

**WINNING
ANSWERS TO
500 INTERVIEW
QUESTIONS**



LAVIE MARGOLIN

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Cover

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Lavie Margolin

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

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Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

This book is dedicated to Kera Greene.

Thank you for being my teacher, my mentor and my friend.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

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Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

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Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Foreword:

I remember my first job interview.

I was lucky, I didn't even have to apply for the job.

A friend of mine had a marketing position for a small web design company in downtown Montreal (Canada) and they were looking to add someone just like him to their team. I didn't have much marketing experience but this was a junior position and as a Computer Science major, I had spent more time online than pretty much anyone else I knew.

My friend was able to get me the interview invite simply by mentioning to his boss that yes, he did actually know someone who might be a good fit. One phone call later and I was all set with a date and time bright and early in the morning a few days later.

I did no homework for the interview.

If I knew the name of the company, it was because my friend had mentioned it. I certainly didn't visit their website or check for press mentions, and LinkedIn hadn't been invented yet or I would have ignored that too.

I vaguely remember forwarding my resume to my friend before the interview, but his boss probably didn't read it before we started. Or even need to, because there wasn't much there to read.

I had no clue.

On the day of the interview, I was a little early to the company offices and arrived with a paper copy of my resume in hand. I'd slept well, was well-dressed, feeling good and happy to see that my friend was already there too, as he opened the door to let me in. His boss invited both of us to sit down in their front office lounge, offered a drink (which I refused), and we got underway.

The boss quickly scanned my resume and asked some quick questions to basically confirm what I'd listed there. Maybe he sensed that I was nervous and just wanted to break the ice, but I remember feeling confident.

And then everything went downhill quickly.

"It says here that you speak French fluently, is that correct?"

"Yes, that's right," I replied.

"What's the French word for 'browser'?"

I had no clue.

I frantically searched my mind, but if there was a French word for 'browser', I hadn't heard it.

I was supposedly bilingual and supposedly very familiar with Internet terminology, so if there was a French word for 'browser', I should have heard it.

I really had no clue.

“I... I don't know,” I stammered, and my face said it all. It felt like I had been caught in a lie, which I had been, frankly.

And just like that, it was over.

There may have been another language-related question that I didn't know, but the boss had heard what he needed to and was very curt about it. He said something like “I think we'll stop here. Good luck with your job search.” He didn't thank me for coming in, but he also didn't thank me for wasting his time either. After the fact, I felt bad that perhaps my poor interview would lessen the boss's esteem for my friend and cause him problems at work, but if it ever happened, my friend never said anything.

What could I have done better?

I could have recognized that I wasn't qualified for the job and been clearer with my friend when he asked me about it.

I could have researched what kinds of projects the company was working on, and what kinds of projects the company would need the hire - me - to work on. LinkedIn didn't exist yet, but I did have a friend on the inside, after all.

I could have been more honest on my resume about my language skills, or at least tried to get someone else's assessment of them, to confirm or reject what I thought I knew before having it done in real-time, to my face, embarrassingly in the middle of the interview.

I had no clue.

But you will.

With this book, Lavie Margolin has done a great job bringing you almost every general purpose question that you're likely to hear in your next job interview, complete with advice on how to respond and a sample answer in every case.

Read the book cover to cover, answering to yourself as you go.

You can also use the book as a handy reference, to check the questions you've struggled with in the past and prepare better answers for the future.

And of course, run interview simulations with a friend choosing questions at random.

By the time you get through *Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions*, you'll either feel ready to conquer any job interview or you'll have pinpointed exactly where you need to improve so that you can conquer any job interview.

To your job search success,

Jacob

--

Jacob Share

Job Search Expert

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Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Editor's Note:

This book is intended to be used as a tool when preparing for an interview. As you read each question, strategy, and sample answer, take a moment to formulate the answer you would give if you were being asked that question. While no one is given a list of study questions to prepare for an interview, there are only so many topics interviewers are likely to touch on.

Advanced practice will give you an opportunity to think through your work history to have the points you are most proud of and those that apply to your present job search at the forefront of your memory. It will also help you to research any information about the position you are interviewing with in advance so that you come across as a serious applicant.

Some of the questions might be surprising or uncomfortable to answer. The strategies and sample answers provided will help you to field these types of questions with greater confidence, as you will be prepared to put a positive but honest spin on any bumps in your professional road. You will avoid the pitfall of sharing personal information that doesn't add to your desirability as a job candidate when you could just as easily answer personal questions with impressive details that apply to the professional you.

You may notice as you read that some questions are really getting at the same point using different words, and that some strategies and sample answers are similar. This is done to help you recognize and feel comfortable with the many ways in which an interviewer may request certain information, and to help you as a job seeker to mentally practice retelling the facts and anecdotes about yourself that you are hoping to share in an interview.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Introduction:

In my role as a Career Coach, I have been helping job seekers prepare for their interviews for more than 10 years.

I wrote this book as a compilation of the knowledge I have acquired from speaking with career professionals, job seekers and those who hire. My strategies are grounded in the reality of what employers are looking for and my examples are based on real life situations.

Answering 500 questions was a major undertaking but I know how helpful it will be for you and that makes it worthwhile.

Feel free to jump right in!

Lavie

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Your Background

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Tell me about yourself.

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer would like to know about the professional you and understand your qualifications for the job.

Strategy: Focus on the professional you. The interviewer does not want to know about where you took your last vacation or what your favorite pastime is. Provide an introduction to your relevant experience, education, skills and knowledge that will be discussed more in-depth over the course of the interview.

Sample answer: I am a Public Accountant with ten years of experience in the field. I recently received my CPA. For the last 6 years, I've worked for Smithson Auditors in a senior capacity. Prior to that, I worked for Jacoby Accounting. Supervisors have described me as a quick learner and a great team player.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What major challenges and problems did you face in your last job?

Why this question is being asked: Jobs are full of challenges. The interviewer would like to know how you have handled problems or challenges in the past as you are likely to face obstacles in this job as well.

Strategy: Demonstrate how you can overcome a challenge. Provide an example of a problem or challenge that would have relevance for the interviewer and show how you overcame that challenge. In structuring your answer, provide the problem followed by the action and then the result.

Sample answer: Two years ago, my employer acquired a niche firm. This created natural friction between long-time employees and those who came aboard during the acquisition. Each team had their own way of doing things. At the beginning, having more employees slowed down our ability to finish projects successfully due to miscommunication and conflict. After this happened, I asked members of our team to meet me for lunch. We went out in a relaxed atmosphere and began to discuss our working styles and why we work the way we do. It opened the line of communications and we began to understand each other better. This led to better teamwork in the future.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

How would someone who dislikes you describe you?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to understand how you deal with a question that is unexpected and makes you acknowledge that you are not perfect.

Strategy: Acknowledge the answer. Do not try and avoid it by saying, "Everyone likes me". Be cautious not to provide anything negative about yourself but think of different work styles and why someone with a conflicting work style may not like you.

Sample answer: Wow. That is a good question as I normally would not focus on negative thoughts or think about people not liking me in a professional context but if I had to give an answer, I would say, "I don't like working with him as I like to take things as they come and charge into a problem and he likes to think things through too much. He likes to create a plan and analyze the situation thoroughly before diving in and that is frustrating to me."

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What was your biggest failure?

Why this question is being asked: Not everything will go your way all of the time and the interviewer wants to understand how you will handle it when things don't go right.

Strategy: Acknowledge the question. Do not try and avoid it by saying, "I have never failed". Provide a relevant failure and explain what you have learned from it that makes you a better professional today.

Sample answer: Early in my career, I overextended myself to grow my professional capabilities. I was working full-time and also attending a master's program at night and on the weekends. It was manageable until I received a promotion at work. I felt overwhelmed and left

the master's program at the end of the semester. It felt like a failure because I could have given it more time to work out the responsibilities. I've learned to consider things more carefully before making any final decisions. As an aside, I've just restarted my master's and things are going really well!

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What is your definition of failure?

Why this question is being asked: Working in a job is all about meeting objectives. The interviewer wants to understand how you judge things like success and failure.

Strategy: Provide some insight into your working style in a way that would be appealing for the interviewer.

Sample answer: To me, failure is not even trying. Sometimes there are opportunities given by a supervisor that one can take if he or she is willing to take on the challenge. Many people are so afraid of failure that they are afraid to even try challenging assignments. Failure is not trying something and it not working out. For me, not trying something out of my comfort zone would be the failure.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What are your regrets?

Why this question is being asked: Not everything will go your way all of the time and the interviewer needs to understand how you will handle it when things don't go right.

Strategy: Acknowledge the question. Provide a regret you may have that is relevant to the job and what you may have learned from it.

Sample answer: I am not the type of person who normally focuses on things like regret as we all make mistakes. It is important to acknowledge those mistakes but then move on. If I did have to focus on one answer, I would say that I regret not being more open to opportunities early in my career. When I was in college, I was laser-focused as to what type of job I wanted. I had the industry, role and even the location all planned out. When I received a call for an interview and it was in an outer borough, I declined the interview because it wasn't what I wanted exactly. I've learned not to be so closed minded to opportunity. In fact, I've become used to commuting for over an hour!

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What is your greatest weakness?

Why this question is being asked: In order to gain a better understanding of the "professional you". The interviewer doesn't want to hear just about what you do well but what

you may do poorly as well.

Strategy: Provide a relevant weakness that you may have had, what you have done to overcome it and where you stand now.

Sample answer: I've always considered myself a quieter person. While I am very comfortable talking to people one on one, or even giving presentations, I have always been intimidated to go over to people I do not know and introduce myself. Given my role in the business world, I knew that I had to get beyond that. I've made a concerted effort to put myself out there and meet new people. While it can be intimidating to do so, I don't think anyone notices that I am uncomfortable sometimes and I've made some great new connections.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

When was the last time you were angry?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to learn how you manage your emotions on the job and if you can maintain your professionalism.

Strategy: Acknowledge the question. Do not try to say that you never get angry but provide a relevant example and share what you learned from it.

Sample answer: As a professional, I try to stay away from being angry at a co-worker or a client. Sometimes, someone may do something upsetting but I try to manage my emotions. One example does come to mind though. Early in my career, I shared a cubicle with someone in a similar capacity to me. As a worker, I tend to be all-in about my work and being a professional. This person was just about the opposite. He would be on inappropriate websites, make personal phone calls and even fall asleep when we were asked to meet with clients. The last part was especially upsetting as it was not only him acting unprofessionally; it was becoming a reflection on me. Eventually, he was caught for his behavior while I was able to take on additional responsibilities and move away from my association with him.

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If you could relive the last 10 years of your life, what would you do differently?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to get a sense of where you are going with your career by having you reflect on your past.

Strategy: Focus on what you've learned through your experience and if you had known, what you would have done differently.

Sample answer: I am not the type of person that lives with a great deal of regret. I try to be thoughtful about my actions, but we all make mistakes. One of the things I would have done differently, but I could have only learned through the experiences that I did have, was to be more culturally sensitive. I've worked with many people from a variety of backgrounds and if I

would have understood their perspectives based on their experiences better, I think we could have worked more effectively together.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Tell me about a time when you helped resolve a dispute between others.

Why this question is being asked: Conflicting opinions and strong personalities are often a part of the workplace. People that can take on leadership roles and resolve problems are heavily valued.

Strategy: Provide an example where you can demonstrate your leadership abilities to resolve a conflict. Explain what was the problem, the action that you took and the end result.

Sample answer: As an accounts manager, I had taken on a mentoring role for two relatively new employees. They were working closely together, and a conflict arose as to which one should get the credit for securing the account. They agreed to talk it out with me before going to the supervisor. Upon hearing each other's side of the situation, they agreed that each deserved some credit and realized that to find mutual success in their new roles, they would be best served by working together.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What are your goals?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to know if your goals align with those of the organization.

Strategy: Focus on an "everybody wins" approach as opposed to only what you want. Be specific as to the items relevant to the industry that you would like to accomplish but avoid naming a specific job title.

Sample answer: I want to continue to contribute to a media organization in a meaningful way. My exact job title is not as important to me as the type of work that I would be doing. I know that if I can contribute positively, the company will benefit and we will all win in the end.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What is your dream job?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to know if your dreams and goals align with those of the organization.

Strategy: Focus on job duties relevant to the industry in which you are applying. Avoid naming a specific job title. Paint a realistic picture.

Sample answer: I look for the potential in most things, so any job that I've held has had pieces of a dream job to me. I understand that even the ideal job will have stress at certain times and various challenges, big and small, to overcome. For me the ideal job is when I can continue to contribute to a media organization in a meaningful, progressively responsible way.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What are three things your former manager would like you to improve on?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer is looking for you to be candid and share professional aspects about yourself that may not be your strong suits.

Strategy: Focus on aspects of yourself that may have been places for improvement earlier in your career. Show how you have overcome those weaknesses and where you are today.

Sample answer: The supervisor in my first job had a difficult personality so I have a good sense of how to answer this one.

"He has poor communication skills." He felt that I could not communicate well and should not speak on the phone. Although I felt this was partly because I am naturally quieter when acclimating to a situation, I did take steps to improve my communication abilities. I've been attending toastmaster meetings for the last 5 years. This has improved my public speaking abilities greatly and speaking publicly is a major part of what I do.

"He has limited technical know-how." At the time of I began that job, I wasn't that experienced in using a computer so it was a sharp learning curve for me. Once I became comfortable in using technology, I really took to it. Now, I enjoy using social media, blogging, podcasting and such.

"He is not a leader." I can understand why my first boss had this initial perception of me. As I mentioned, in my first role, I was quieter and intimidated to speak out too much. I just focused on the work. As I've grown as a professional, so have my leadership abilities. Even in that job, I helped to train new employees and was left in charge of overseeing the office in the absence of a supervisor. As I've grown in my career, I have often taken on the role of team leader.

Tell me about an accomplishment you are most proud of.

Why this question is being asked: By learning about what you've accomplished in the past, the interviewer has a better sense of what you may accomplish in the future.

Strategy: Paint a picture with your words of an accomplishment that would be relevant to the position for which you are applying.

Sample answer: I was called upon to do a job meant for two people. I was able not only to meet the demands of both positions, but to really excel. As the company acquired various

new businesses, the CEO was looking for someone who already had experience in account management to lead a new team. I was asked to do so while maintaining my old position as well. I would spend two and a half days at each site per week. Through maximizing resources, especially leaning on technology as a communication tool, I was able to stay on top of both roles and exceed expectations.

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Are you a leader or a follower?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to understand how you'd fit into the organization given your role.

Strategy: Every organization values some leadership qualities but wants someone who will follow directives as well. Try to maintain a balance between the two.

Sample answer: I take a leadership role on those occasions that call for expertise or experience that I have and which my colleagues may not possess. I am always ready to share my knowledge. But as a leader, I understand that sometimes it's important to be a good follower as well in order to learn from others.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What are some of your leadership experiences?

Why this question is being asked: As the ability to lead is an important quality no matter what your role, the interviewer wants to know more about your ability to lead by learning if you have done so in the past.

Strategy: Provide a memorable story (or two) that demonstrates your leadership qualities. It is better to provide only one or two stories than to provide a laundry list of all of your leadership experiences, with none being memorable following the interview.

Sample answer: Every quarter, my department has to provide a report on its accomplishments to the executives. I volunteered for the role of team lead in gathering this information from co-workers and ensuring that it was as accurate and organized as possible. I called several team meetings to set objectives and deadlines for our work and met with individual members to answer any questions and to make sure we were on the same page. We produced a report that was praised by the executive team and I have been the go-to person ever since.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Why aren't you earning more money at this stage of your career?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to understand how much the salary factors in to your career goals.

Strategy: Explain your long term strategy in preparing yourself for the highest future earnings as opposed to taking whatever highest paying job comes next.

Sample answer: Up to this point in my career, it has been all about contributing to the organization and getting as much experience as possible. I chose to take some jobs that paid in the middle range of the market as opposed to the highest, as I knew those firms would challenge me the most and I'd have the best opportunity to learn. Now that I've gained all of that experience, I feel that I am in the position to pursue a job that adequately meets both of my goals- to challenge me as well as pay a salary that is at the higher end of the scale.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Who has inspired you in your life and why?

Why this question is being asked: As the interviewer does not know you, he/she wants to understand what made you the person that you are.

Strategy: Provide a few examples of family, friends and/or mentors who've inspired you through their work ethic and dedication to a task.

Sample answer: It would be difficult not to be inspired by one's parents. Thankfully, mine served as great role models for me. In addition to dedicating their free time to their children, they have a tremendous work ethic. My father would wake up extra early to get to work earlier in order to put in extra hours so that he could get home in time to see his kids. If need be, he returned to work after we had gone to bed.

My first supervisor, Jane Riley, was an inspiration as well. She has a tremendous moral compass. If something appeared morally questionable, she taught us to lean towards the right thing to do. She was right as it strengthened our relationship with clients and benefited everyone in the end.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What techniques and tools do you use to keep yourself organized?

Why this question is being asked: In a world of increasing demands, multi-tasking and reporting, the interviewer would like to know how you remain organized.

Strategy: Everyone has different strategies but paint a picture of a person that is organized and has created a system to stay on top of the work.

Sample answer: The first thing that I do is create a running task list for myself in Google docs. In that list, I place deadlines and notes as to my progress. I have a calendar app for all of my appointments and to-do's as well as a physical appointment calendar as a backup. I like to arrive early to the office to clear out my inbox and voicemail system and solidify a working

plan for the day.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What is your personal mission statement?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to understand what defines you in order to determine how you would fit into the company culture.

Strategy: Provide a well-defined mission statement that demonstrates your strong work ethic, moral compass and drive to succeed. Consider the mission statement of the company and make sure that it is compatible with your own.

Sample answer: To utilize my strong work ethic and drive to succeed to meet my own objectives, as well as those of people who count on me, in a responsible and morally appropriate way.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What is your greatest achievement outside of work?

Why this question is being asked: The employer wants to understand who you are as a person outside of a job setting.

Strategy: Focus on an achievement that demonstrate experiences, skills or abilities that was performed outside of the job.

Sample answer: I've been volunteering for an organization called Building Homes for the Homeless since 1999. At first, I was just a helper when we went into a town and helped to actually build a home. I've worked my way up and I'm now the team leader. It's a great feeling to successfully lead others in volunteering their time for such a worthy cause.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Tell me one thing about yourself you wouldn't want me to know.

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to know how you'll handle a question that you did not anticipate and what you'll say that you may not have planned to.

Strategy: Don't provide an actual weakness about yourself. Provide something that you may not have really said otherwise but makes you seem like a stronger candidate.

Sample answer: Well to be honest, I've actually been following this company for a long time. I'm a fan of your work. I know that you aren't looking to hire someone that is just a fan but is also a great fit and employee and I think that I'm an excellent balance between the two.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What is your favorite memory from your teenage years?

Why this question is being asked: The employer wants to understand more of who you are as a person.

Strategy: Provide something that shows your good character and would be applicable to making you a better professional.

Sample answer: My favorite memory was watching my sister graduate from high school. She struggled with her math classes and she wasn't sure she was going to be able to pass. I tutored her and she became more confident. A few months later, my sister made a copy of her diploma and gave it to me with a note of thanks.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What accomplishment has given you the most satisfaction?

Why this question is being asked: A predictor of your ability to accomplish things in the future is partly based on what you've accomplished in the past.

Strategy: Provide an accomplishment that would be relevant to the job you are interviewing for. Paint a picture of what you accomplished, how you went about accomplishing it and why it was important.

Sample answer: I've always been good at multi-tasking but I was not sure that I'd be able to go to school full-time while working and raising a family. It wasn't always easy but I was able to do it successfully. I'd study on the train, wake up early, go to sleep late and learned how to manage everything that I do more effectively.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What are your hobbies?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to understand who you are outside of the job.

Strategy: There is really no wrong answer here but you should avoid any controversial answers. This is not really the place to discuss hunting or governmental protests.

Sample answer: Since my job is desk-based, I like to do hobbies that give me exercise and allow me to spend time with my family. I like to play sports and go camping.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What sports do you play?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to understand who you are outside of the job. There is some perception that active, healthier people are more productive.

Strategy: If possible, provide some examples of sports you participate in to show that you are active and are not all about work. To show a competitive spirit isn't a bad thing either.

Sample answer: Informally, I run regularly. I like to compete with myself in breaking my fastest time. I have a competitive spirit so when time allows, I like to participate in pickup basketball games.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What kind of games do you like to play?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to better understand who you are outside of the job.

Strategy: Focus on games that require solving puzzles and strategic thinking as these are valued skills in most jobs.

Sample answer: I enjoy playing chess. It's the type of game that no matter how skilled you become, there is always someone better. It motivates me to continue to learn and improve.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What do you do in your leisure time?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to know if you are a well rounded person.

Strategy: There is really no wrong answer here but you should avoid any controversial answers. This is not really the place to discuss hunting or governmental protests.

Sample answer: I dedicate much of my time to my job but I find that it is important to find the time to relax. I enjoy spending time with my wife and daughter. We like to go to the park, see friends and go out to eat.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What do you do to deal with stress?

Why this question is being asked: As work is naturally stressful, the interviewer wants to know how you manage yours.

Strategy: Be honest that you do get stressed. Provide concrete examples to show how you can manage the stress.

Sample answer: I try to remain calm and prioritize my time when thinking about what needs to be done first. If it is an especially stressful time of year, I make sure to spend my lunch away from my desk and to get some exercise. I find that it makes me feel refreshed so that I have the energy to deal with the work.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What do you do to help balance life and work?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer wants to know if you are a well rounded person.

Strategy: Provide concrete examples of how you maintain that balance. The interviewer is likely to be unimpressed if you say that you cannot maintain that balance and that you are a workaholic.

Sample answer: It can be difficult to maintain a proper balance but I think I manage it. For me the key is maximizing my time. On the train on the way to work, I am preparing for work and on the way home, I'm preparing for the next day as well. That way, I can mitigate the need to stay late at the office and spend time with my family. Plus, the weekends are family time (unless there is something essential to take care of before Monday rolls around).

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Would you rather be liked or feared?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer would like to get a better sense of your management style.

Strategy: Find a balance for a middle ground. If you only say that you want to be liked, the interviewer might think you are a pushover and if you say that you need to be feared, you'll come off as a dictator.

Sample answer: I would want to be liked because I am a respected leader who leads by example. As an effective leader, my team would be fearful of not doing their best because each would know that everyone has put in a great effort and no one wants to disappoint the team.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

How competitive are you?

Why this question is being asked: Most jobs require a certain amount of competition, either between employees or externally, and the interviewer would like to see how you hold up.

Strategy: Provide clear examples that show you thrive on a good amount of competition but that you wouldn't do anything, especially if it is unethical, to get ahead.

Sample answer: I do enjoy a healthy competition. I find that competing with co-workers motivates us all to be better. If someone comes up with a great strategy or technique that works well, the next person can build on that and we can all grow.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Tell me about a time when you used your creativity to overcome a problem.

Why this question is being asked: There isn't always a guidebook to solve all of the problems that can, and do, arise at work. The interviewer wants to know if you can be creative in order to solve problems.

Strategy: Provide an example relevant to the job you are applying for. Describe the problem, the creative approach you used to solve the problem and what the positive end result was.

Sample answer: I have to establish relationships with executives. The most difficult part is reaching them. I've learned how to find any email address at a company when you can find that of one person. I google for the email address of anyone at the company to learn how their system works. Once I have that along with an executive's name, I can contact him or her directly. This has led to a much higher rate of response than trying to reach the person on the phone or through an intermediary.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

Which of your technical skills has most helped you on the job?

Why this question is being asked: Technical aptitude is an increasingly important skill no matter what your role. The interviewer would like to get a better understanding of your strongest skills.

Strategy: Provide a technical skill relevant to the job you are pursuing. Demonstrate your expertise by providing an example of how you used it and why you were successful.

Sample answer: I have a good understanding of how to utilize social media. I've trained our sales staff in the use of LinkedIn to increase company visibility.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What new skills have you learned or developed recently?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer would like to know if you are a lifelong learner. Companies want to hire people that are constantly learning and not stagnating.

Strategy: Provide an example of something you learned recently that is relevant to the job you are interviewing for. Explain how what you've learned is relevant to your job and what you accomplished.

Sample answer: I recently learned more about the importance of body language. It helped me to better identify what people are communicating with their bodies even when saying something different. This skill has been very helpful when attending business meetings and

establishing new relationships.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What sort of things have you done to become better qualified for your career?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer would like to know if you are a lifelong learner. Companies want to hire people that are constantly learning and not stagnating.

Strategy: Provide a relevant example of how you have continued to learn and improve to become a better qualified learner.

Sample answer: I believe that it is important to keep learning in order to improve and I participate in as many professional development opportunities as possible. I attend two or three conferences a year in my field. I participate in cross-trainings from other departments at my current job. Additionally, I am an active contributor in several relevant LinkedIn groups.

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What were your responsibilities in your last job?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer would like to know if the job you are currently pursuing is similar to your last job or if it would be a step up in increased responsibilities.

Strategy: Consider the responsibilities of the job you are pursuing when describing your previous job. The objective is to demonstrate that you can handle the responsibilities of the new job because you've done most of them already in your old job.

Sample answer: From my understanding of this job, many of the responsibilities of my previous job would have been similar including....

Winning Answers to 500 Interview Questions

What have you done to improve your knowledge in the last year?

Why this question is being asked: The interviewer would like to know if you are a lifelong learner. Companies want to hire people that are constantly learning and not stagnating.

Strategy: Provide a few examples relevant examples of how you have continued to learn and improve to become a better qualified learner.

Sample answer: I believe that it is important to keep learning in order to improve and I participate in as many professional development opportunities as possible. I attend two or three conferences a year in my field. I participate in cross-trainings from other departments at my current job. Additionally, I am an active contributor in several relevant LinkedIn groups.