



Oliwia

Global Executive Recruiter

How to answer “tell me about yourself”

There are thousands of possible interview questions you can find all over the internet, but “Tell me about yourself” is still one of the most frequently used question to start off the interview.

Before we look at some of the best ways to answer this question, let’s first understand the ‘why’:

- ▶ This is purely an ice-breaker to a serious and in-depth conversation. It allows the interviewer to take the first step into focusing on your professional profile after some small talk.
- ▶ This question is so easy and general, that there is (almost) no bad answer to give. Therefore, interviewers assume it is a candidate-friendly question, allowing you to focus for the rest of the conversation and put you in the right mood for answering only more difficult questions.
- ▶ Again, because this question is so general, allowing you to speak freely for a minute or two, the interviewer can take the opportunity to observe your body language and make some impressions about your overall business attire and behavior.
- ▶ Last, but not least, your answer to this question matters! Your answer will show the interviewer what is important to you, assess how you think and articulate, and what are you hoping to achieve in this role.

The best advice for the candidates is not to disregard this question and prepare an answer beforehand. Here are a few hints on how to tackle the “king” of interview questions:

- ▶ Answer this question in approximately 3 minutes. As this is an ice-breaker for the rest of the interview, do not take too much time answering. If the interviewer would like to dig deeper and follow-up on anything that you have shared, they will ask you about it later.

- ▶ Focus on the past, present and the future. Think of a few sentences describing your professional persona on a timeline. Mention your background and give a brief summary of your previous experiences, then explain your current employment situation and briefly explain the why are you interested in the role. Close your pitch by sharing your general career aspirations and how the role can help you achieve them.
- ▶ Be succinct. This is the hardest part of this exercise, but you really need to be extremely succinct. Do not try to exploit this question and squeeze in too many facts and information. You may feel tempted to say more about your previous roles or motivation, but be sure, that the interviewer has separate questions on hand to explore this so leave the rest to the later part of the interview.
- ▶ Finish with a question (Optional, but this is a nice conversation starter to continue the next part of the interview). After responding, finish by asking the interviewers if there are questions on what you have shared or is there anything that they may wish to know more.
- ▶ Practice, a lot. As you can be almost sure, that this question will appear during the interview, a good idea is to invest some time in practicing this pitch of yours. Note down the key points which you would like to mention, then practice the answer in front of a mirror or record yourself talking. Be mindful of the time, tone and speed of your speech by rehearsing a few times till you are comfortable. You may even get someone to role-play with you and request their feedback.

About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, strategy, transaction and consulting services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. Information about how EY collects and uses personal data and a description of the rights individuals have under data protection legislation are available via ey.com/privacy. For more information about our organization, please visit ey.com

© 2020 EYGM Limited. ED None.
All Rights Reserved.

EYG no. 006070-20Gb1

This material has been prepared for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be relied upon as legal, accounting, tax or other professional advice. Please refer to your advisors for specific advice.

ey.com