

TIP SHEET: Interview – Tell Me About Yourself

Common Interview Questions

Job interviews are both exciting and nerve-wracking. Understanding how to answer some of the most common questions effectively can set a positive tone for the entire conversation.

How to Answer the Age-Old Question – Tell Me About Yourself

When an interview asks you to tell them about yourself, they are not asking what your first pet's name was. What they are really trying to do is:

Break the Ice: Hiring managers use the ‘Tell me about yourself’ as a soft opening. They are aiming to create a more relaxed atmosphere, setting the candidate at ease. This small talk approach is also more common with less experience interviewers looking to establish a comfortable rapport.

Get a Snapshot: The thing to remember is that all your interviewer is looking for is a professional snapshot with this question, not an exhaustive autobiography. They want to cut through the noise and get a quick understanding of who you are in a professional context.

Assess Alignment: This question also serves as a compass for hiring managers to assess how well your skills and experiences align with the job requirements. It is important to take this question seriously. Based on how well you do in the first questions, they might already determine if you're the right fit for the role.

How to Answer “Tell Me About Yourself” Effectively

Responding to this free-form request successfully comes down to three things:

1. **Focus** - keep your answer relevant and leave out anything that doesn't serve the role.
2. **Script** - prepare what you'll say ahead of time by using the job listing to align your answer.
3. **Practice** - go over your script out loud and even to a friend to perfect your delivery.

Create a narrative that captures the interviewer's attention and showcases your suitability for the role with this simple, yet effective strategy.