager, a peer who'll be seated nearby or someone from an entirely different department, job seekers must run the interviewing gauntlet.

"Two years ago it was totally different," said XXXX XXXXX, senior career adviser at XXXXXXXXXXXX, a subsidiary of XXXXXXXXXXXX and The XXXXXXXX Company. Candidates "would have one interview and it wouldn't even be with the main decision-maker and they'd walk out that day with the job."

More employers are picking and choosing with care, hoping the up-front work will lead to a long-term and successful employee.

"When they do have that one open position, they want to find that super-star and they want to invest resources and time to ensure that they make the right hire," XXXXX said.

Job-seekers faced with a phalanx of interviewers have ways to improve their likelihood of success. The following are tips from Andrea Kay, career consultant and author.

* Keep your interview responses fresh and complete. Even though you're asked the same question repeatedly, don't short-change yourself. "Your tendency will be to shorten the response -- you need to keep in mind that they've never heard it," Kay said. "Think through your response. Know that this is fresh for this interviewer."

* Keep up appearances and attitude. "Your goal -- to make a good first impression with every single person -- must be the first thing on your mind," Kay said.

* Pay attention to different interviewers' motives. One manager may ask tough questions while another delves into more personal feelings. "People may have different roles," Kay said. "Pay close attention to the demeanor of the person, what seems to be their objective, what are they trying to ascertain about you so you can answer questions accordingly."

* Determine your interviewer's job and tailor your answers. A human resources manager won't want to hear the technical details of your previous job, but you can talk shop with a potential peer. You'll need to ask questions ahead of time to find out who's interviewing you and what they do, Kay said.

* Follow-up with each interviewer. Collect business cards and then mail thank-you notes. "Take mental notes about what each person said or thought to give you a way to customize your note," Kay said. Each inter-viewer "influences whether you get hired or not, and a thank-you note has a lot of credence. It can give you a leg up because most job hunters don't send them, especially to multiple interviewers."

No matter what the interview situation is, job candidates need to be highly prepared.

"A lot of people now are doing research on the front end, looking at the company and coming up with proposals and business plans ... like they're already working for the company," XXXXX said. "They go in with the attitude 'This is what I can do for you.'"

Career Transition Help Links

- For information about relocation, including moving tips, mail forwarding, maps, etc., see <<http://www.homefair.com>>

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