Recruiters reveal how to respond to the most complicated questions.

"Preparing for an interview is more than just researching the company. It’s thinking about these types of questions and being prepared to successfully answer them.”

To help you prepare, ADVANCE polled recruitment leaders on the most common difficult interview questions, and how to answer them.

WHY DID YOU LEAVE YOUR LAST POSITION? Fine off, why are you here? Recruiters aren't just being nippy when they inquire about why you're looking for a job. Unless you've got a new career plan or a position, you're leaving another one behind. Essential ly, recruiters want to know what went wrong. Was it the job or was it you?

They try in answering this one is to be truthful— in a degree. Even if you hate your boss's ever-loving guts, this is better off kept to yourself. Never say anything disparaging about your previous employer, boss or a co-worker in an interview, advised Linda Konstan, Sensible Human Resources Consulting, LLC (www.lindakonstan.com). "It will come back to you." The reasons you're leaving should be professional and growth-based.

Potential Qs & As

Q: Have you ever done just enough to get the job done? A: Be clear about knowing when you are going above and beyond at work and when you are just doing the job. The insight is in identifying what is important and exceed your expectations.

Q: What are you willing to get fired for at work? A: This interviewer is seeking to explore what matters to you. Align your values with the employer.

Q: Why should we hire you? A: Tell the interviewer exactly how your background fits his needs, the accomplishments you've experienced in similar roles and why you believe you're a good fit for the culture of the company.

Q: How would your co-workers describe you? A: Point out why you are a team player and how you collaborate with colleagues for the good of your department. Bonus: If you can report 180-degree assessments indicating your co-workers believe you are a person of integrity, competence, sincerity and high achievement.

Toll me about a time when...

A: Make sure the answer points you as a solution provider and always be ready to include accomplishments (e.g., saved the company money, improved patient satisfaction, created/improved processes or systems).
3 WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF?

This seemingly innocuous question can be a red flag for the interviewer, the one who is not prepared. "Employees ask candidates about their past experiences, skills, and goals to determine if they can satiate the role of the job," said Margolin. "Your goal during the interview is not to prove you the skills, qualifications and abilities for the job so much as the questions asked. When the recruiter asks you about yourself, keep your answer framed in a professional context. Margolin reminded. Don’t focus on your family, favorite vacation spot or your Chihuahuas, Peanuts, or your relevant skills, experience and abilities. Keep your answer within 2 minutes to avoid walking into inappropriate topics.

4 WHAT ABOUT US?

Recruiters will often see if you have done your homework on the company you’re interviewing with by asking what you know about the company. "In this day and age of information being readily available at your fingertips, you would think all job seekers would have an answer prepared for this question," said Roberts. "In fact, one study by the Human Resources Management Association found that 98% of job seekers research the company they are interviewing with before the interview." In contrast, the company will use this to gauge your interest and passion for the role and the company. "This is important because it demonstrates your level of interest in the position, by researching the company and whether you are a good fit for the position." The more you know about the company, the more they will be impressed.

5 WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES?

This one is the easy kicker. While it seems straightforward enough, keep in mind that you are being evaluated on your ability to reflect on your weaknesses and how you have successfully addressed them. "This is your chance to demonstrate your level of interest in the position, by identifying your strengths and weaknesses, and how you have overcome them. This is an opportunity to show your growth mindset and ability to learn from past mistakes." The more you can talk about how you have overcome challenges and learned from past mistakes, the better. "By showing your willingness to learn and grow, you demonstrate your commitment to continuous improvement, which is a valuable trait in any workplace."

Andersen suggested. Horvitz has a more creative approach. "What are your weaknesses?" means "Why should I hire you?" he cautioned. While the answer has to be positive, humor-void appropriately, don’t hurt, he noted. He provided this example: "I am great at coming up with a strategy and implementing it. However, I literally get lost going around the corner. I always look for a way to overcome weakness, so if you ask, I will give you my kidney." He would have given you any kidney it you gave him your MPS. More seriously, he concludes that you can’t suffice just to be very patient. I can spend as much time as necessary in supervising who are trying and willing to learn. I got along very well with children. I have all the patience in the world for 6-year-olds born in 2004. However, I have no patience for 6-year-olds born in 1948!"

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Now that you’ve learned how to phrase your responses, practice, practice, practice. Brian Mitchell, founder, Karru, LLC, who founded ADVANCE if job applicants have thought through these questions and prepared responses, they will find them for less tricky when the big day arrives and they are put in the hot seat.

Kari Halt is on staff as ADVANCE.