

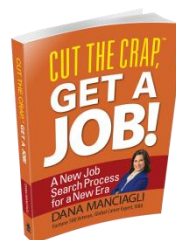
Cut the Crap™ (CTC) Interview Prep Guide

<http://DanaManciagli.com>

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Cut the Crap "Law of Three's":

- Listen HARD to the question
- Pause, think of three points you want to make
- Say three short points and stop.
- Repeat: Say three short points and ZIP IT! (*kidding, but true*)



Most Common Questions	Answer Examples
What are your greatest strengths? OR What would prior co-workers say your strengths are?	<p>This is one of the easier interview questions you'll be asked. But most candidates miss the opportunity.</p> <p>When you are asked questions about your strengths, it's important to discuss attributes that will qualify you for this specific job. The best way to respond is to <u>describe the skills and experience that directly correlate with the job you are applying for.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I complete projects well ahead of schedule</i>• <i>I have exceeded my sales goals every quarter</i>• <i>My customer service skills and resolving challenging customer problems</i>
What are your greatest weaknesses? OR What would prior co-workers say your weaknesses are?	<p>Try to turn a negative into a positive. For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I used to triple-check every item in a spreadsheet; now I try to limit my reviews.</i>• <i>Being organized wasn't my strongest point, but I implemented a time management system that really helped my organization skills.</i>• <i>I used to wait until the last minute to set appointments for the coming week, but I realized that scheduling in advance makes much more sense.</i>
Tell me about yourself.	<p>Because it's such a common interview question, it's strange that more candidates don't spend the time to prepare for exactly how to answer it. Script it! Use the Law of Three's. Here's the formula:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One sentence about your education• One sentence about your work experience• Last sentence about why you are here today – why it's a great opportunity <p>Offer three sentences that set the stage for further discussion and sets you apart from your competitors.</p>

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<i>How do you handle stress and pressure?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stress is a fact of my employment life...it comes with the type of work I love to do. I just make sure I have the correct balance between good stress and bad stress. I need good stress to stay motivated and productive.• I actually work better under pressure and I've found that I enjoy working in a challenging environment.• From a personal perspective, I manage stress by visiting the gym every evening. It's a great stress reducer.
<i>Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it.</i> <i>OR</i> <i>Tell me a time when you....?</i> <i>Do you have experience in...?</i>	<p>These are behavioral interview questions designed to discover how you handled certain situations. The logic behind these types of questions is that how you behaved in the past is a predictor of what you will do in the future.</p> <p>Well in advance of any interview, prepare three concrete examples of situations that actually happened at work. Then be prepared to discuss what you did to solve the problem. Keep your answers positive.</p> <p>Script each of the three examples that illustrate times when you have successfully solved a situation.</p> <p>During the interview, offer only one story with three sentences then stop! They will probe for more, if needed.</p> <p>Formula to answer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Situation: Describe the situation – briefly!2. Action: Describe what you did, using "I", not we3. Result: "The result of my actions were...use metrics, facts"

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Why are you leaving or why have you left your job?	<p>If you were let go from your prior company and are no longer there:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due to the economy, they had a reduction in force.• The job wasn't a good fit so my boss and I agreed that it was time for me to move on to a position that would show a better return for both of us. So here I am, ready to work.• My job was offshored to India. That's too bad because people familiar with my work say it is superior and fairly priced.• I outlasted several downsizings but the last one included me. Sign of the times, I guess.• The company was cutting back and, unfortunately, my job was one of those eliminated. <p>Keep it brief, keep it honest and keep it moving.</p> <p>If you left on your own:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I found myself bored with the work and am looking for more challenges.• There isn't room for growth with my current employer and I'm ready to move on to a new challenge.• I'm looking for a bigger challenge and to grow my career and I couldn't job hunt part time while working. It didn't seem ethical to use my former employer's time.• I was laid-off from my last position when our department was eliminated due to corporate restructuring.• I'm relocating to this area due to family circumstances and left my previous position in order to make the move.• I am interested in a new challenge and an opportunity to use my technical skills and experience in a different capacity than I have in the past.• I recently received my degree and I want to utilize my educational background in my next position.• I am interested in a job with more responsibility, and I am very ready for a new challenge.• I left my last position in order to spend more time with my family. Circumstances have changed and I'm more than ready for full-time employment again.• I am seeking a position with a stable company with room for growth and opportunity for advancement.• I was commuting to the city and spending a significant amount of time each day on travel. I would prefer to be closer to home.
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Why do you want this job?	<p>Customize this answer to fit your particular circumstances and the job you are applying for.</p> <p>Pull out three characteristics of the job, per the job description, and talk about those.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>There are three major reasons: Your engineering requirements are challenging, your new product launches are exciting and I enjoy leading people.</i>• <i>Your technology is fascinating, the marketing opportunity is tremendous, and you have a winning management team.</i> <p>Avoid "I'm a perfect fit, it leverages my capabilities, I have the skills you are looking for," etc.</p>
Why should we hire you?	<p>The best way to respond is to give three concrete examples of why your skills and accomplishments make you the best candidate for the job.</p> <p>Formula:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Because you're looking for <this> and I have <that>• Repeat 3 times with 3 items from their job description. <p>Once you complete the JD Profile tool from "Cut the Crap™, Get a Job!", you will have the answers for this question.</p>
What are your goals for the future?	<p>Refer to the position and the company you are interviewing with. Don't discuss your goals for returning to school or having a family. They are not relevant and could knock you out of contention for the job.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I see myself as a top performing employee in a well-established organization, like this one. I plan on enhancing my skills and continuing my involvement in (related) professional associations.</i>• <i>Once I gain additional experience, I would like to move on from a technical position to management.</i>
What was your most recent compensation?	<p>Interviewers expect a candidate for employment to be able to provide the details of their compensation history. Be prepared to tell the interviewer how much you earned at your prior positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Make sure that what you tell the interviewer matches what you listed on your job application.➤ Refresh your memory prior to the interview by reviewing your salary history, so, you can speak in detail and accurately.➤ <u>Don't exaggerate</u> or inflate your earnings. Some employers will check references and confirm your salary history prior to making a job offer. A discrepancy between what you reported and what the employer says could knock you out of contention for the job.

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What is your target compensation?	<p>BEWARE!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try to avoid giving a numeric number or range.• ONLY if strictly required on a job application do you provide a number and make that at least 10% higher than your prior compensation.• In the majority cases, when asked:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>"I am interested in this great position for all the right reasons and I am confident you will pay market-competitively."</i>○ And if they press you for a range, avoid giving one again!○ <i>"My goal is to exceed your expectations in this job. Again, I trust you will make an offer for a market-competitive package."</i> <p>Note: Remember to use "market-competitive" and "package".</p>
What motivates you?	<p>There isn't a right or wrong answer to interview questions about what motivates you. The interviewer is trying to understand the key to your being successful in the job he is interviewing for, and wants to make sure it's a good fit.</p> <p>Reminder: Say three short things, even three short words and stop talking! Choices I like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Teamwork and seeing the team win▪ Finishing a really hard project and celebrating with the team▪ Getting an "at-a-girl" (or at-a-boy) for a job well done▪ Seeing the results from my efforts with some sort of metric (revenue dollars, profit, whatever the key metrics are for the area of business I can influence)
Are you overqualified for this job?	<p>Choose two from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No, I believe I'm fully qualified.• I am proud of the fact that I've stayed on the cutting edge of my career field, including its technology.• I hope you're not concerned that hiring someone with my solid experience and competencies would look like I am overqualified. This job will be a great fit for both of us.• As you note, I've worked at a higher level but this position is exactly what I'm looking for.

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Good resources for Interview Questions and Answers (*there are so many on the web!*):

<http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/Interview-Questions/100-Potential-Interview-Questions/article.aspx>

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/interviewquest.htm>

<http://www.jobinterviewquestions.org/>

<http://www.interviewstrategies.com/>

http://www.quintcareers.com/interview_questions.html

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