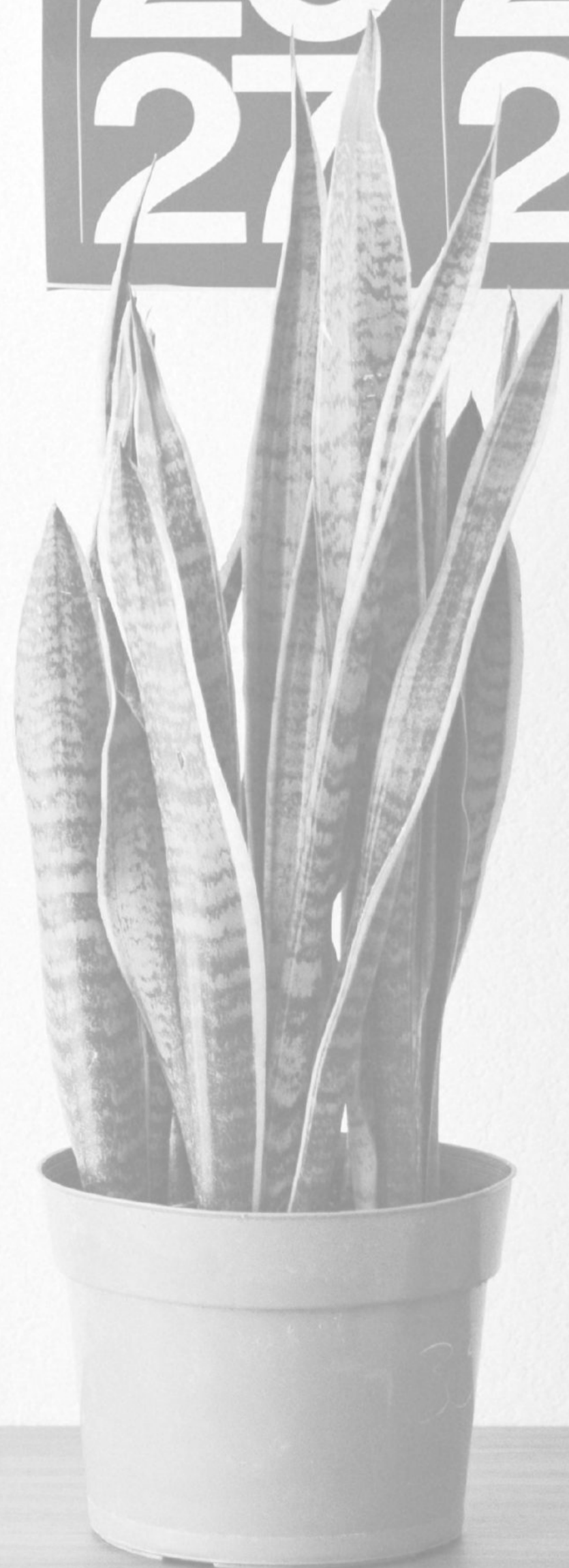


THE ULTIMATE INTERVIEW GUIDE

These are the frequently asked questions recruiters ask during interviews, along with the best way(s) to structure your answers

ABROADEXPERIENCE
International Recruitment



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TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

After the handshake, a quick chat about the weather and the first sip of coffee, 99.8% of the time an interview will start with: 'So, tell me about yourself.'

Your personality and interests are just as important as your work experience.

Tell the interviewer about your love of adventure and hiking whenever you have time off. A brief history of how you ended up where you're sitting now is what is needed.



Timing is everything!

Keep it short, sweet, and chronological. It's a good idea to prepare an answer of a minute to a minute and a half. The information should be in organized timeline form, start from point A and stay on track until point D, avoid wandering from one bit of information to the next like this: A - C - D - B. It may confuse the interviewer, as your CV is in front of them and if your information doesn't stay consistent, it won't look good.

Keep it minimal and relevant

Details aren't needed, your grey tabby cat with a left green eye and right blue one is not as important as that company and position you held in the past. Drop subtle hints by talking about previous experiences which will be a great contribution to the job your discussing.

However, you're not suppose to repeat your CV, only the highlight of your experiences. Recruiters should understand your personality, why you're looking for a new job, what are your ambitions, all in a minute and a half.

Don't be negative

We all go through hard times, and after being pulled down so often you can feel like telling the story of you hardships and almost begging for the job - but this is never a good idea. Showing interest and enthusiasm is more important than the reasons you haven't been able to get settled down. Negativity always brings a bad feeling, and starting the interview off with it can set an awkward or more negative impression.

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP 3 SKILLS?

We know you are an incredibly experienced professional with many acquired skills, so where to start?

If you were interviewing for your dream job, what would it be and what do you think would be the most important skills required? How would you answer this question in an interview to seal the deal and land the job offer? If you do not yet possess the skills for your dream job, try our list of online courses and certificates to help you get there!

What they want to hear

To be able to answer this question properly, you must thoroughly read the job description and identify the key skills that the company is asking for in this role. Make a list ordering these skills from most to least important as you understand them. There will most certainly be more than three, so it will be up to you to choose the three you identify as being most applicable to you and, hopefully, towards the top of the list.

For example

You can, for example, say “One key skill of mine is my exemplary professional phone manner and conduct. I am consistently rated 8-9 out of 10 for customer satisfaction in my current position.”

This keeps the answer concise but provides verifiable proof that you possess the necessary skill.

Now what?

Addressing your sales track record would be helped by having your KPIs and target figures in mind and summarizing them to the interviewer. It should go without saying that your responses should be honest and straightforward and, if applicable, verifiable should the interviewer choose to follow up. Naturally if you believe you possess a skill that is key to the role yet not listed in the job description, be sure to prepare a response that details why you feel that it is particularly beneficial to the position.

WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES?

Being self-aware of your strong and not-so-strong suits is a trait that interviewers value in a candidate. When they ask you what your weaknesses are, they don't want you to start putting yourself down and turn the interview into a therapy session; it's simply to see if you're aware of the qualities you could improve on.

Imagine you're being interviewed for an administrative role, you would be shooting yourself in the foot if you said one of your weaknesses is 'organization'. Red flags would be waving furiously in the interviewer's head with that as an answer. You should turn your weaknesses into something that doesn't look impossible to overcome in the role you're applying for, and also make them into something positive in one way or another.

SAY

I tend to say yes to everything, and sometimes have a hard time asking for help because I don't want to bother my already busy colleagues.

DON'T SAY

I'm too much of a perfectionist, who wants to do the job 100% at its best, even if it means I need to stay past working hours. I'm very hard on myself because I focus on details.

SAY

Presentations and public speaking can really get to me, I need to properly prepare when it comes to speaking in front of a lot of people. But when I've taken the time to properly go through everything and I'm up there, things run smoothly.

DON'T SAY

I cannot tolerate difficult people, if someone is rude to me, it's very difficult for me to stay civil. There is no reason why anyone should be rude towards someone who didn't do anything wrong to them directly.

Justifying the weaknesses proves that you know yourself well and that you're capable of developing. In the end, the job will require you at your best and will highlight your strengths. The question will pop up, and you need to find a good way to tell your interviewer that you're perfect for the job, even with your flaws.

WHY ARE YOU LEAVING YOUR CURRENT JOB?

Understandably one of the most sensitive questions and requiring a delicate approach, the discussion of your previous employer can make or break the interview for you. Not to worry, Abroad Experience is here to help!

Hopefully you can be honest in this question, by stating that the department was outsourced to Poland, the company declared bankruptcy or was forced to downsize and laid people off according to the “first in, first out” policy.

In any case, it is important to avoid saying anything negative about your previous employer, no matter how much you might want to.

SAY

“While I love my job and the company, after several years, I no longer feel challenged in my role and am interested in exploring opportunities that would allow me to develop professionally and learn new skills.”

DON'T SAY

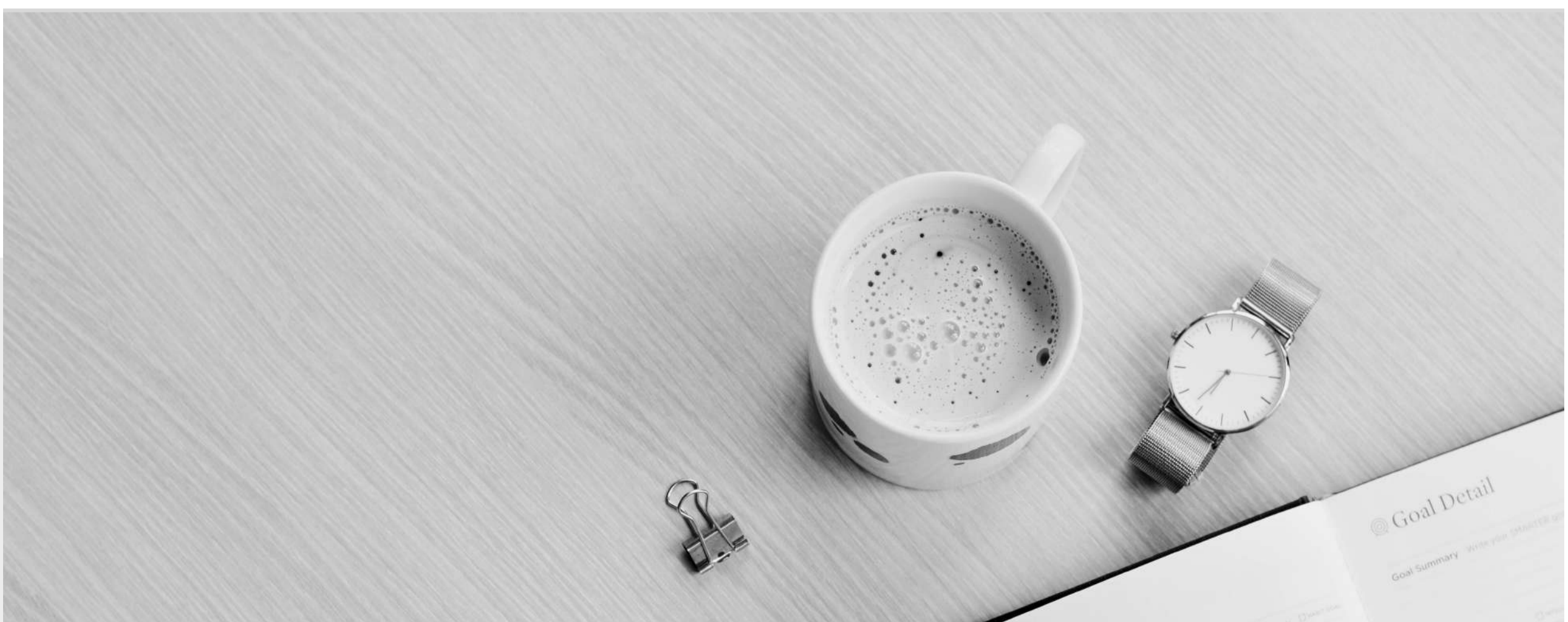
“I’m just so bored and my boss won’t give me any new responsibilities so I want to leave.”

SAY

“I think it is important to explore my options and the time is right as my contract is up for renewal in February”

DON'T SAY

“My contract is finished in February and I’m trying to find another job in case it doesn’t get renewed.”



If you quit your job without having another lined up

Often, we hear stories of candidates who were so miserable in their jobs that they quit without having another job lined up. These are some of the trickier cases, requiring an honest response to the question but taking the emphasis off of how unhappy they were, which can come across as being fickle and job-hoppy to an interviewer.

Whatever the circumstances, the key here is to remain as positive as possible and avoid any accusatory or derogatory explanations. An interviewer will not understand that management at your previous company was passive-aggressive and that the company politics favoured certain employees over others, or that employees were forced to work weekends without being paid for the overtime; he or she will simply see a vindictive, bitter person in front of them and wonder how you would speak about and represent their company to others if you were hired.

SAY

"After the extensive internal restructuring, I no longer felt as though the work culture was right for me so my boss and I came to a mutual agreement to not renew my contract when it concluded in August."

DON'T SAY

"I hated my colleagues and the company was going downhill so I just told my boss not to renew my contract."

If you were fired

So you got fired. It happens and it's beside the point to argue whether it was your fault or not. It's important here to bypass accusations of who's fault it was or excuses for why it wasn't your fault and simply put the best face on it as possible.

SAY

"My project came to an end," "My third temporary contract came to an end," or "My manager and I came to the decision not to renew my contract because..."

DON'T SAY

"I was fired for xyz."



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?

Five years ago, did you see yourself being where you are now? Probably not. It's tough to even know what you're going to do six months from now, let alone 5 whole years. However, it's something that we should all be asking ourselves every once in a while.

Before any interview, come prepared with answers for these sorts of open questions. Not only are they looking at who you are now and what you have done, they also want to see the person who you expect to become and if that person is the right fit for their company.

Why is this question asked?

Interviewers are interested to see if the job at hand is something that will interest you long term, help you reach personal goals and, ultimately, whether it's worth your while... and the company's. So hearing your dedication will be very important to the company, as it will demonstrate that both parties will only gain from you being hired.

So how should you go about answering this question?

At the end of the day, think responsibilities and achievements, not items, promotions or perks, as well as showing the impact you could have on the company and the kind of positive growth the company could benefit from by hiring you. It's also best to concentrate on your career goals rather than personal, unless specifically asked.

Don't say: "I see myself in a F 015 Luxury in Motion Mercedes, driving to work as the CEO of XYZ enterprises with a salary indication of X amount per year."

Instead say: "In five years, I hope to know all there is and more about your company's values, products and services while expanding my skills and responsibilities to become an even greater asset to the company."

This response makes no mention of promotions (vertical growth) by rather the addition of responsibilities on a team or in a department (horizontal growth). You're expressing a desire to remain with the company for several years and build up your value to them, something all companies are eager to find in their new hires.

HOW WOULD YOUR COLLEAGUES DESCRIBE YOU?

Sounds easy, doesn't it? Think about it now... What do those people think of you? And how are you really able to speak for them without sounding conceited? It's not very often that you sit down with anyone to talk about how they feel about you.

A good way to transform this into a concrete addition to your response would be through a removed perspective, such as a reputed personality test based on psychological criteria.



“How would your friends and/or colleagues describe you?”

Most days we can only guess what other people think about us. Everyone just has their own thing going on and probably don't have time to think about how much they adore you.

So, how is best to approach this question?

Get some honest feedback from friends and colleagues. Different relationships involved different sides of your personality that most likely results from the levels of comfort and professionalism that we have with each person; feedback from different kinds of relationships will give you a well-rounded response.

Ultimately, the interviewer wants to know if you are bearable or fun to work with and they're trying to figure out what type of person you are from the opinion of others. But perhaps they should be asking a different question – how do you see yourself? In life we are always searching for who we are, what we like and who we like, and all of these features are what make you, you.

A good way to transform this into a concrete addition to your response would be through a removed perspective, such as a reputed personality test based on psychological criteria. This test, for instance, is based on the Big Five personality trait model, which measures Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. At the end, it will tell you the context of the terms, and what your score in that dimension is. This way you can formulate an honest, yet positive spin on how you may be viewed as an “Introvert” rather than “shy” or “timid” and so on.