

## How to Answer Difficult Questions

When asked a difficult question, take a moment to reflect before answering. Speak about your accomplishments and relate them to solving company problems. Interviewers want to know what kind of person you are, whether you are a good fit with other workers, and whether you will make a positive contribution.

- ◆ **Tell me about yourself.** Ask the interviewer what in particular he/she would like to know about you. Describe your accomplishments that match their job specs. Stick to information relevant to your qualifications for the job.
- ◆ **What is your greatest weakness?** Describe your weakness so that it is seen as a positive characteristic. Possible weakness might include over extending yourself on projects, working till the project is complete, etc. Or describe a weakness from the past, how you turned it into a strength and what you learned from the experience.
- ◆ **Why did you leave your last job?** Prepare a brief statement explaining why you left—ending on a positive note about the skills you offer. “I really enjoyed using my administrative skills in my last job, but left to receive my accounting certificate. Based upon our discussions, I am very capable of performing this payroll position.” if due to a disability, you might state that you were unable to perform certain aspects of the job, (such as heavy lifting or continuous typing), depending upon your limitations. Avoid using words such as injury, rehabilitation, or workers comp to explain your reason for leaving. Employers interpret these negatively.
- ◆ **Why do you want to work for us?** Do your research and tell why you would select them. Relate your skills point-for-point to those described by the interviewer or in the announcement.
- ◆ **Why have you changed jobs so frequently?** If applicable, explain that you wanted to gain broad experience and that you are now seeking a position that you can commit to. Say that it’s not due to poor performance.
- ◆ **Why were you unemployed for so long?** Be sure to have a good explanation for all unemployed periods. Describe any training, traveling, or career exploration that you did during these gaps.
- ◆ **What would you like to be doing five years from now?** You might say that, if hired, as you gain knowledge and experience on the job, you would be receptive to any jobs within the company which may become available. Emphasize that you have to be professional and a team player.
- ◆ **Describe a difficult problem you’ve had to resolve.** Make a list of past problems you’ve resolved. Rehearse a few to describe during an interview. Describe the steps you took to resolve the problem. Make sure that there was a positive outcome.