



# HOW TO PASS ANY JOB INTERVIEW

# Preface

Searching for job is a job in itself. And one of the pre-selection process is passing an interview. How well you perform at an interview can make a huge difference between you getting the job or not.

As a leading provider of jobs in Nigeria, we have therefore put together this guide to help you prepare and pass any interview.

This is the first edition of this e-book. We hope it grows into a guide that every job seeker no matter your level of experience will find useful.

Please recommend and share this guide. And if you have any idea, input, feedback on this guide, do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

We love to hear from you.

To your interview success!

Recruitment Team

ICS Limited

[www.icsjobportal.com](http://www.icsjobportal.com)

Email: [icsnigeria@gmail.com](mailto:icsnigeria@gmail.com)

Interviews are an important part of any job selection process. You might follow all the great interview tips but how good your responses are to interview questions you are asked, will determine if you will be hired or not.

Luckily passing an interview does not need to be rocket science. For most typical interview questions, there is no right or wrong answers. With adequate preparation you can provide the right answer to any of these questions.

We have therefore put together this huge list of the [tough top interview questions](#) you are likely to be asked at any interview and provided the best way to respond to each of them.

## 40 Tough Job Interview Questions and The Right Answers

### **1. Why Should I Hire You or What Can You Offer Us That Someone Else Can't?**

There's an apparent answer to this question, and that is that you're the best for the job. However, you need to back up this answer with salient points that differentiate you with the rest that are applying for the same job.

But how do you do this? Take a look at the specification of the job and look deep to get an example of a situation where you excelled or simply add value to the job or the project at hand.

Another way to do this is to speak passionately about your achievements while bearing in mind that all you say must be related to the job you're running for.

### **2. What Are Your Weaknesses?**

Often times, candidates/applicants fall into the error of saying they have no weaknesses. This is a NO NO!!! And believe me; the interviewer has heard it all before.

This is when you want to think of the weaknesses you're actively working on overcoming and you should be able to present to the interviewer how you're working on it.

This is not when you want to project laziness as a weakness or a poor sickness record; no organization want to hire such persons.

Also, you can give your knowledge gap in the role you're interviewing for as a weakness and how you're seriously working on developing the skill set to cover the gap.

### **3. Why Do You Want To Leave Your Current Job or Why Are You Looking For A New Job?**

One mistake applicants make when answering this question is to speak ill of their present company or totally disrespect their current boss. This is very wrong!

This is an opportunity to project what you've learnt from your current job and how you can add value to the prospective job role. Tell the interviewer how ambitious you are and how your present employment does not give you enough opportunity to fully express your ambition. Tell the interviewer that you believe and know that his/her organization would give you the playing ground you so much desire.

### **4. What Are Your Strengths?**

This is by no means an easy question and a lot of job seekers will fail at this point. Most candidates fail not because of lack of what to say but for the lack of the accurate thing to say. As recruiters, we are basically giving you an opportunity to shove it in our face and tell us how awesome you are without being vain about it. The best answer is when you are able to demonstrate how you used this skill to carry out a task or perform a job role. Therefore when answering this question, look for skills that fit with your present role or talk about specific example of where you were able to get a notable appreciation for using this skill in your job. A good example should be when I have a deadline; I do all I can to keep to it.

### **5. Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?**

This is a tricky question and how you answer it will depend on how well you understand your self and your career goals. And this is usually one of the reasons why it is important to have a career goal. 5 or 10 years might seem like a long time and really no one cares. What the interviewer wants to know is if you have defined your career path and know what you want to be. This is not the time to tell them you want to be the MD of the company. Your interviewer might just be the MD and he won't look favorable to employing someone ready to take his job from him.

#### **6. Why do you want to leave your current company?**

Just like answering the question why do you want to leave your job, sometimes you are changing company but not roles. In this situation, the best answer is to make it all about the current company. What is it that you like about them? Is it their brand perception? Find a sweet spot about the company and leverage on that.

#### **7. Why was there a gap in your employment between these two dates?**

Under no circumstances should there be a gap between your employment date either by error or deliberately. But life happens. Sometimes you find yourself out of job for no apparent fault of your own. What should you do? Use this opportunity to learn skill, a trade or upgrade your skill. Worst case, use it for some pro bono but at no time should you be idle to leave such a gap. By doing this, you are able to fill every gap on your resume.

#### **8. What are three things your former manager would like you to improve on?**

This looks like a tricky question and if you are not well prepared, you might just miss an opportunity to impress your interviewer. This is not a time to glorify your weakness, speak ill of your former boss or have nothing to say. Take one of your weaknesses and turn it into something positive.

**9. Are you willing to relocate?**

The right answer here is not a Yes or No. The right answer will depend on what the job requirement is, and what the job description is. Is the job requires that your travel a lot, then the right answer will be a yes. Even if it is not stated explicitly that you will be travelling, take a moment to think about the job you are applying for.

**10. Tell me about an accomplishment you are most proud of?**

When interviewers ask these questions, they want to know what your value is and what you hold dear. However, this does not give you room to rate one accomplishment over the other, rather see them challenging and these are what drives you/motivate you more to deliver on the job.

**11. Tell me about a time you made a mistake.**

Making an error or a mistake is not a bad thing. What is wrong is not learning from your mistake or repeating the mistake. Whenever you are asked this question, this is not the time for self pity or to cry. Take your time to analyze a situation where you made an error, how you were able to recover from it and what you learnt from it.

**12. What is your dream job?**

Except if you are not serious about getting a job, your dream job should be the current job you are applying for. Take time to make the job sound interesting. Tell your interviewer why you love the job and what aspect of the job or industry you love and explain why you want to work in the industry.

**13. How did you hear about this position?**

Tell them about how you got to know, they probably will find out anyway.

**14. What would you accomplish in the first 30/60/90 days on the job?**

Answering this question correctly will give an insight into how prepared you are for the new job you are seeking. A proper understanding of the challenges the company is having and how you can fit in to help the company solve some of this challenge by being good at what you do. You should have a 30-60-90 day plan of what you intend to do and how you hope to achieve this. You may not have the whole answer but not having an answer at all is worse.

**15. Discuss your resume.**

Even though the recruiter might probably have gone through your resume, here is an opportunity to brief going through your resume in a chronological order. Be brief and straight to the point. If there is an appointment you want to highlight in your resume, here is a brief opportunity to “quickly” draw the recruiter's attention to this highlight in your CV.

**16. Discuss your educational background.**

This is an opportunity to talk about your education background in a chronological order. Highlight the skills you have acquired that will make you a more suitable person for the job.

**17. Tell me about yourself.**

Most candidates fall into the trap of discussing what has been written on their resume. What look at it from this perspective? If the recruiter calls you for an interview, then they must have

gone through your CV. That means they know one or two things about you. 90% of the time, the recruiter will have a copy of your CV close by as they interview. This is why it is not a very good time to repeat everything you have written on your CV. Use this opportunity to say something about how you fit into the job role or company. Use it as an opportunity to sell yourself.

**18. Tell me how you handled a difficult situation.**

Here, it's important you give a scenario on how you have handled a difficult situation before. These could be a challenge posed on your deliverables and what strategies you applied to control the situation and also lesson learnt this time.

**19. Why are you looking for a new job?**

Low wages, Bad boss, uncondusive working environment, no appropriate compensation? Anything and everything can be wrong with your present job but coming to an interview and saying all that will not make you better or project you in a better light. Rather talk about the new job role you want to fit in and why you are in love with it. If it is the same job, then talk about the new company and why you think their brand is great.

**20. Would you work holidays/weekends?**

Giving an honest answer to this question might make you lose the job but it is better to lose the job than to lie. Know the job description very well. Eg if you are applying for a sales man's job, then you may be required to travel and even work weekends. If you are also applying for a sales assistant job, the same might be required of you. So know the job requirement and be truthful.

**21. How would you deal with an angry or irate customer?**



This should be a no brainer but also a technical question. The interviewer is interested in knowing how you treat people and how well you relate with others. If you have a previous experience in your job, probably you have worked in a position where you had to interface with customers or client, then draw from that experience.

## **22. What are your salary requirements?**

This is one of the most dreaded questions candidates do not want to answer. Either you are a diehard job seeker or a fresher; you still have to give answer to this question. Fortunately there is no wrong or right answer. Whatever salary you are asking for, make sure

- It is reasonable
- it is something you can defend
- It is based on proper research

## **24. Who are our competitors?**

This question is to let your prospective employer know if you have research the company you want to work for and how well you know the brand. If you fail this question, it shows your lack of preparedness. Before you attend any interview, you should not only research the company but also the industry.

## **23. What was your biggest failure?**

Interviews questions can be nerve racking and this questions is usually one of them. So what is the best way to answer it? Should you take about that time when you didn't make the football team because of your inability to arrive early? Well it depends on if you how show how you were able to turn it into something positive.

Talk about a time you failed and learnt from the failure.

**24. What's your availability?**

How soon are you available to resume. Logically most employers require a minimum of one month notice but not in all cases. Therefore you need to understand what your present job requirement is regarding resignation. And if you do not presently have a job, then this question will best be answered by saying "I am willing to resume as soon as an offer is made and accepted".

**25. Who's your mentor?**

A mentor is someone who guides a less experienced person by building trust and modeling positive behavior. Whosoever you decide to pick as your mentor in order for you to properly answer this question, you must be able to explain why you are picking such a person and how the person has positively influenced you.

**26. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your boss.**

Bosses can be stupid but not when answering this question. The interviewer is at this stage trying to gauge how well you handle opposing or contrary view. Where you able to properly articulate your point while still acting appropriately? So do not go explaining how stupid your boss is or how well you were able to shout down the whole room so they can listen to you.

**27. What is the name of our CEO?**

How well do you know the company? Read about the company before you go for the interview. Find out their core values, which the management is and possibly, check out their profile on twitter to know what interests them. The CEO might just be sitting in the room and if you can show how well you know them, then you might just have nailed the interview.

**28. What are your career goals?**

Career goals are is the most important part of your career. It details what your plans are in the next 5 years or 10 years. Your career goal must be match what your job specification is. Applying for an accounting job and telling your interviewer that your career goal is to become a dancer is not appropriate. Rather specific goals like “in 5yrs, I see myself as a chartered accountant”. This is not the time to tell your interviewer (who might be your next boss) that your career goal is to unseat them.

**29. What were your bosses' strengths/weaknesses?**

Once you hear this question, you have to watch it. Bad mouthing your boss is just as awful as painting yourself in a bad light. The same technique you used in answering the question “what is your strength or weakness” should apply here.

### **30. Are you a leader or a follower?**

Are you smart? Then do not rush to give an answer. Pause a minute and then selectively give an answer that is appropriate to the new role you are being interviewed for.

### **31. What was the last book you read for fun?**

Do you remember the last book you read? If yes go on. But what if you do not read? Remember that pamphlet you pick up and glanced through? Or that newspaper headline you saw and caught your attention. Talk about it and why you were fascinated with the story or what stuck you about the story.

### **32. What are your co-worker pet peeves?**

Don't let this question fool you. Recruiters can easily find out a lot about you by the answer you give to this question. It is therefore wise not to make it about something not personal and not work related but if it has to be related, then let it be something that won't put you in a bad light. For example, you could say something like "I do not like it when people arrive late to meetings".

### **33. What are your hobbies?**

Hobbies are activities done regularly for leisure. It is important then that you take about something you really do. There was a particular time during an interview; I asked a candidate what her hobbies are? She responded with the answer that she loves travelling. I then proceeded

to ask her where was the last place she traveled to and when. She responded with a blank look. Make sure the hobby you are willingly to take about is really something you like doing.

**34. What is your favorite website?**

What website do you visit regularly and why do you like visiting these pages. Mention publications that are both educating and entertaining. Do not mention your gossip websites or the website that are not meant for the work environment. Here you should keep your personal reference to yourself.

**35. What makes you uncomfortable?**

The best way to answer this question is to think about something that you may never encounter. This can vary and depend from industry to industry. If you are applying for a job as a lawyer, saying something like “I feel uncomfortable when I am being asked to lie” might not be the most appropriate answer. No because lawyers lie but simply because it comes with the trade to keep client’s confidentiality. A good answer will be something that put you in good light like “I feel uncomfortable when I am working in a team and I am not being carried along”

**36. What are some of your leadership experiences?**

You may not have held an important title but remember that time you were in the boy’s scout and you had to lead a team. Remember any task you have done as long as it is remotely connected to leadership role and emphasis how you were able to led the team.

**37. How would you fire someone?**

The firing process is usually a delicate one and an area employers, HR and recruiters do not want to go. Yet, something you might just have to do this. Is there a way to fire someone gracefully? Then here is your tip to answer this question. First take it as a clue that the same thing might be done to you. . Having said this, you should be careful how you respond to this question or the same procedure might be used when you are about to be fired. The right response should be I will calmly explain the reason why management is taking this decision, advice the employee on what to do and try to ask if the employer has a question he wants me to answer.” Firing someone is actually not a pleasant experience but what the recruiter wants to know is your level of empathy and arrogance weather you are arrogant or will treat people badly.

### **38. Would you work 40+ hours a week?**

If you are applying for any job, there is a probability that you might need to work some extra time so going on to say it is a “no” is definitely not the right answer. Rather explain how you are prepared to work extra time if it will make you meet your target and make you carry out your duties more effectively. In some work culture, it is usually not seen as a good sign to work extra hours while in others, it shows lack of discipline. So make your research and understand the company’s culture.

### **39. What questions haven’t I asked you?**

The way you will answer this question will depend on your level of experience. If during the interview, you notice a strength of yours that can give you an edge; you can use this opportunity to draw the recruiter’s attention to it. Just be ready for any follow-up question that might arise.

#### **40. What questions do you have for me?**

This is your chance to ask questions and find out things you want to know about the company. Telling the interviewer you have no question to ask is a sign you are not prepared for the interview. So you should always have a question no matter how simple it is. In asking your question, there are some questions you should refrain from asking. This is not the time to ask how many times you are free to go on leave or to start negotiating your salary. Ask intelligent questions like “What drives the company”? or “Who will you be working with?”, “Who held the present role you are being interviewed for and why?”.

If you are a job seeker, then you need to make this guide your friend. Pin it to your desk (just make sure your boss does not see it), download the PDF and take it anywhere you go. Whatever you do, just make sure you go through this guide before your next interview.

# Conclusion

As usual, read and share wisely.