

## Are You Ready for an Unexpected Job Interview?

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Most job seekers wait to polish up their interview skills until they are looking for a new position. Important interview opportunities, however, can present themselves at any time. For example,

- **Unplanned internal job openings:** There is a sudden opportunity to advance your career from within, and your boss recommends you as a candidate for the job. **ARE YOU READY TO COMMUNICATE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMPANY?**
- **A recruiter calls:** The position sounds like just the career move you've been wanting. **WILL YOU SAY THE RIGHT THINGS TO WIN THE JOB OR WILL YOU BLUNDER YOUR BEST CHANCE?**
- **A former colleague introduces you to his boss:** They are building an exciting new division for their company and looking for new staff. **CAN YOU ENTICE HIS INTEREST IN YOU AS A MUST-HAVE NEW TEAM MEMBER?**

Those who continually grow in their careers are always prepared for these situations. Their interview skills are sharp at all times. To know if your skills are sharp enough to handle a surprise interview, see if you can answer the following four questions:

### **1. Can you concisely state your value proposition in 30 seconds or less?**

A value proposition is meant to intrigue your listener with a quick overview of your skills, expertise, and industry know-how. If you can offer a precise summary of why you are the perfect candidate for that job, you are more likely to get to the second or third interview. A concise value proposition can make a critical difference in winning you a new position.

### **2. Do you know your top five accomplishments, and can you communicate their impact to your employer's bottom-line initiatives?**

A list of your top accomplishments will allow a potential employer to imagine what you can do for him or her. Accomplishments give employers a way to associate your skills with their needs—and a reason to remember you. Be prepared to list your top skills and show how they can help meet corporate needs.

### **3. Are you prepared to answer your own toughest interview questions, or do you hope they just won't come up?**

Don't leave yourself vulnerable to questions like "If you're doing so well in your job, why do you want to leave?" A good recruiter or hiring manager will see you sweat and

stutter and squirm; you'll lose their confidence and destroy a chance to get your dream job. Think about the questions that will be your biggest pitfalls—and be prepared to answer them.

#### **4. Do you know how to find out your interviewer's motivations to understand how best to answer their questions?**

This is a very important question. Without knowing your interviewer's motivations, how will you know if your answers hit the mark of what he or she is looking for in a perfect candidate? There are many ways to conduct research discreetly and determine exactly what that employer needs. Once you have those answers in hand, you can target your interview answers accordingly.

A good career coach can help you answer all these questions and more, preparing you for the interviews you plan—and the interview you didn't expect. With those answers in hand, you can take your career from mediocre to marvelous with “always-ready” interview skills.

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