

What Employers are Looking For

Hiring new employees is a frustrating business; most employers do not like the process. The employer must make a financial commitment to someone with very little knowledge about them. In general, employers want to make **SURE** this is a good decision. Below is a brief description of what they are trying to figure out when looking at prospective employee materials (resumes, applications, and interviews). You can increase the chance of being hired by remembering the four questions the employer is trying to answer. Just remember the word "**SURE**":

- S**kills Do you have the skills to do the job?
- U**se Will you use those skills on the job? Are you motivated to work?
- R**elate Will you relate well to the other employees and the company's image?
- E**nhance Will you enhance the company by contributing in a positive way?

You communicate with future employers through resumes, applications, telephone contact, and face-to-face interviews. Each contact you make with an employer should focus on answering these four questions for them.

Some employers don't even know these are the important questions they should be asking. An applicant who answers the questions for these employers will appear far better qualified than an applicant who doesn't - even though the employer won't know why they appear so qualified.

If you want a job, make **SURE** you answer these four important questions during every contact with an employer. Advertising research tells us that you must repeat something three times before someone remembers it. Repeat your answers to these questions each time you talk to a prospective employer to make **SURE** they remember you.

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The material on this handout is taken from the Employment Skills unit of Quick Skills, the cognitive curriculum developed by KBSolutions. KBSolutions is providing it to you with the hope it assists you in your job search.

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The SURE Method of Answering Interview Questions

Job interviews are hard work. That is why there are so many books written about how to interview. Most of these books say three important things:

- 1) You have a short period of time to impress the interviewer.
- 2) They have a short period of time to learn about you.
- 3) In most interviews, the interviewer doesn't know what (s)he is doing.

The third point is a very important one. Since the interviewer doesn't know what (s)he is doing, you **MUST** be prepared. If they don't ask questions that allow you to point out why you are the perfect candidate for the job, you **MUST** find a way to get that information to them or you will be screened out. By planning ahead (actually thinking about your answers to some common questions), you can increase your chance of getting the SURE questions answered for the interviewer no matter how unprepared they are. Below are some common questions asked in interviews. Create answers to these questions so you can be prepared.

Question	SURE Elements	Your Answer
Tell me about yourself.	Skills Use Relate Enhance	Think about your 5 skills and 5 traits. Develop and practice a quick paragraph (2 minutes of speech) that answers all 4 SURE elements. After the 2 minute speech ask "Do you want me to continue?". They will usually say "no", but be prepared for another 2 minutes if they say "yes".
Why Should I hire you?	Skills Use Relate Enhance	This is a great chance for you to point out all the reasons you should be hired. Have a 3 minute paragraph practiced that points out all 5 of your transferrable skills and all 5 of your personal traits. Be sure to answer each of the SURE questions while describing these 10 reasons.
What about this job interests you most?	Use Relate Enhance	You should have done your homework and know what the job entails. Your answer should point out the things about the job which allow you to USE your skills. Add comments about the work environment (relate) and how you can "contribute" to the company (enhance).
What is your greatest strength?	Skills Use Relate Enhance	Think about your 5 skills and 5 traits. Try to COMBINE at least two that relate to this job in your answer. For example "My greatest strength is my ability to <u>get the job done quickly by working hard</u> as an <u>effective team member.</u> " That's 5 traits/skills in one sentence!
What is your greatest weakness?	Use Relate Enhance	Make your "weakness" be a form of strength. For example; "Sometimes I work too hard" or "Some times I expect too much from myself". Be prepared to expand or explain the "weakness" and talk about what you have done to fix it.
Why do you want this job?	Use Enhance	This is not the time to say you need it. Your answer should talk about how your employment is a good match and will benefit BOTH you and the employer. Something like "This job will let me use all my skills and make a contribution to the company's goals - that is what work is all about isn't it?"

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