



HOLLYWOOD MOVIE METHOD
JOB WINNING SERIES GUIDE #2



WHAT'S RIGHT WITH YOU?

OR Help Me Decide Why
I SHOULD Promote or Hire You!



TERRY KOZLOWSKI

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Introduction

How This Guide Will Help You

This is Guide #2 in the Hollywood Movie Method Job Winning Series. It is designed to help you do a better job of selling yourself in an interview, particularly if you can't get past the idea that it's really hard to be yourself, not BRAG, but still stand out as the top candidate.

You will lose the job that should be yours if you don't overcome this common interview problem.

This Guide is for you if you don't like talking about yourself or you have been taught NOT to brag, and that thinking is limiting your interview effectiveness. Your interviewer will usually give you some easy questions so you can tell them why they should select you as their best candidate.

Don't miss these perfect chances to impress them naturally and sell yourself in your interviews when responding to some of the classic "What's Right With You?" questions they give you, such as:

- Why do you want to work here?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your goals?

Putting your best messages forward when you respond to these common questions can make the difference between your moving up or staying exactly where you are now.

What You'll Learn

By following the "How To's" included here and reviewing the 36 example answers given by real people in their interviews and checking your ratings against my own, you'll be able to develop your unique job winning answers to the most frequently asked "What's Right With You?" questions.

My focus is to give you in just 30 minutes the essentials you need so you can:

- Learn the psychological short-cut hundreds of people have used to get past their "no bragging" hang-up instantly

- Discover the easiest evidence that will sell your strengths (a fast fix because you already have the evidence, you're just not using correctly) . . .
- Apply the "courtship" secret to success that's just as powerful when pursuing your most desired job opportunity . . .
- Decrease your nervousness and increase your confidence and control . . .
- Have fun and begin to enjoy interview preparation with interview success tips from Hollywood movies.

As a special bonus, I have also included how you can avoid two of the fatal mistakes I have seen most often during interviews I have personally conducted.

Why I Wrote This

I committed myself to write this guide because, during the more than 10,000 hours I've spent coaching candidates to prepare for their interviews and win their desired new jobs, I observed something over and over again. I saw that even experienced professionals pulling down six figure salaries can stumble badly with these common questions.

Since my team of coaches and I can only help so many people 1-on-1, I decided I needed to share this information in a form that would be more widely available. So I have summarized the essentials into this guide for the highly accomplished people who struggle in their interviews despite their excellent qualifications

BE SURE TO REGISTER AT: <http://Jobinterview911.com> (if you have not already done so) right now. This will give you access to special resources and benefits only available to members. Membership is Free.

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Turn the page and let's get you started right now. Your next better job is waiting for you to claim it!

Terry Kozlowski

Your Quick Reference to Example Answers

How to Get the Most from the Examples

Every person quoted here gave their permission to share their answers to pay it forward and help others. You can learn quickly by reviewing the actual answers given in a mock interview session.

After you've reviewed the how-to information for each question, I suggest you look at the sample answers included here.

First, read them and decide what you like and don't like about their answers and what rating you would give their answer. Use a scale from A to F. A represents a great answer, and F represents an answer that failed.

Then take a look at my rating and see if your assessment was the same as mine.

You will find some great examples that you'll want to adapt or additional things to avoid in your own answers from a quick glance at ALL the examples, even those not similar to the position you're pursuing.

However, if you do want to look at sample answers from specific industries or types of positions, here's your quick reference.

Position/Industry by Name Listing

(Who is Dana? Dana - Media Planner and Buyer with 4years experience seeking Marketing PR Specialist role)

(Who is Jessica? Jessica - Over 2years experience in insurance industry seeking Customer Service Representative job)

(Who is Amy? Amy - Administrative Assistant seeking Project Manager position in Marketing Services)

(Who is Fabian? Fabian - IT professional with 10years experience seeking SQL Analyst Programmer job)

(Who is Don? Don - MBA and International Communications Manager seeking Manager of Corporate Communications role)

(Who is Denise? Denise - Global Integrated Marketing Executive seeking Director of Strategy position)

(Who is Steven? Steven - Human Resources Professional seeking Senior Human Resources Generalist role)

(Who is Leonard? Leonard - Non-Profit Leader with 25 years experience seeking Executive Director role)

(Who is Wendy? Wendy - Executive and recent Chief Operating Officer seeking Controller position)

(Who is Allen? Allen - QA Analyst and Programmer since 1985 seeking Quality Assurance Tester job)

(Who is Bonnie? Bonnie - CPA with over 6years experience seeking Accounting Manager position)

(Who is Margaret? Margaret - Senior Level Marketing Communications Professional seeking position with University)

Interview Mistake to Avoid #2: You've Been Taught Not to Brag (So Do This Instead)

Movie Reminder

"Just the facts, ma'am."

Quick, what show is that classic line from? Yes, you got it right. Dragnet!

Whether you knew that from when Jack Webb originated the role of Sergeant Joe Friday in the radio series in the 1940s-1950s, from the TV series or any of the movies, this phrase will help you if you're one of the accomplished people not feeling completely comfortable talking about yourself and your achievements.

Almost every confident and successful person I've worked with during the more than 10,000 hours of coaching I've done has had to deal with this issue to some extent. And messages you heard as a kid could be the fatal factor in your job interviews today as an adult.

When I've had a client where I suspected this was the source of their interview failures and I did some probing, they often told me that as a kid they had been taught not to brag.

Why Must You Share Facts or Quotes

In order to get hired, the interviewer must see you as special and well suited to meet the demands of the position. If you can't talk conversationally and convincingly about yourself, you will not get hired.

You must prove to them that you're special by including specific proof examples from your own background. These include the positive impact you have had and the benefits you've produced for your organizations in your prior positions.

Is it your parents' fault that you're not getting the job you really want and you're making this big interview mistake yourself?

Most of us have mom and dad to thank for teaching us important life lessons and how to get along with other people. (In my case those lessons came early in dealing with three sisters and three brothers!)

But if you allow what anyone in authority instructed you about not "bragging" or "being too stuck on yourself" or "just who do you think you are" or whatever other messages they gave you early in your life to get in your way when you're interviewing, you are making a big mistake. Here's the easy way to fix it.

Apply the "Dagnet Approach" and Improve Your Interview Success

You must talk about your prior successes and achievements to win the job. So how do you do that if being humble is deeply embedded in your psyche?

Take the Dagnet approach to share "just the facts" and succeed despite your prior programming. Instead of bragging, here's the psychological trick that hundreds of people have already applied to overcome their discomfort in talking about themselves. You must become the factual reporter to convey information about you.

These Are the Two Easiest Forms of Proof to Share that Will Impress Your Interviewer

1. Quote what others have said about you or your results.
2. Share facts about you or your results.

1. Quote What Others Have Said About You or Your Results.

I understand that you don't want to say how great you are. That would feel like bragging. And it's also much more effective to have others speak on your behalf. My clients tell me that quoting others is a much more comfortable way to put key messages forward.

There are two different types of quotes you could share: Direct and Indirect

Let's look at each type now.

Direct Quote

In a direct quote, you're identifying a specific individual or source. For example, a prior performance evaluation, a supervisor's explanation of why they're giving you a promotion or a new project, something a client or a vendor or a co-worker said to you or about you to others.

Your quotes that you share in an answer may vary. They could be:

- As short as just a few words
- A bullet point
- As long as necessary to establish your credentials
- Evidence of your superior performance.

Here's a direct quote example: "This project will be a tough one, I'm coming to you because I know I can rely on you to get it done."

Indirect Quote

In an Indirect quote, you convey the meaning of someone's original words without using the exact words. You're paraphrasing.

Here's an Indirect quote example: The Managing Partner took me aside and told me he wanted to offer me a full-time position even though I had only been there a short time.

For direct and indirect quote examples drawn from real people during their interview practices, also see the Interview Mistake to Avoid #8 included in this guide. You will also notice the use of direct and indirect quotes as you review the example answers with ratings included in this and the other guides in this series.

Now that we've reviewed the first of the easiest forms of proof, quoting what others have said about you or your results, we will turn our attention to the second easy form of proof that you can share.

2. Share Facts about You or Your Results.

For the second easy way to talk about you without bragging, provide factual information. You are providing information that answers the basic questions that journalists are taught to uncover. These include who, what, where, when, why and how.

For instance, when you tell someone that you earned an award and why you were given that award, you are not bragging. You are simply sharing objective information that any third party who was there could also verify as being true and factual.

Sharon's Story

Let me share one specific example of someone who had trouble talking about her own accomplishments and how she conquered it and won the job she really wanted.

Sharon (not her real name) had worked for her company for 23 years. She'd moved around some, but over the last 7 years, she had interviewed for 15 different positions and promotions where she felt qualified but never got a single offer. She came to me for professional help because she didn't know what she was doing wrong! All she knew was that what she was doing during her interviews wasn't working.

One of the things that I saw immediately when we did a mock interview was that her answers were very general. She had decided that an important part of their culture that she wanted to include in one of her answers was "high performing work environment." Here is an example of one segment of her BEFORE answer to an open-ended question.

BEFORE

" . . . I am a focused, yet forward-thinking and flexible leader who offers to you the wisdom and energy to cultivate and maintain great relationships and develop high performing work environments . . . My diverse experiences have provided me with the opportunity to operate in and understand the different aspects of the business and be a change agent . . ."

So you see that kind of general answer and statements about herself without any kind of supporting proof was not going to win her the attention of anyone with whom she would interview. Nothing in her answer would make her seem special in comparison to other candidates.

Doing Things Differently

So we changed her thinking to use the Dragnet Approach to share "just the facts" and had her pull out from her experiences and prior performance more **specific instances, examples and metrics**.

With practice she began to get more comfortable with not bragging, but simply relating to the interviewer simple facts, quotes from others and reporting relevant information. She came to see that these facts she was sharing weren't bragging, because they could be independently verified.

Here are some of her AFTER examples as she was beginning to get more comfortable using the Dragnet approach.

AFTER

" . . .I have been with [company name] for 23 years where I've successfully led as a [position, position] and worked in 9 separate departments. This has given me great exposure to all facets of our business including how each area does things and why. This background will be useful when I'm supervising and developing the employees within [area] to further advance that high performing work environment . . ."

Sharon went on to share other specific tangible awards she received and her performance ratings in specific conditions and circumstances that were similar to the circumstances anticipated in the new position.

Sharon's Next Interview

Sharon applied the lessons she learned from me in only three sessions to her very next promotion interview. Here is an excerpt from the email she sent me:

"I am happy to share wonderful news with you. I GOT THE JOB!!!! THANK YOU!!

Thanks for helping me to tell my story, to be comfortable and at ease talking about me and my successes.

I had a hang-up and felt like I was being boastful and prideful. I was not happy to talk about me because I didn't want to come across as being selfish. But now, the curtain is down and I feel great and am excited to talk about me and can communicate my strengths and how I add value with such freedom.

I 'm like a butterfly out of cocoon.

Thanks for being open, honest and real with me. Thanks for keeping my best interests at the forefront and helping me cross over to a better side. You are an angel and I pray for blessings to overtake you in every area of your life."

You too can get over any prior negative programming lurking inside you and sabotaging your opportunity to win the job you really want.

Remember that you're not bragging if you're being factual and quoting what others have said about why they think you're great, or providing evidence of how you were assessed in relation to others in prior situations.

Follow the actions steps below to prepare yourself with the evidence that will allow you to walk into your next interview with confidence and powerful messages to sprinkle into your responses.

Your Action Steps to Avoid this Mistake

Give yourself permission to be the factual reporter. Recognize that you're being of service to them when you give them facts about yourself.

1. Collect and write bullets or “sound bites” of things people have said about you or to you that you could quote. These could be direct or indirect quotes.
2. Collect and write factual bullets or “sound bites” that are short. These are similar to what you would hear on the news either from reporters covering a story or their subject directly. For example your:
 - Proud accomplishments
 - Benefits produced for your organization
 - Results you created
 - Evidence of your superior performance or rating in prior situations.
3. When you're pursuing a specific position or posting, analyze the job description and review your lists of quotes and factual bullets. Identify which of your bullets may be most relevant to them.
4. To increase your confidence, Identify one or more of your bullets that you can use to address each requirement in the job description.

By preparing these items in advance, you will be able to share them naturally during the interview. You have created building blocks of evidence that are now in the forefront of your mind. You will be able to bring the appropriate evidence block forward and adapt it to make it relevant to their specific question.

Interview Mistake to Avoid #8: Saving These Assets for Later

Movie Reminder

Do you remember Captain Renault as played by Claude Rains saying, "Mademoiselle, you are in Rick's! And Rick is . . . Well, Rick is the kind of man that . . . well, if I were a woman, and I were not around, I should be in love with Rick. But what a fool I am talking to a beautiful woman about another man."

In fact, I've watched that scene and all the others in *Casablanca* (1942) starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman so many times I could probably win a trivia contest asking for all the information others share when they talk about Rick. That's a trick playwrights and screenwriters have used forever to quickly establish the most important facts we in the audience need to know about a character.

You're making a big mistake is you don't use this same technique more often to quickly provide more proof to your interviewer. **Share what other people who have worked with you say about the specific ways that you're special.** Even small moments can be used. For example, they may have shared something with you in conjunction with a special project or even a quick hallway conversation that acknowledged your unique contribution and the special value you brought to a situation.

Leverage Three of Your Existing Asset Sources

If you're similar to the professionals I've been assisting over more than 10,000 hours of coaching, you may not be leveraging all the assets you have at your disposal effectively. Perhaps you think you need to "save them" for when your reference checks are done, but it's a mistake to not bring this evidence forward much earlier.

There are three main sources of quotes and other forms of evidence of your accomplishments that you already have, but may not be including effectively in your answers today.

➤ **What Your References Say**

Of course your references will say great things about you. If not, they wouldn't be your references. But instead of waiting until they're called in the final stages, do you know what they recognize as your gifts and are you volunteering that information to back up claims you're making during your interview? "The VP of *** at XYZ Company told me that she thought I was one of the most effective *** because I had the knack of ***." By the way, they don't need to know that they're one of your references for you to share the acknowledgment or proof of your skill or strength.

➤ **What Your Documents Say**

Too many people assume that if it is on your resume or C.V., you don't need to mention it in the interview. This is a mistake as you can re-use accomplishments included in all your documents such as numbers or statistics that verify your performance, favorable comparisons, awards and significant events. If you're making a claim for a strength you have, back it up with a short for example that provides tangible evidence. For instance, say "as demonstrated by the results I produced at XYZ company where I *** in *** time frame."

➤ **What You Can Retrieve**

In addition to your official references, you've worked for and with many more people that you could also metaphorically bring into the interview room with you to endorse your claims. Retrieve from your memory, prior performance evaluations and your own personal files statements and evidence of your superior performance, skills or value provided.

You could even take a colleague out to lunch or meet after work and offer to exchange memories of what you appreciated about them when you worked together. They will have some additional reminders to share in their next interview and you will have new sources to say, "a vendor (or a client or one of the people that worked for me) at XYZ company said that I ***."

Your Time Is Short, So Use These

Remember that your time with any interviewer is often short, so you want to put forward overwhelming proof in a variety of ways that you bring the necessary skills, experience and personality traits they desire.

Quoting other people is a very powerful method. In fact, it's so powerful that we're going to quickly review two forms you can use to provide support and reinforcement for key messages about you.

There Are Two Forms Your Quotes Could Take: Direct and Indirect.

In a direct quote you're identifying a specific individual or source.

Here are a few direct quote examples:

- "[name or position] said there were two things that were consistent about me; first, when you promise a date you always meet it or deliver early and second, you can get along with everybody"
- "[name] said he would love to have me back as I was one of the best [position] he ever had"
- "When my boss learned I needed to move out of state he said, 'we're losing one of our best strategic thinkers in the organization'"

In an indirect quote you convey the meaning of someone's original words without using their exact words. You're paraphrasing.

Here are a few indirect quote examples:

- "They offered me a full time job at the end of my internship"
- "People on committees with me appreciated how I was usually focusing our discussion and helping the group identify the true root cause and not just symptoms"
- "In fact, at [company] my file included over 140 thank you's from people who appreciated how I solved their urgent problems. I was told this was about three times more notes than the other [position] received."

Three Situations To Share What You've Collected

Because you worked so hard to earn people's trust and respect, we're taking the time here to remind you of ALL the ways you can use those assets in your interviews. Too often, I've seen top candidates who don't leverage those assets as early as they should.

Others' statements about you usually have a very powerful positive effect as an external source. Be sure to retrieve them from all your sources. Then by quoting either directly or indirectly, allow others to speak about you in your interviews.

Here are three situations that should trigger your consideration to use a quote or other statement of evidence:

1. **To avoid feeling like you're bragging about yourself.** (See more about this in mistake #2 in this guide.) Quoting someone or a document or an award description allows you to be a reporter conveying objective facts about your performance or impact without the discomfort of talking about yourself inappropriately.
2. **To provide additional evidence of skills, personality traits, qualifications or intangible benefits you possess in response to any interview question.** For instance, the strengths question or at the end of any story or behavioral interview example. (Additional how to's and more than 12 examples of stories are provided in Guide 3.)
3. **Any key messages that you want to share about yourself when time is short or that you want to strengthen by having someone else say it about you.**

Your Action Steps to Avoid this Mistake

1. Search back through your work history and life experiences to remind yourself of direct and indirect quotes and endorsements of you.

2. Schedule meetings with former colleagues to gather more examples if you don't feel you have relevant ones for the opportunity you're pursuing.
3. List them as bullet points.
4. Go back through your bulleted list and put a * next to those particularly impressive and/or relevant to the specific position you're pursuing.
5. Refine those quotes and then adapt them and include them dynamically in your next interview and notice the positive reactions.

How To Answer: What Are Your Goals?



“What Are Your Goals?” Movie Tip

A great movie example for how to answer this interview question is suggested by Avatar (2009) in the different goals desired by Jake Sully, the injured Marine veteran.

One of his early goals is to get the surgery he wants to regain the use of his legs. To do that, he needs to get specific information to the Colonel about the natives and the planet.

As he is introduced to the elders of the tribe, he tells them he wants to learn from them. So he has multiple goals, all simultaneously true.

You also probably have multiple goals, all true. How do you select which one(s) to share with your interviewer? Keep going to find out now.

Alternate Versions Of This Question Include

- “Tell me where you see yourself in a few years.”
- “What are your goals, short term, and long term?”
- “How would working here meet your goals for your career?”

Your Answer Should Be

Balanced between showing your drive and being realistic. Both general or more specific answers are acceptable. Your answers may include:

- Something that indicates the next natural job progression.
- Further certification or education in your field.
- A focus on the value you want to create for the organization.
- Your desire to continue to learn and grow and take on more responsibility.

Your Answer Should Not Be

- Anything that indicates a desire to leave the company or start your own business.
- Something potentially not doable within the organization.
- Perceived as a threat, such as “want your job.”
- Unrealistic.

Here's How to Create Your Answer

Think of a goal that you want that is also something that they want that is of benefit to them. Even though this question sounds like they want to know about you, your answer will be more effective if it is also about something THEY want.

Following are some specific story examples as given by clients during their mock interviews with my comments for your review and as thought starters for your own stories. Here's one method to review the following examples.

1. Read the sample response
2. Notice their use of FACTS and QUOTES
3. Read my Comments

Example #1

“My immediate goal is to begin working here and become a valued team member in this department. My long-term goal will be to grow into a position of greater responsibility. Where that would be would depend on where my skills would be most needed by the company.”

Terry’s Comment: Succinct but effective for the purpose.

Example #2

“My short-term goal for the next nine months to the year is to make the inner circle club of top sales performers. Longer term, I would be looking for increased opportunities to continue to grow my skills and enhance my value to the organization.”

Terry’s Comment: This type of answer being successful depends on it being appropriate for the role. However, acknowledging your desire to exceed your target numbers for revenue, etc. will generally be well received.

Example #3

“My immediate goal is to become one of the best nurse’s aides you have here. In time, I know I would have to go back to school to become an LPN and I would plan to do that by fitting in part-time classes around my shift schedule.”

Terry’s Comment: Good answer that shows the drive to advance, balanced by realism for what would be required to accomplish the goals.

YOUR TURN NOW

You can see more example answers given by real people in their mock interviews in the following pages. Review them for additional ideas and adapt your own unique answers.

You already have your preferred style and the habits that have made you successful, so do what works for you. However, I don't recommend you write out your answers word for word in advance.

Instead, capture key phrases or bullet points you want to share. It's easier to sound natural if you haven't memorized a script but can adapt what you say naturally in the moment.

Think about the goals you do have for your career or that connect to your values and what is important to you. Then find the connection with what THEY want. Consider addressing both the short-term and the long-term in your answer. In this question, it's ok to be a little more generic, because you don't know the specifics of the future opportunities.

After you've drafted your answers, say them out loud to check if they sound natural and try out variations.

Record yourself or ask someone you trust to give you some feedback.

Continue to refine and adjust over time to be relevant to the specific opportunity you're pursuing.

What are your goals? Dana's Answer



(Who is Dana? Dana - Media Planner and Buyer with 4years experience seeking Marketing PR Specialist role)

Terry: All right. **What would you say are your goals?**

Dana: You know my goals are to definitely join an organization where I can contribute and where I can learn new skills, take on additional responsibilities and contribute as much value as I can to that organization. I feel like this position would be an excellent opportunity for me to pursue that.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? – DANA QUICK RATING - C

Ok, but somewhat generic, instead you could include something specific about them or the specific skills you'd be growing and developing in their operation.

What are your goals? Jessica's Answer



(Who is Jessica? Jessica - Over 2years experience in insurance industry seeking Customer Service Representative job)

Terry: What are your goals?

Jessica: My goals are to excel within a company. Definitely to start somewhere, achieve each goal and hit the next level. I'd like to make a career within a company, receive more responsibilities, acquire more knowledge and better myself.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? – JESSICA QUICK RATING - B

Ok, but general answer, you could make it a little more specific to them and the position you're beginning with.

What are your goals? Amy's Answer



(Who is Amy? Amy - Administrative Assistant seeking Project Manager position in Marketing Services)

Terry: Tell me about what your goals are.

Amy: My goals in five years, I see myself as a PMP certified project manager on the path or close to becoming a senior project manager starting off with this position. It's a perfect fit of my project management skills and team facilitation expertise.

I see myself continuing to grow, learning more about project management and more specifically about agile project management, taking on additional responsibilities and making an increasing significant contribution forXXX's success.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? – AMY QUICK RATING - A

Believable and match for their need, covers both short and long term.

What are your goals? Fabian's Answer



(Who is Fabian? Fabian - IT professional with 10years experience seeking SQL Analyst Programmer job)

Terry: Alright. **Tell me, what are your goals?**

Fabian: My goals are to land the Sequel Server Developer position, but in longer term, I want to move into more of the database development and creation, more of the DBA types of activities in creating databases, creating the indexes, doing technical things that backup the development and being more involved that way.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? – FABIAN QUICK RATING - A

Covers both short term and long term and both are relevant to this specific posting.

What are your goals? Don's Answer



(Who is Don? Don - MBA and International Communications Manager seeking Manager of Corporate Communications role)

Terry: What would you say are your goals?

Don: Personally, my goal is to find an organization that values communications, values the employees and to increase both up and down communications. Somewhere where I can basically dig in to find a home where I can enjoy seeing that both executive management as well as employees all the way to the front line are feeling that they're being treated with consideration.

And, that they grow in this organization, take on more responsibilities and bring new ways of improving the relations between various parts, regions, what have you, business units, levels of the organization that everybody feels loyal to and something that they're constantly providing value to the company.

So it's something that I would like to spend, you know, a number of years of doing where I can basically prove that's something that can be done.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? – DON QUICK RATING - C

Notice that what you're saying is a little hard to follow, are you talking about your growth or employees growth or ??? What is it that you're trying to prove?

What are your goals? Denise's Answer



(Who is Denise? Denise - Global Integrated Marketing Executive seeking Director of Strategy position)

Terry: What are your goals?

Denise: My goals are I would say threefold. I'm again very excited about technology and the trends that are happening with digital marketing.

One of my goals is to be a thought leader in terms of how digital marketing is changing the landscape in terms of traditional marketing.

My second goal is to be able to apply the skills that I've developed and honed over the course of my career, really apply them to my next assignment and add value.

I want to make sure that wherever I land it's a great fit and that I'm positioned for success and that I'm able to add value from the get go, that I'm able to hit the ground running. That's a really important goal of mine.

Third is balance. I want to make sure that the next adventure and opportunity that I take on to really challenge myself as I take on big goals and opportunities helps me maintain balance in my life. That I can continue to check in and make sure that Denise is happy and she's moving along and accomplishing all the things that she's doing.

Terry: For the balance portion of that, what would balance look like to you? How would you know if you had attained it in terms of your next job?

Denise: I'll give you an example. I was living in the XXX area for a better part of eight years and didn't have a lot of history or support mechanism in place there. It was very easy to get consumed with work and fill up all of my time there with work and there was no distraction to stop me from doing that.

Now that I've actually re-located myself to the XXX area, there's not just support in terms of family, but my alma mater is here. I have friends that I went to school with here, community outreach programs and activities that I'm interested in.

So, it's really simple for me now that there are different buckets that I'm challenging myself to make sure I'm applying my time to so I'm not finding myself being one dimensional.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? – DENISE QUICK RATING - F

You have goals but would be stronger if they were related to something they cared about too. Really worried about your balance goal. My impression of agencies is that those are some of the last places where you would expect to have balance, so have you just told them not to hire you because you don't want to work so hard or long? You've just told them your priority is outside work.

What are your goals? Steven's Answer



(Who is Steven? Steven - Human Resources Professional seeking Senior Human Resources Generalist role)

Terry: What are your goals?

Steven: I would be interested in development. I think at my last position I was able to develop that from an internship to an HR manager. I would be interested in the same type of development at the next company that I'm with, eventually going to more of a leadership role in the HR field.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? – STEVEN QUICK RATING - C

"Would be interested" or am? "Development" meaning what? If this was a small company there may be nowhere to promote. Can you come up with way to identify a way to add to your contributions and value even if you're in same role?

What are your goals? Leonard's Answer



(Who is Leonard? Leonard - Non-Profit Leader with 25 years experience seeking Executive Director role)

Terry: Tell me about what your goals are.

Leonard: I would like to finish off my career working for an agency that cares about young people and families. I'd like to, if possible, stay in the XXX area where my children are and continue to play an advocacy role on behalf of young people and families both within XXX and at the national level as part of the XXX Association.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? - LENNY QUICK RATING - C

Good and specific, but question to you is whether they would see advocacy role at XXX as something they would really support you in because it helps them too and is related to their organization's mission or is this something that's only personal to you. Also concerned about phrase "finish off my career", instead phrase it more positively.

What are your goals? Wendy's Answer



(Who is Wendy? Wendy - Executive and recent Chief Operating Officer seeking Controller position)

Terry: Tell me, what are your goals? You kind of started to allude to them a little bit earlier, but just to give you more of a chance to sort of expand on that.

Wendy: Again, for me, it's getting an opportunity to be a part of an organization where I can be kind of a member of the senior management team and have the opportunity to really make a difference. And I think a lot of people say that, but for me, I get a lot of value in knowing that I'm making a contribution.

I'm very passionate about my work, so I like to work in places where that's appreciated and I look for an opportunity to continuously grow and learn. I do want to be able to say...you know, I think I have a very broad breath of experience, so I want to be able to go into an organization where I can apply that and add value in a number of different places.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? – WENDY QUICK RATING - A

Could also add one specific instance of when you did that to strengthen your answer.

What are your goals? Allen's Answer



(Who is Allen? Allen - QA Analyst and Programmer since 1985 seeking Quality Assurance Tester job)

Terry: What would you say are your goals?

Allen: I like manual testing. I'd like to get into a little bit of the automated side. I'm thinking of taking some courses at XXX Training, which has training in the QTT and the Quality Control Center.

Once I get some training underneath my belt, I'd like to move into being able to automate some of the manual testing. I think that saves a lot of time and is very efficient.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? – ALLEN QUICK RATING - A or F

Answer does shows progression and personal responsibility. But are they moving to automated? If not, how long would you be happy doing manual testing?

What are your goals? Bonnie's Answer



(Who is Bonnie? Bonnie - CPA with over 6years experience seeking Accounting Manager position)

Terry: Tell me about your goals.

Bonnie: My goals are to become a part of an organization where I can work with the management and the staff to form long-term goals to decide where we want to move in the future, what things we want to accomplish, and then to be an integral part of the accomplishment.

I think my long-term goals are just to be more useful as time goes by and to become more and more a part of management. To become someone that people rely on, because they know I can get the work done and do it properly.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? – BONNIE QUICK RATING - B

Pretty good covering both short term and long term, could strengthen answer by making it more specific to them and this opportunity too.

What are your goals? Margaret's Answer



*(Who is Margaret? Margaret - Senior Level Marketing Communications
Professional seeking position with University)*

Terry: What would you say are your goals?

Margaret: My career goals are to work in the same field that I'm working in now. I just absolutely love putting together a publication. I would like to continue putting together publications from start to finish, from concept to launch. I have done that with the annual reports and magazines that I've worked on. I would very much like to continue doing that and just doing it better.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your goals? – MARGARET QUICK RATING - B

Great on energy, great if putting publications together is important to them in the job, if not, takes it to D or F if there will not be much opportunity for you to do this there or it's not so important to them in the job.

How To Answer: What Are Your Strengths?



“What are your strengths?” Movie Tip

A great movie example for how to answer this interview question is inspired by the movie, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015.) Let’s consider the character of Rey and identify some of her strengths.

When we meet her, she’s an effective scavenger. She can understand BB-8’s beeps and whistles. Later we discover that she can handle herself in a physical fight. We also learn that she can repair and fly Han Solo’s Millennium Falcon herself.

She sees visions. And when she is taken captive she withstands the interrogations and then she also demonstrates extraordinary strength in the Force. So which strength(s) Rey should share would vary depending on what type of future opportunity she was pursuing.

The same is true for you. How do you decide which one or few strengths to bring forward? The job description or posting is one source of valuable information that can help you identify your most relevant strengths for this opportunity.

A strength for one position could very easily be seen as a liability for a different type of position and company culture. Here are some additional tips and examples for you to develop your own answers.

Alternate Versions Of This Question Include

- “What is your greatest strength?”
- “What are your top three/top five strengths?”

Your Answer Should Be

Any of the following are options for creating your strengths answer.

- Strengths that are relevant to the job you’re pursuing with them.
- Examples of results or accomplishments that demonstrate and “prove” strengths you claim.
- What you bring that’s related to problems they want to be solved by the role.
- Differentiators that separate you from the competition.
- A very short story that shows your strength in action, producing results.
- A quote or other factual evidence that proves that others in positions of authority recognize this as one of your strengths.

Your Answer Should Not Be

- A long list of many traits.
- Unorganized and unfocused.
- The generic response that many others pursuing that role would also claim.

Here’s How to Create Your Answer

Ask yourself:

- What situations are likely to arise in the position?
- What challenges are likely to arise in the position?

- Which of your experiences, education, personality traits or skills make you a desirable candidate to address search situation or the challenge you identified?

Since you will have several accomplishments that demonstrate proof of your strengths, pick those to share that are most memorable or impressive.

Following are some specific story examples as given by clients during their mock interviews with my comments for your review and as thought starters for your own stories.

Example #1

“In addition to my strong engineering skills, my boss also told me that I was the best engineer he’d worked with in the past 5 years at communicating and working with people. Despite my age, in my prior job I received an award for leading a cross functional team including engineering, manufacturing, sales and customer support. We successfully solved a big problem with one of our most important products that was responsible for 20% of the company’s revenue.”

Terry’s Comment: This is a strong answer as it included multiple forms of proof. Candidate quoted boss and included factual proof in the form of an award. This answer also highlighted the strength in communication, which is not typically associated with young engineers. The tangible impact on prior company’s revenue was also a good addition. This answer managed to include quite a bit of proof in a short period of time.

Example #2

“I think my biggest strength is my ability to partner with management to help organizations achieve their business goals.

From putting in effective financial information to designing reports, designing report cards, CPIs that enables the rest of the organization to make the right kinds of decisions around where they’re going.

That helps them to highlight when there's risk, when there's exposure, so that they can make quick decisions around the operation. I also am very good at having a strategic view of the future, but translating that back to the more tactical initiatives that are required to achieve that strategy.”

Terry's Comment: This was not too long and was a good answer for the specific position she was pursuing because her recruiter had advised her that this aspect was very important to the employer.

Example #3

“I would say one of my best strengths is active listening. It's amazing what you can glean from somebody if you just let them talk about it.

An example would be when I first got the regional role outside the corporate office, I handled the employee relations for all of our XXX communities and we received a lot of employee issues from this one facility, one of our communities, so I decided to go out there and talk to all the staff.

Eventually a pattern was emerging to where the executive director at the time was a fairly new executive director. What the employees were telling me was he's a great guy but we have this problem, or he's a great guy but this other person doesn't want to work and nothing is being done about it.

I was able to sit down with that executive director after listening to his employees saying that really everybody thinks you're a great guy and you're the type of manager that wants to please everybody all the time but ended up pleasing nobody because he wasn't holding people accountable to their jobs.

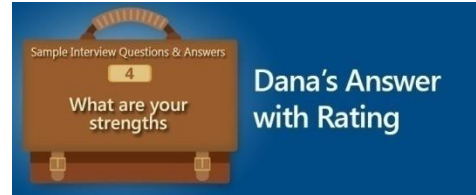
Once we were able to make that discovery and I was able to coach him through that and work with him from that point. So my strength of listening was a key factor that helped solve their employee relation problems in that location.”

Terry's Comment: This is a good example of sharing a specific story to prove a claimed strength. This example also follows the "Movie Moments" structure covered in detail in Guide #3 on how to answer Behavioral Interview Questions. This example sets the scene, includes visual "I" behaviors in the middle and ends with the successful accomplishment of the goal.

Your Turn Now

- See more examples with ratings for the strengths question in the following pages.
- To prepare your answers for the strengths question, analyze the job description or posting and what you know about the opportunity. Identify which strengths are likely to be most desirable to them.
- Consider which of your strengths you want to highlight. Determine which quotes, numbers, examples, facts or stories you could include to prove your claims of that strength.
- After you've drafted your bullet points, phrases, stories or proof examples, say them out loud to check if they sound natural and try out variations.
- Record yourself or ask someone you trust to give you some feedback.
- Continue to refine and adjust over time to be relevant to the specific opportunity you're pursuing.

What are your strengths? Dana's Answer



(Who is Dana? Dana - Media Planner and Buyer with 4years experience seeking Marketing PR Specialist role)

Terry: What would you say are your key strengths?

Dana: I would say that I have excellent communication skills. You know I work very well with all kinds of people, I'm very comfortable working on a team and I understand everyone has a different sort of work style and I can identify that and take that into consideration.

So, when there's different questions or issues that come up during the project, I can think back to the way that those other people on the team work and be able to prioritize the objectives and communicate the scope of a project, just to make sure the final goal of the project is going to be accomplished.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – DANA QUICK RATING - B

Good, could expand with more specific example too.

What are your strengths? Jessica's Answer



(Who is Jessica? Jessica - Over 2years experience in insurance industry seeking Customer Service Representative job)

Terry: Great. **What do you see as your key strengths?**

Jessica: I think my attention to detail, wanting to go over and beyond what is expected of me. Usually I surprise people by going the extra mile when they're looking for one thing, but they get more than what they ask. They're always happy and excited to know that someone is looking out for their vested interest.

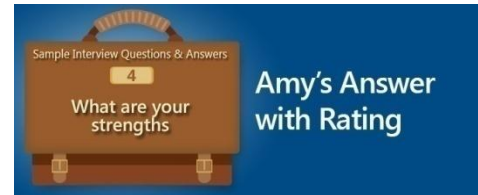
I think my strength is wanting to make sure everything is taken care of and that nothing is overlooked.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – JESSICA QUICK RATING - B

Good, could supplement with specific instance where your attention to detail saved a customer or helped the company in a particular way.

What are your strengths? Amy's Answer



(Who is Amy? Amy - Administrative Assistant seeking Project Manager position in Marketing Services)

Terry: Tell me what you see as your strengths.

Amy: I'm thoroughly experienced in a holistic approach and cross-discipline area approach with the ability to communicate with vendors and employees across all organization levels. I've found in learning more about project management, the project management skills I have are my strengths and I've taken them with me wherever I go.

For example, with organization and planning skills, I have the ability to manage, track and locate XXX, large volumes of information and documentation. You might remember this when I was resourcing and doing all the facilities and logistics for about 150 people on our team.

My written and oral communication skills, I have the ability to communicate with the vendors and employees across all levels. In my project work I've been able to communicate and track time lines and deliverables to ensure team success and also tailor all of my communications, whether it was to the specific logistical team or in other company's telecommunications or construction team.

I have the ability to tailor it to my audience and also figure out who are the key stakeholders that need to be involved and when to not over-inundate people with either email or phone calls.

I have excellent time management skills with the ability to prioritize how I work in my day, also the ability to prioritize issues and interruptions and how I go about estimating and managing my day to make sure I get everything done that I need to.

As far as leadership, I definitely, in resource management in one meeting's time went from leadership to collaborator to facilitator. With the ability to take ownership of the process, work well independently and to communicate my vision and goal of what needs to be done to the team.

Also having the flexibility to step back and facilitate the team what's on, think things through and talk things out. I'm a people person so I'm able to collaborate with employees at all levels.

As far as budgeting skills, in my last move projects I was able to get more exposure to vendor quotes and invoicing and had the ability to stick with the budget.

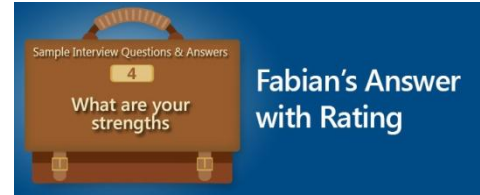
My problem solving skills – I have the ability to find the problem, analyze what's going on, determine the best course of action and implement a decision. This would come from whether we had eight contractors that needed to be turned around and come in from Friday to Monday or oops this request needed a change and it was a waterfall effect on all the other work we had done.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – AMY QUICK RATING - D

Too long and too many, no more than 3 to 5 tops, or could also do just one with a great specific example.

What are your strengths? Fabian's Answer



(Who is Fabian? Fabian - IT professional with 10years experience seeking SQL Analyst Programmer job)

Terry: Tell me what you see as your key strength.

Fabian: My strength is just my analytical talent, the way I can break things down and figure things out. Also, I can learn software that I need to learn. Give me the computer, the software book, and I can work my way through it. I can understand it, and understand it well enough to explain it to the users to help solve their problems.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – FABIAN QUICK RATING - B

Good start, would be strengthened by specific example of an accomplishment that used that skill that relates to what they want to bring you in to do.

What are your strengths? Don's Answer



(Who is Don? Don - MBA and International Communications Manager seeking Manager of Corporate Communications role)

Terry: What would you say are your strengths?

Don: My strengths are, in quoting my former manager, “being able to take on any project or challenge or basically anything that’s thrown at me and return something usually above expectation.”

My background is highly-diverse in a lot of areas regarding communications and also having the people skills where it’s important to develop trust. I find myself in situations where I’m allowed to very much get into the culture of the organization, which I think is absolutely critical to the success of somebody to be in the role.

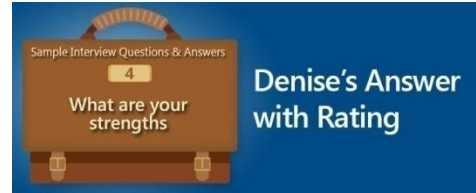
Basically, being able to provide add value to the company, being able to deal with any possible situation or task that has been provided to me and also having the people skills necessary for working in an organization of this size and scope.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – DON QUICK RATING - B

Great quoting former manager would have been stronger if you could have cited a specific accomplishment where that strength helped you in something that's one of their key result areas from their posting.

What are your strengths? Denise's Answer



(Who is Denise? Denise - Global Integrated Marketing Executive seeking Director of Strategy position)

Terry: Tell me what you see as your strengths.

Denise: I think that one of my strengths has always been the ability to see beyond the chaos. Based on the number of experiences I've had in multiple industries and different situations I've encountered and have been a part of, in terms of a successful outcome, it has given me the opportunity to be able to take bold risks.

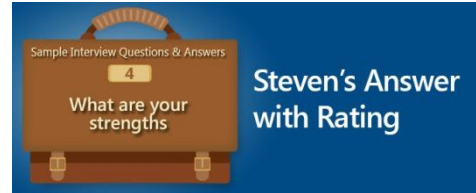
It has allowed me to step into a situation that may be chaotic, be able to see beyond the current circumstances, create a vision that I can also then backup with tactical execution to move the organization forward and drive results both in the short and long term.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – DENISE QUICK RATING - C

Ok, but would have preferred you to talk about strengths that they would see as particularly relevant to them and/or give specific example of what you've done that they need too.

What are your strengths? Steven's Answer



(Who is Steven? Steven - Human Resources Professional seeking Senior Human Resources Generalist role)

Terry: What would you say are your strengths?

Steven: I would say one of my best strengths in this position is active listening. It's amazing what you can glean from somebody if you just let them talk about it.

An example would be when I first got the regional role outside the corporate office, I handled the employee relations for all of our XXX communities and we received a lot of employee issues from this one facility, one of our communities, so I decided to go out there and talk to all the staff.

Eventually a pattern was emerging to where the executive director at the time was a fairly new executive director. What the employees were telling me was he's a great guy but we have this problem, or he's a great guy but this other person doesn't want to work and nothing is being done about it.

I was able to sit down with that executive director after listening to his employees saying that really everybody thinks you're a great guy and you're the type of manager that wants to please everybody all the time but ended up pleasing nobody because he wasn't holding people accountable to their jobs.

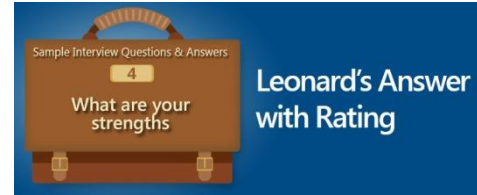
Once we were able to make that discovery and I was able to coach him through that and work with him from that point knowing that they were really able to turn their employee relation problems around.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – STEVEN QUICK RATING - A

Great story, follows suggested structure including set up, specifics and I messages in middle, tells how it ended.

What are your strengths? Leonard's Answer



(Who is Leonard? Leonard - Non-Profit Leader with 25 years experience seeking Executive Director role)

Terry: What do you see as your strengths?

Leonard: I think my strengths are the ability to relate to diverse groups of people. Whether we're talking about the school, teachers, principals or whether we're talking about community members or young people and their families, staff or board members, the ability to relate to them and to listen to what they're talking about and try to connect with them.

I view building programs as a partnership with all those kinds of people, all those different diverse groups and stakeholders.

The second strength is my ability to network with and nurture current and potential funders.

Terry: Tell me more about that.

Leonard: Wherever I've worked, I have grown the diversity of the funding mechanisms. For instance, at the XXX when I became the Executive Director they had one major funder or foundation.

I led the board and the organization into a plan to reach out to other foundations. We diversified it, both in terms of private foundations as well as state grants, built an individual donor campaign and then built a sponsor's campaign

I led them from an annual meeting that lost money in the first year before I came to an annual meeting that made money for the organization by charging a fee for the meeting

as well as recruiting sponsors and exhibitors for that annual meeting. It's really reaching out and looking for diverse streams of money.

Terry: Can you give me a sense of what the before and after was in terms of the foundation or funding support that you got as a result of the efforts that you were just talking about?

Leonard: Yes. The grant that I came in on was roughly \$XXX a year for three years. I renewed that grant for an additional three years and built two other sizable grants. We got a \$XXX grant for two projects. We also received numerous operating grants in the range of \$XXX to \$XXX, so the budget went from \$XXX to \$XXX, plus corporate sponsors that ranged anywhere from \$250 up to \$10,000.

Then, as I was getting ready to leave we were launching an individual donor's campaign and in the first year we had about 125 individual donors with contributions ranging anywhere from \$10 to \$1,000.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – LENNY QUICK RATING - C

Because I had to push in a followup to get the great stuff that is an A rating, don't make them ask you, provide more of the impressive metrics up front in your answer.

What are your strengths? Wendy's Answer



(Who is Wendy? Wendy - Executive and recent Chief Operating Officer seeking Controller position)

Terry: Thank you. **What do you see, Wendy, are some of your strengths?**

Wendy: As I said, I think my biggest strength is, you know, my ability to kind of partner with management to help organizations achieve their business goals. Promote the operations as it says, even an organization by supporting it financially.

From putting in effective financial information to designing reports, designing report cards, CPIs that enables the rest of the organization to make the right kinds of decisions around where they're going.

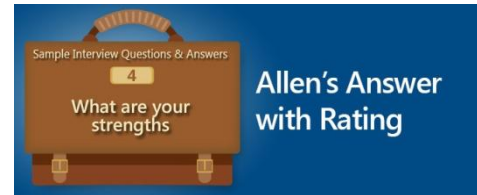
That helps them to highlight when there's risk, when there's exposure, so that they can make quick decisions around the operation. I also am very good at having a strategic view of the future, but translating that back to the more tactical initiatives that are required to achieve that strategy.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – WENDY QUICK RATING - A

Not too long, good description of what you bring to them in terms that they most likely care about.

What are your strengths? Allen's Answer



(Who is Allen? Allen - QA Analyst and Programmer since 1985 seeking Quality Assurance Tester job)

Terry: Tell me about what you see as your key strengths.

Allen: I would say a propensity for details, paying attention to the details, because that's what important in a quality assurance position. This would be making sure you've entered the right data, that you created test cases that cover all of the requirements and that you documented that everything you've tested works, when they don't work that you document that.

The whole, from beginning to end, I enjoy the whole process. I think I'm good at it.

Terry: Are there other strengths that you bring beyond the quality assurance related technical one?

Allen: That's a good question. One of the things I pride myself on is communication and that would be between two types of people. One would be the technical person who likes the detail and then the business analyst who doesn't use that kind of detail that a programmer would need.

I see myself as a person that can talk to either. I'm a member of Toastmaster's for the last eight years so I've learned a lot of learning about your audience and who you're speaking to, gearing what I'm saying to each person or group.

Terry: Okay.

Allen: I think those soft skills are important in addition to technical skills. Being able to talk to business analyst, the manager without going into too much detail so their eyes

don't get glossed over, but again the programmer may need a bit more detail and I can do that as well.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – ALLEN QUICK RATING - C then B

When prompted you added people skills, may differentiate you from competitors.

What are your strengths? Bonnie's Answer



(Who is Bonnie? Bonnie - CPA with over 6years experience seeking Accounting Manager position)

Terry: What do you see as your strengths?

Bonnie: My strength is that I'm very focused. I know how to prioritize. I know how to multi- task. I can be a great team member, but I also can work on my own to accomplish tasks.

My real strength is that I've done the work correctly. One of the things I'm really proud of is that I've been able to increase some of the revenues that we've brought in.

So, while we have lost some revenues I've been able to try and replace them with other revenues by initiating and implementing new grants and working with the grantor agencies to bring in the new grants. I've also been involved in implementing new budgets and the program side, which are the activities that will be acceptable and the staff that will be acceptable in order for the grant expenses and the grant to be approved.

I've also been able to build relationships with granting agencies where they have called me if something changes or if I haven't submitted a report because I didn't know it was supposed to come in.

One time I needed to submit a budget. One of the agencies found \$17,000 that they were giving to the social services area after the budget was almost over and I thought I would have to do a revised budget, the social services manager had told me that.

We waited and waited and never received any knowledge that it was due and all of the sudden I got a call one day saying how come you haven't submitted this it's due

tomorrow. It's because they knew me so well that they could call me. I said oh I'll get it done tonight, right now. I stopped and did it, it doesn't take too long, and can I come in the morning and drop it off?

I did and we didn't miss the deadline, so we were able to get the \$17,000 in additional revenue we would have lost if they hadn't called me and told me, but because I had this relationship they did that.

Is that what you're looking for?

Terry: It sounds like it was very helpful that they had such regard for you that they called you to say hey, we don't have this you're going to lose out on this. That's great.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – BONNIE QUICK RATING - D

Too long and too many of them, no more than three to five tops and sometimes better to pick just one and tell story that demonstrates several of them for you.

What are your strengths? Margaret's Answer



*(Who is Margaret? Margaret - Senior Level Marketing Communications
Professional seeking position with University)*

Terry: What do you see as your key strengths, Margaret?

Margaret: A lot of the things I mentioned in the “Tell Me About Yourself” questions, but I will go ahead and start. I’m creative, very energetic and I don’t get stressed easily. I have a very even temper and I feel that’s a real strength in a work situation. I am aggressive when need be, but know when to back off. I’m very detail-oriented and deadline-oriented.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

What are your strengths? – MARGARET QUICK RATING - C

You missed a great opportunity to talk about your strengths relative to this specific position.

How To Answer: Why Do You Want To Work Here?



“Why Do You Want To Work Here? Movie Tip

A great movie example for how to answer this interview question comes from the trailer for the animated film, Zootopia (2016.)

Chief Bogo says “It’s not how badly you WANT something. It’s about what you are capable of!” That’s really solid advice for making sure you make your answer is not just about you.

Follow these suggestions to make your answer compelling to their ears.

Alternate Versions Of This Question Include

- “What attracted you to this position and/or company?”
- “Why do you want to work in this company?”
- “What attracts you to this industry?”

Your Answer Should Be

- A demonstration that you've done your homework on them.
- Showing connections between what you value and what they value.
- Specific to them.

Your Answer Should Not Be

- Generic
- Solely about you and what you want.

Here's How to Create Your Answer

Do research at the company website or through sites that profile them or through people that work there or have worked there. This is a great starting point to finding something you admire and how you can add value to something important to them.

This is a courtship question. Just as in your personal life, when you're wooing, they want to know what you see that's special about them. Be sure to tell them that. Just as sincere appreciation voiced out loud will help you win a romantic partner, it's an important asset in your business courtships too.

You also should draw the personal connection on how you align with what they're about and the benefits that you bring. The more personal and unique your answer is to this particular company or organization, the more powerful it will be.

Remember, what the interviewer really wants to know is, **why would it benefit me to hire you?**

Example #1

"My research has confirmed you are the industry leader in XXX because of your commitment to XXX and XXX. I have prior experience doing XXX and I want to be doing that here with the best."

Terry's Comment: This is just the bare bones of a structure when you respond to this question. The power is in the specificity you add, both the specificity of what you appreciate about them and in what you bring to them.

Example #2

"Your mission to XXX is important to me because my brother was a patient here and I saw firsthand your staff's dedication. I would be proud to be part of this team."

Terry's Comment: Sharing a deeply personal connection can be very powerful.

Example #3

"I have helped XXX go from XXX to XXX in XXX time frame and believe those experiences would be applicable to meeting your company's strategic priority for this year to XXX."

Terry's Comment: When you have impressive accomplishments that are relevant to what your future employer wants to do, be sure to share them. In the original answer before it was edited for confidentiality, the revenue numbers shared were a "wow!" The time frame was short so also attention-getting.

Your Turn Now

- You can see more example answers given by real people in their mock interviews in the following pages. Review them for additional ideas and adapt your own unique answers.
- Start with the job description or posting, their website, and any supplemental sources you have for information on the organization, the specific opportunity and their needs and desires.

- Review your own connections. Who do you know that works there, used to work there or is a former customer or supplier that can give you some additional insight?
- Identify the short phrases that are true for you that you could share when they ask why you want to be there. Your answer should be unique and adapted to each organization you're pursuing.
- After you've drafted your answers, say them out loud to check if they sound natural and try out variations.
- Record yourself or ask someone you trust to give you some feedback.
- Continue to refine and adjust over time to be relevant to the specific opportunity you're pursuing.

Why do you want to work here? Dana's Answer



(Who is Dana? Dana - Media Planner and Buyer with 4years experience seeking Marketing PR Specialist role)

Terry: All right. **Why do you want to work here?**

Dana: You know I definitely feel as though I, obviously, can identify with the mission of the organization. I'm really looking for a professional environment where I can grow and I feel that this is an excellent match for my skills. I'm looking for a fresh experience, a new challenge and believe I could learn a lot in this position.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – DANA QUICK RATING - C

Not enough about them specifically.

Why do you want to work here? Jessica's Answer



(Who is Jessica? Jessica - Over 2years experience in insurance industry seeking Customer Service Representative job)

Terry: Why do you want to work here?

Jessica: I want to work at XXX because I see that your mission is to provide financial security for life, health and retirement needs and I have a little bit of experience in insurance. Also, I see you're looking for someone in a customer service role where I have much experience in that role. I've won recognition, goals and awards for my customer service and I think I could bring a lot to your company.

Terry: Tell me about the recognition and the awards that you've won already.

Jessica: I have won service awards. At XXX University, I met my goals in admissions. At XXX, I've won service awards for rentals and meeting my goals in that area, too, which were filling-in a lot of coverage or getting recognition from customers; having them write letters.

In my last job, I had emails about my speedy service from clients that I serviced.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – JESSICA QUICK RATING - B

Great focus on them and connection to your own insurance background and your skills, might be able to also include your awards in answer.

Why do you want to work here? Amy's Answer



(Who is Amy? Amy - Administrative Assistant seeking Project Manager position in Marketing Services)

Terry: Let me ask you why you want to work here again?

Amy: I left, because I had been here for seven years and not that there are anything wrong with staying longer, but I needed to get out, learn and grow. After four years in a weekly cycle of high pitch resourcing, I grew out of the cyclical operations role.

At the time, I needed a change of pace and I wasn't sure exactly what I needed. As you may recall, I left on great terms and I was replaced by two people and the department has been even further reorganized over the years.

My leaving had nothing to do with my love for XXX. I've always been passionate about XXX and the people here. In my exploration, I flexed my skills working on a variety of projects. As I've explored different industries, I've continued to feel an undeniable pull into project management and XXX's interactive tuning.

I recently attended the PM Expo, which was a full-day seminar on different project management topics and it confirmed both things for me. One that, I'm going to make an excellent project manager. Two that project management is where my passion is and I want to grow and learn.

I'm eager going to jump back into XXX and use my passion and strengths to be a rock star on your project management team.

Terry: What is it that you like about XXX specifically? What is it that drew you back to us? Setting aside the desire for project management, which I hear very clearly the

passion that you have for that, but what is it about our company, the environment, the culture that attracts you?

Amy: It is the combination of all of that. After having experience in different cultures, it reconfirms for me the large interactive teams where everybody is hard working. It's a creative and technological environment where people want to have fun while creating great work. The culture and the environment is perfectly suited to me.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – AMY QUICK RATING - C

Longer than it needs to be, liked the specificity of why you wanted to work for them in particular.

Why do you want to work here? Fabian's Answer



(Who is Fabian? Fabian - IT professional with 10 years experience seeking SQL Analyst Programmer job)

Terry: All right. **Tell me why you want to work here.**

Fabian: Because doing my research on your company, it looks like you're doing some very interesting things with Sequel Server databases, using the new functionalities. A lot of companies right now are still running on Sequel 2000, you're one of the companies that are actually moving on into Sequel Server 2005 and making use of the new functions in the database, and that sounds really interesting.

What got me interested in your company is that technically you're using some of the more advanced features in Sequel Server 2005, and you know that's something that looks interesting, and the kind of work your company does looks interesting as well.

Terry: Do you have experience with Sequel Server 2005?

Fabian: Right now, I've got training and certification on that. I finished my MCITP in Sequel Service 2005 Database Developer certification. I also have a lot hands-on experience with CD2 database, and I've done a lot of work as far as optimizing queries, defining tables, indexes and doing back-up maintenance.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – FABIAN QUICK RATING - B

Great job on the SQL aspects you know about them but also add something else about the company that's attractive to you.

Why do you want to work here? Don's Answer



(Who is Don? Don - MBA and International Communications Manager seeking Manager of Corporate Communications role)

Terry: Thank you for that clarification. **Tell me why you want to work here.**

Don: I find that many of the objectives of the job and to be successful correlate very closely to what I've done and what I enjoy doing. I see some of the potential challenges and the success this position offers would allow me to come in very quickly and provide a strong value add in a short amount of time.

Plus, I think the environment of the organization and the current business plan and things that I've read about your organization in the press and on your website appears to be something that I would be able to, for the long-term, definitely be able to add value and continue to grow with them.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – DON QUICK RATING - C

Great first paragraph, second paragraph is not specific enough about them. Share what it was specifically that you read about them that engaged you, is too generic right now.

Why do you want to work here? Denise's Answer



(Who is Denise? Denise - Global Integrated Marketing Executive seeking Director of Strategy position)

Terry: Given that you have an active consulting practice, right now yourself and current clients right now, **why do you want to work here?**

Denise: Actually as I look at the opportunities that have presented themselves to me it has really excited my interest in working for an agency, working on the agency side, and have a purview into a diverse set of customers.

Financially, in terms of my own agency, I think that I've done okay so far with the economic conditions. Looking five years down the line, I think I'd prefer to go back into an agency where I can add value, in terms of some of the trends that are happening in digital marketing.

Then, be able to apply my technical aptitude and skills within marketing in a firm that is more established than mine that can weather the economic downturn that we're all experiencing.

Terry: The question that comes immediately to mind is are we basically just going to be your port in the storm until such time as conditions turn around and you can head back out again?

Denise: Not at all. I mean, I think that my excitement for working with an agency really stems from putting on that lens myself, coming from within the corporate world and seeing the opportunity to have a different set of problems.

I could easily go back to a corporate role and work as a marketer in a marketing organization. However, I see a trend where I think those firms, especially those that have embraced digital marketing, are going to have an exciting future.

They're kind of leading edge right now in terms of where the whole digital state is going and how customers are going to invest their dollars, whether it's traditional or whether it's going to be a mix of traditional and digital.

I'm excited to partner with the right agency and use my skills to add value, and hopefully there are opportunities for me to grow. I know there's never any guarantees in anything but I think there's a great fit in terms of my ability to make contributions to the firm and the firm's excitement about what I'm doing, I can see myself being there for another five or 10 years.

It's the opportunity to really see a variety of different problems and the opportunity to solve those problems for customers.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – DENISE QUICK RATING - D

Needs work and refinement, why them in particular and what will you be bringing them that's valuable to them and what they want.

Why do you want to work here? Steven's Answer



(Who is Steven? Steven - Human Resources Professional seeking Senior Human Resources Generalist role)

Terry: Why is it that you want to work here?

Steven: was actually one of our vendors that we dealt with and they've always been great to deal with, a solid company.

In addition to that just looking at the duties and responsibilities and the position requirements I think my skill set fits in nicely with that.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – STEVEN QUICK RATING - C

Good because specific to them, but would have liked to hear more about what made them a great company and reiterate that you want to join, also great opportunity to state what your skills are that matches their needs.

Why do you want to work here? Leonard's Answer



(Who is Leonard? Leonard - Non-Profit Leader with 25 years experience seeking Executive Director role)

Terry: Tell me, why do you want to work here?

Leonard: Two reasons, the first is personal. I have a son who has struggled with a mental health issue. He's been bipolar since his high school days, so the importance of working with young people and families so they have a plan and the skills and resources necessary to have a quality of life and be able to function in this society.

The second is that I believe that my skills of working with young people and families, doing the advocacy and working on mental health and addiction issues will be valuable to the XXX XXX Association.

Terry: So you see your skills as a good match for what we need?

Leonard: Yes. In terms of both fund development as well as my history of working on behalf of and with schools and community groups for young people and families, I think would be an excellent fit.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – LENNY QUICK RATING - C

Did a good job demonstrating commitment, but needed to ask you followup question to get at skills you're bringing, could do more there too.

Why do you want to work here? Wendy's Answer



(Who is Wendy? Wendy - Executive and recent Chief Operating Officer seeking Controller position)

Terry: Why do you want to work here?

Wendy: As I look at what my strengths are and what kinds of environments I do best in, I am targeting industries and organizations that, number one, value sort of a pragmatic approach to controls and compliance.

I have a very strong control background, but I like to approach it in a way that how do you insure you have the right controls in place, but not hinder the organization from achieving its top-line and bottom-line goals.

I like to get involved in change. You know I consider myself a bit of a change agent. I thrive where there is a need to implement process and procedures. I targeted the education field, because I do think it's a heavy-regulated industry or heavy-regulated operation; high-growth.

I mean I've heard that a lot of people are going back to get additional degrees and expand their educational knowledge as they've been displaced from their current positions.

It's an area that long-term, believe it or not, my longer-term goals when I get to "retirement age" is to teach probably in the college arena, so getting myself associated with an educational organization helps me to promote my longer-term goals.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – WENDY QUICK RATING - C

Good start on what you bring them, but missing why them in particular.

Why do you want to work here? Allen's Answer



(Who is Allen? Allen - QA Analyst and Programmer since 1985 seeking Quality Assurance Tester job)

Terry: We may come back to that at some point in the future. **Tell me why you want to work here.**

Allen: I find that your company has a lot of manual testing, which I enjoy. I like to get my hands dirty, so to speak. I like being able to create test cases, test scenarios and be able to document all of those processes.

I also see that you have the PBCS tracker, which is a way to track defects. I enjoy and have a passion for following up and making sure that the programmer or business analyst is following up on errors, things that are not working properly, defects and making sure they're doing it in a timely manner or report that to management that for whatever reason it's falling behind. It's exactly the kind of job I'm looking for and I think it's a good fit.

Here's how I would rate that answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – ALLEN QUICK RATING - C

If what you shared was a great match to what they want than good answer, also good match of your skills, but missing why them in particular, you just talked about the work itself.

Why do you want to work here? Bonnie's Answer



(Who is Bonnie? Bonnie - CPA with over 6years experience seeking Accounting Manager position)

Terry: You've already started to talk about that a little bit in terms of what you bring, **but what is it in terms of why do you want to work here?**

Bonnie: I know what you do is a vital service, the emergency centers and 911 center. I know what a vital service you perform for the community, which is something that I'm really interested in.

My passion is in working with organizations that work with the public. I've seen in action what you do because we unfortunately lost somebody in my building, we lost quite a few people, but we lost somebody to a fire, so I've seen what your agency does.

Plus, I know that I can come in and be productive from day one because I already know what is expected on grants, I've been doing that for a while. I've trained staff people and I know that when I'm coming in I can be productive and that's something I'm looking for.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – BONNIE QUICK RATING - C

Why them in particular is there, but there's so much other stuff around it that it got lost, also in this and the prior question you keep adding in what you want, don't do that, they don't particularly care what you want unless it relates to what they want.

Why do you want to work here? Margaret's Answer



*(Who is Margaret? Margaret - Senior Level Marketing Communications
Professional seeking position with University)*

Terry: All right. **Why do you want to work here?**

Margaret: Well, XXX University has been one of the universities I've wanted to work at for a long time. It has a fantastic reputation, creative and intelligent people and I have just a great admiration for the university.

Here's how I would rate this answer . . .

Why do you want to work here? – MARGARET QUICK RATING - B

Excellent job of making it unique to them, could do more to add what you bring.

Conclusion

Congratulations, you have now learned how to respond more effectively to some of the common questions you are likely to get in your interviews.

This guide gave you the essentials for the classic what's right with you questions you face so you can develop better answers for yourself very quickly.

- During fatal interview mistake #2 you learned to share quotes and facts to avoid bragging while giving your interviewer evidence of your prior accomplishments.
- In fatal interview mistake #8 we discussed the three sources of your assets that you can leverage to find the impressive proof that you can include in your answers.
- For the goals question, you have discovered how to make your message include something that they want too.
- For the strengths question, you have discovered how you can provide tangible proof and evidence that's relevant to them for the strength you're claiming.
- For the why do you want to work here question, you have discovered why it's important to find something unique about the company or department as part of your courtship and to help them understand that you know why they're special.

For all of those questions, you have also had the chance to review and rate how real people have answered them too.

These examples provided great ideas on what to say, what not to say and some new inspiration that you can adapt to create your own unique job-winning answers.

Your Next Steps

Beginning with a specific job description or posting (that you're pursuing or would like to pursue) to focus your responses, review their requirements and expectations and:

1. Draft your own unique answers to these classic questions.
2. If you've already been preparing your own answers as you went along, take a fresh look at them and see if you want to make any additional changes.
3. Remember that these questions come in slightly different forms, so also prepare some variations.
4. Say them out loud to check if they sound natural. (Record yourself or ask someone you trust to give you some feedback.)
5. Continue to refine and adjust over time as you identify alternate answers or when a new job pursuit requires a change as the prior message is no longer appropriate in the new context.

Final Thoughts

Be sure to look at the following **Additional Resources** section. You'll find some links that I have specially selected for you to be particularly valuable to you now.

You will see new areas that were outside the scope of this guide where we can also help you. You are eligible for special offers at a greatly discounted rate because you are a client. So don't miss the chance to take advantage of them.

Be sure to register at the <http://jobinterview911.com/> website if you have not already, so we can let you know when we release new tips, tools, resources and special offers to assist you to advance and meet your career goals. Membership is Free.

And be sure to use the [Contact Us](#) feature on the website to share new questions or topics you would like to see us cover in our blog, online training or new products and services. We pay attention to every message we receive.

About the Author



Terry Kozlowski created JobInterview911.com to more widely share her unique interview success strategies with a global audience.

Since 2001 and founding AchieveMentor Group LLC, advisors for career success, she has helped more than 573 people win new jobs and advance in their careers.

She has been seen on TV nationally as a Career Strategist and Interview Expert including NBC and FoxNews, heard on radio stations across country, and contributed to or been profiled in print media including The Wall Street Journal and Chicago Tribune.

Terry is a popular Speaker and Facilitator of dynamic meetings and interactive workshops. She started with a degree in Theater, and then earned multiple promotions in her business career.

Prior, she was a Partner and Global Leader at CSC (Computer Sciences Corporation) Consulting, an internationally recognized technology consulting firm. She has innovated, applied and led best practice organizational change, leadership and employee development approaches that deliver performance and bottom line results in organizations for more than 20 years.

Her clients have included the leaders in commercial, government, nonprofit and health care organizations including the City of Chicago, Kraft Foods, Aon, Chase, Nationwide Insurance, General Motors and many others.

A graduate of Northeastern Illinois University, she has been an instructor and guest speaker in continuing education and degree programs offered through Northwestern University, University of Georgia, National-Louis University, Institute for International Research and the American Management Association.

She holds over 20 additional certifications in employee selection, leadership development, executive coaching and career instruments and approaches including being a Certified Executive Coach, Certified Interview Coach, Certified Job and Career Development and Certified Job and Career Transition Coach.

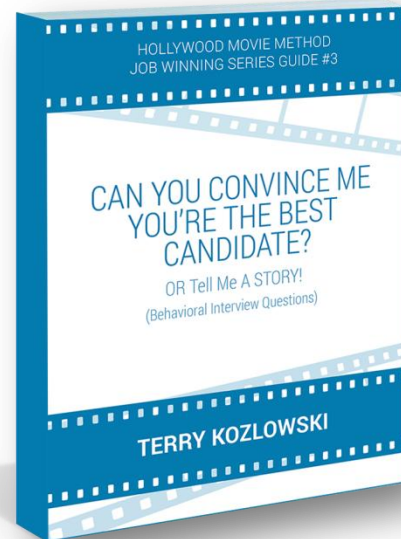
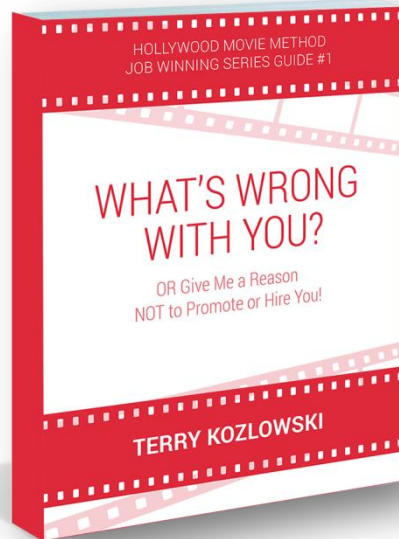
She also serves in leadership roles in arts and community organization. In 2007 she led a non-profit coalition project for women returning to the workforce with funding from U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau.

Terry combined her love of movies, live theater background and decades of business experience to create her unique Hollywood Movie Method Interview Success System that assists worthy candidates improve their interview performance and so win the job they really want.

For more of Terry's Tips for your career or to contact her, visit <http://jobinterview911.com>

Additional Resources

You have just completed one of the guides in the Hollywood Movie Method Job Winning Series. Additional Guides that have already been released include:



If you would like to purchase both these guides at a deep discount, then just follow this link: <https://secure.jobinterview911.com/multiple-guide-1-and-3-sales-order-form>

If you would like some additional help and feedback from one of our expert career coaches, this is a special coaching package that will get you 1-on-1 assistance at a **50% discount**. You are eligible for this offer because you are an existing client. Follow this link for full details and to order: <http://jobinterview911.com/special-private-60-minutes/>

For additional 1-on-1 coaching options, to make arrangements to have Terry Kozlowski or our other experts speak to your organization or for additional resources, please visit us at <http://jobinterview911.com>