

Plan for Success

10 Interview Questions from Telecom HR Professionals

Visualize the interview **before** you're in the hot seat. Then ask your spouse, a friend or family member to practice and role play. Or practice answering these questions **out loud** while you're driving or alone.

1. Why Should We Hire You?

Summarize your experiences: "My five years of experience working in the telecom industry ranges from being an outside plant tech to working in a Central Office with fiber optics. I could make a big difference in your company because I understand technology and have customer service skills. I'm confident I would be a great addition to your team."

2. Why Do You Want to Work Here?

The interviewer is listening for an answer that indicates you've given this some thought and are not sending out resumes just because there is an opening. For example, "I've done my homework and your company seems to be at the forefront of telecom technology. I want to be part of growing industry in a stable company."

3. What Are Your Goals?

Sometimes it's best to talk about short-term and intermediate goals rather than locking yourself into the distant future. For example, "My immediate goal is to get a job in a growth-oriented company. The rapidly changing economy makes it tough to think too long-term so that really depends on where the company is headed. What I know for sure is that I'm a hard worker, dedicated and really like to learn new things."

4. What Types of People Do You Have Most Difficulty Working With?

Everyone struggles with co-workers at one time or another. State your experience in a positive context: "I worked with a person who took credit for everything. This really affected morale so I talked with him about it. He didn't even realize he was doing this."

5. When Were You Most Satisfied in Your Job?

The interviewer wants to know what motivates you. If you can relate an example of a job or project when you were excited, the interviewer will get an idea of your preferences. "I was very satisfied in my last job because I worked with customers to help them solve their problems. I really like to troubleshoot."

6. What Can You Do for Us That Other Candidates Can't?

What makes you unique? This will take an assessment of your experiences, skills and traits. Be concise, "I have a unique combination of strong technical skills, and the ability to build strong customer relationships. These skills allow me to break down my knowledge in a way that customer's understand."

7. What Are Three Positive Things Your Last Boss Would Say About You?

Pull out your old performance appraisals and boss's quotes. This is a great way to brag about yourself through someone else's words: "My boss has told me that I am the most reliable database expert she's ever had. My attention to detail meant that she could rely on me. "

8. How Do You Work Best With Other People?

The interviewer is looking for clues about whether you are a teamer or an individual contributor. Both are important but best suited for particular roles. For example: "When I'm troubleshooting a technical problem, I like to have procedures to follow. But, when the issue is something I can't resolve on my own, it's great to have a teammate I can turn to for help."

9. What Do You Read First When You Pick Up a Newspaper or Scan Internet News?

There isn't a right answer to this question. It is just meant to get you talking and shows an interviewer that you're willing to learn and connected to the world around you.

10. What Are Your Weaknesses?

This is a dreaded question. Handle it by minimizing your weakness and emphasizing your strengths. Stay away from personal qualities and concentrate on professional traits: "In the past, I've taken every training opportunity possible to improve my technical knowledge. That way, when tough customer questions arise, I can provide the very best customer service."