



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

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Answering the Interview Question: “Tell Me About Yourself”

One of the most dreaded interview questions is "So, tell me about yourself." Your response will set the tone for the entire interview. You should be prepared. Here are five recommendations:

Focus

List five strengths you have that are pertinent to this job - experience, traits, skills, etc. What do you want the interviewer to remember about you most?

Script

Prepare a script that includes the information you want to convey. Talk about past experiences and proven success. Example: "I have been in the customer service industry for five years. My most recent experience has been handling incoming calls in the high tech industry. One reason I really enjoy this business, and the challenges that go along with it, is the opportunity to connect with people. In my last job, I formed significant customer relationships resulting in a 30 percent increase in sales in 6 months."

Mention your Strengths and Abilities

"My real strength is my attention to detail. I pride myself on my reputation for following through and meeting deadlines. When I commit to doing something, I make sure it gets done, and on time."

Conclude with a Statement About Your Current Situation

"What I am looking for now is a company that values customer relations, where I can join a strong team and have a positive impact on customer retention and sales."

Practice

Practice your script until you feel confident about what you want to emphasize. Your script should help you stay on track, but you shouldn't memorize it. You don't want to sound stiff and rehearsed. It should sound natural and conversational.

Even if you are not asked this type of question in an interview, this preparation will help you focus on what you have to offer. You will also find that you can use the information in this exercise to assist you in answering other questions. The more you can talk about your product -- you -- the better chance you will have at selling it!

Excerpted from an e-mail from Kevin Donlin, author of "Resume and Cover Letter Secrets Revealed."