

## Likely Questions

**What have been your most notable achievements to date?** With a little preparation, this should be an easy one. The client is trying to find out if you are an achiever. Describe a recent, work-related achievement, identifying the skills it demanded, and its benefit to the company.

- It is important to detail things that YOU have been responsible for. Don't just talk about things "the team" have done. The objective is that the client thinks YOU are great, not the team you worked in.

Wherever possible, relate the achievement to a requirement of the role you are aiming for:

- "As HR Director for my current employer, we undertook a significant down-sizing programme resulting in 250 redundancies. It was critical that we maintained maximum business continuity during this time of upheaval, with minimum unwanted loss from unaffected roles. We managed the redundancy programme efficiently and sensitively and suffered only 3 unwanted losses out of 680 roles in other parts of the business.
- "In my last company where I was Managing Director, I grew revenues by 15% from £20m to £23m during the last year, whilst reducing costs from £10 to £8m. The net effect was an increase in profit of 50% from £10 to £15m".
- "My greatest achievement as a Business Development Manager was to win an order for an XYZ system to the value of £1.4m, when up against major competition from ABC Company, who were 20% cheaper. The profit on the deal was £400,000".

**What are your strengths?** This should be quite easy. The interviewer wants a straightforward answer as to what you are good at, and how you can add value.

Concentrate on discussing two or three of your strengths and how they could benefit the client. Strengths to consider include focus, technical proficiency, ability to learn quickly, determination to succeed, a positive attitude, your ability to relate to people in order to achieve a common goal.

Always be prepared for the follow up question of "how is that manifested?"

**What is your greatest weakness?** Name an area that is not vital for the job. Or, describe a personal or professional weakness that could also be considered a strength... "I'm a perfectionist". Do not select a personal weakness such as "I sometimes have difficulty concentrating."

**So, tell me about yourself?** Use this opportunity to summarise your qualifications, career history and abilities, emphasising those skills relevant to the job in question. The client doesn't want to hear detail about your childhood memories. Your response should not take more than three or four minutes. If the client wants to explore a particular area, they will ask a supplementary question.

**Why do you want to leave your current employer?** Give a positive answer, stating things such as looking for a greater challenge, responsibility, experience and a change of environment. Try not to give negative reasons for leaving. It is rarely ever appropriate to cite salary as your primary motivation, unless you are being paid dramatically below the market rate.

**What do you dislike about your present job?** A safe approach is to play up a characteristic of your present company that is different to the company you are talking to. For example, if your corporation is large, you might say you are frustrated with slow decision-making. Or if it's small, you could say that a lack of opportunities makes you feel unfulfilled. If you're too specific you may draw attention to weaknesses.