

10 Questions and why employers ask them

When you know why employers ask these questions and what they are looking for, it puts you in a better position to answer them.

What led you to join ABC company?

They want to understand your decision-making process. Did you join for money, growth, or because it was an amazing opportunity? They want to understand what is important to you in a company or a role and if they feel you can realize your goals working for them. They will probably ask this question for each of your past jobs and they are looking for patterns of why you joined each one. For example, if you joined each one for more money, then they will probably feel that you won't last long if they hired you.

What led to your decision to leave ABC company?

Not why did you leave, but what led to your decision to leave. They want to understand your motivations and your judgment for leaving each position. This helps them understand your decision making process and judgment for each position. Essentially, they are looking for an upward trend in responsibility and income. If you left each job for more responsibility and growth, then they can assume the pattern will continue if they hired you. If your pattern shows a downward trend in responsibility or no change at all, then they might determine your growth is stagnant and that trend will continue if they hired you.

What were you hired to do?

They want to know if you were hired to work on a new deal, open a new sales territory, start a project, or fix a failed project. And they want to understand whether you accomplished that or not. If you accomplished it, share the progress or the results. If not, why not? And if you start blaming management, your team, funding, or anything else besides yourself, then they know you don't like accepting blame and you'll do the same if they hired you. Make sure you accept responsibility for anything you were responsible for that didn't work out and share what you learned.

What was your greatest accomplishment?

If your accomplishment lacks grit and fails to leave them with a wow factor, they are going to write you off as a low performer. You want to give them accomplishments they can sink their teeth into. Do not describe your daily job duties as accomplishments, because they are not. Share your accomplishments in a way that shows you know what you are talking about.

What impact have you made on the company while working in this role?

They're looking for people who are needle movers who turned around a sales department, created a profitable marketing campaign, established foothold in a new industry, or improved a customer service department. Could be anything, but the key word is impact. They are looking for responses that shows how you made a difference.

What were you most passionate about in your last role and what did you least enjoy?

This compound question is searching for alignment. They're looking for things that you enjoyed doing in your last role because they want to make sure that this new position represents some of those things as well. They're also looking for what you didn't like because if this job requires you to do things you don't enjoy (more than 15-20%), then it's likely you won't enjoy this role if they hired you.

What three skills are you working on right now to develop?

They are searching for high performers. If you hem and haw and say, umm... well... maybe.... They know right off the bat that you are not a high performer. Because high performers know exactly what they are working on to better themselves. The best answer is one where the candidate rattles off three things they are working on to improve. As long as these are related to personal or professional development, your answer will sound great.

What about this position is exciting to you?

They want to hear how passionate you are about the role, the company, the mission or the team. They want to know deep down inside what you really love about this and why you love it. Let them feel why you're excited and why you're passionate.

What did you do while you were in between jobs?

They want to hear what you did to better yourself while you were looking for jobs. So talk about books you read, trainings you took, or workshops you attended. Don't say that you just searched for jobs.

What question haven't I asked you that you wish I would have asked you?

This is a closing question that gives you an opportunity to tell the interviewer something deeper about yourself. Maybe you didn't get a chance during the interview to share a valuable skill or ability. It also shows them where your mind is and what you're thinking.