

# Career Renewal Interview Skills & Sample Questions \*

January 17, 2021

\* Reference: [CareerRenewal.org](http://CareerRenewal.org)

1. Answering Interview Questions\_HR STAR Consulting and St. Brendan's Career Transition Ministry
2. Ask The Headhunter - Why job interviews are a persistent illusion
3. Ask The Headhunter \_ Interview Questions-You need just one

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

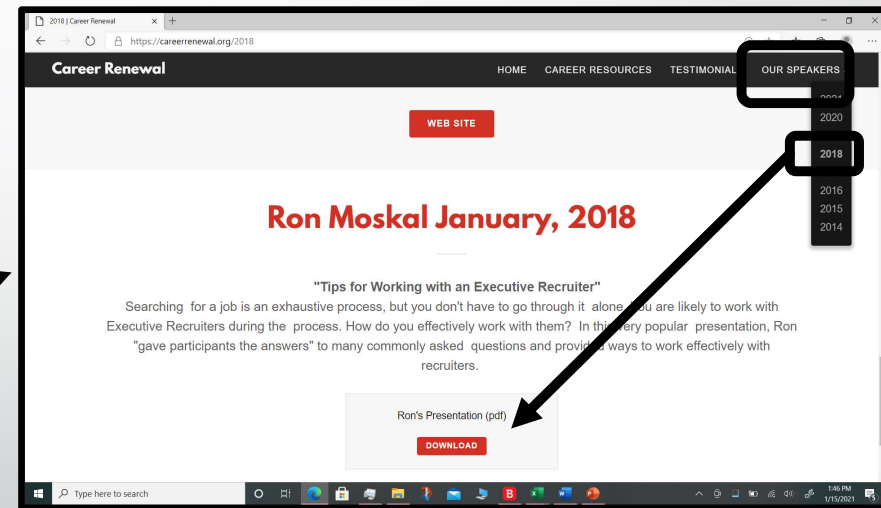
- Listen to the context of the question
  - Friend was talking to his young son.
    - Where does 'poo' come from?
      - What about Tigger?

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

- Not in Sales ?
  - Think Again !!!
  - You're selling **You**
- Find out what an employer wants most in his or her ideal candidate, and then show how you meet those qualifications.
  - Match your abilities with the needs of the employer.
  - You must sell what the buyer is buying.
  - You must find out what the buyer is buying.
  - The best way to do that is to ask a few questions yourself.

# Career Renewal Interview Skills

- Ask a few questions yourself.
- How to know 'what the buyer is buying'?
  - Research
  - Company Website
    - Mission statement
    - Press Releases
  - Glassdoor
    - Sample Questions from Interviewees
    - What Employees are saying
    - Salaries
  - LinkedIn
  - Recruiter
    - <https://careerrenewal.org>
    - "Tips for Working with an Executive Recruiter"



## Career Renewal Interview Skills

- Everyone is nervous in interviews. If you simply allow yourself to feel nervous, you'll do much better.
  - Remember also that it's difficult for the interviewer as well.
- In general, be upbeat, positive.
  - Never be negative.
- Rehearse your answers and time them.
  - Never talk for more than two minutes straight.
- Don't try to memorize answers word for word.
  - To help you remember key concepts, jot down and review a few key words for each answer.
  - Rehearse your answers frequently, and they will come to you naturally in interviews.

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

- Turn weaknesses into strengths.
- Think before you answer.
  - A pause to collect your thoughts is a hallmark of a thoughtful person.
- As a daily exercise, practice being more optimistic.
  - The best-liked interview candidates, come off as being naturally optimistic, "can do" people.
- Keep an interview diary.
  - Right after each interview, note what you did right, what could have gone better, and what steps you should take next with this contact.
  - Then take those steps. Don't be like the 95% of humanity who say they will follow up on something, but never do.
- Be honest ... never lie.
  - This bears repeating
  - Be honest ... never lie

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

- How do you get to Carnegie Hall?
  - Practice, Practice, Practice
    - Use a Spouse
    - Use a Friend
    - Use a Mirror
    - Record Yourself with your Phone
- Respond to questions using the **SAR Technique** whenever possible
  - Situation, Action, Result

# Career Renewal Interview Skills

## Sample Questions

- Tell me about yourself...
  - Why do they ask?
    - To learn about you?—Maybe
    - Can you string sentences together coherently?—Yes
    - Can you frame your experience to show VALUE to them?—Absolutely
  - Techniques for answering:
    - This isn't an opportunity to detail your personal chronology.
      - Don't talk about the home run you hit in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
    - Relate your relevant experience to their needs.
    - Remember: you must sell what the buyer is buying.
    - Think: "What keeps you up at night?"
      - The Interviewer, not you
  - Remember SAR



## Career Renewal Interview Skills

### Sample Questions

- Why did you leave your last job?
  - Why do they ask?
    - To see if you have an “appropriate” reason? —Yes
    - To see if you speak professionally about your prior employer?—Probably
    - To see if you’re a “malcontent” likely to cause trouble?—Absolutely
    - If hired, will you respect THEIR confidential material?—Absolutely
  - Techniques for answering
    - Keep your response positive. Never trash talk your past or current employer in any capacity.
    - If you were fired, say so—but have a reasonable answer, candid and without bitterness. Express what you learned from it.

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

### Sample Questions

- How do you work under pressure? / How do you handle stressors in the workplace and how you manage your time?
  - Why do they ask?
    - Can you thrive in their environment fast-paced (maybe) understaffed environment?—Yes
    - Can you deal with deadlines and everyday stress?—Yes
    - Do you have flexibility & strength when the going is tough?—Certainly
  - Techniques for answering
    - “I work well under pressure.” is not an answer with teeth in it. Any one can say that. Rather prepare an example or two in advance.
- Remember SAR

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

### Sample Questions

- Why do you want to work here? / Why should I hire you?
- Why do they ask?
  - To see if you know about their company and, even better, know about the job?—Absolutely
  - To see if you have researched their company and department?—You bet
  - To see if you are interested and enthusiastic about the position?—100%
- Techniques for answering
  - Make sure you have done your homework about the company and job/department
  - Always express enthusiasm—even if you're uncertain about the job. (You can always say "no" later.)
  - The best answer will SHOW them how you can be of benefit to them—either increase profit or decrease costs.

• Remember SAR

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

### Sample Questions

- Aren't overqualified for this position?
  - Why do they ask / suggest this?
    - Are you just looking for an interim position and will leave at the first chance for a better job?—Certainly
    - Will you need too much money—Absolutely
    - Will you to be bored (and cause trouble) in the job?—Probably
    - Will you come after THEIR job?—A possibility
  - Techniques for answering
    - Explain why your circumstances and this job align. (Why you'll be happy here.)
    - Define the value you as a more experienced player brings to this position.
    - Remind them of all the training costs they will save as you get up-to-speed quickly.
    - Show them that you bring a wider perspective than less-experienced candidates.

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

### Sample Questions

- What have you been doing since your last job?
  - Why has it taken you so long to find a job?
- Why do they this?
  - Are you a “sit-back-and-let-the-world-come-to-me person.”—Yes
  - Have you lost your technical skills?—Absolutely
  - Are you a disciplined time manager who sets and achieves goals?—You bet
- Techniques for answering
  - Most importantly, if unemployed, don’t just sit around cruising the Internet. Get involved in volunteer work, teaching, taking classes, becoming certified, etc. etc.
  - Emphasize that you want to do the due diligence to find a fit for you AND your new employer.
  - Explain the research you have been doing.

Remember SAR

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

### Sample Questions

What have you been doing during COVID?

- [http://digitaledition.chicagotribune.com/infinity/article\\_share.aspx?guid=oc4ec4ba-2359-45e2-8ed2-84d5b635d255](http://digitaledition.chicagotribune.com/infinity/article_share.aspx?guid=oc4ec4ba-2359-45e2-8ed2-84d5b635d255) (5 ways 2020 changed job searching)
- Have you spent time improving your skills?
- Have you been pursuing something of personal interest?
- Show that you're curious.
  - What have you been reading?
  - What are you excited about?

• Remember SAR

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

### Sample Questions

- Do you have any questions for me? (You better!!!!)
- Why do they ask?
  - To find out if you are a thoughtful / questioning person?—Yes
  - To select someone who will do more than just “collect a paycheck” or “phone it in”?—Absolutely
  - To know if you have done your homework on the company / department?—Very important
  - To know if you can ask intelligent questions?—Yes
- What do YOU want to know?
  - Is the company growing, profitable
  - Is the workplace friendly or “toxic”
  - Will the team / boss you will work with fit with your values and style
  - Can you thrive in this environment
  - Can you do the job well—actually “very well”
  - Will you look forward to Monday mornings

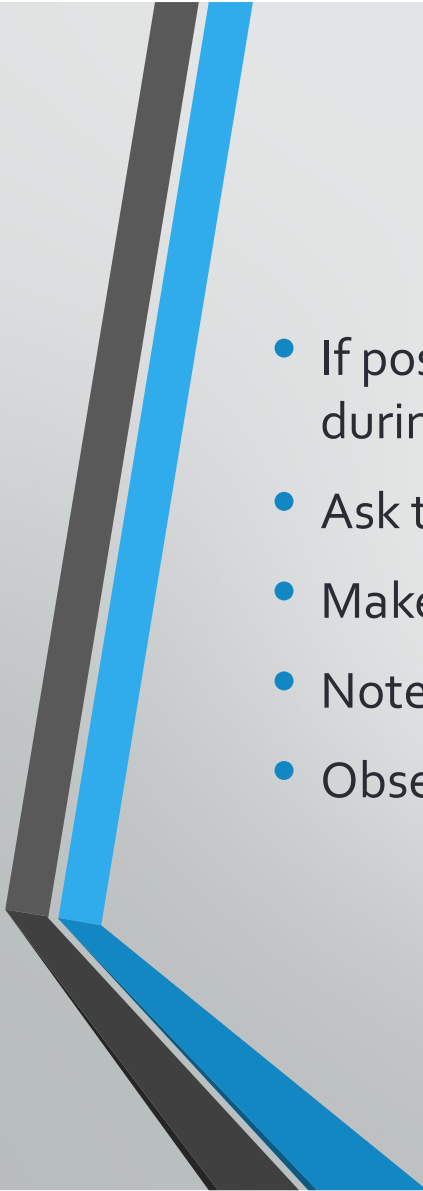
## Career Renewal Interview Skills (More) Sample Questions

- Are you willing to relocate?
- Are you willing to travel?
- Describe the best job you ever had
- Are you good at delegating tasks?
- Are you not overqualified for this position?
- What would your last supervisor suggest for additional training or exposure?



## Career Renewal Interview Skills (More) Sample Questions

- How would your coworkers describe you?
- Tell me about a challenge you've faced and how you've overcome it.
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What is your greatest weakness?
  - It better be a strength
- Why are you the best candidate for this position?
- Describe your proudest professional achievement.
- Where do you see yourself in five years?



## Career Renewal Interview Skills

### Uncovering Corporate Culture - Clues

- If possible, schedule your interview early in the morning, late in the day or during lunchtime.
- Ask to do a walk-through of the office.
- Make small talk with the receptionist.
- Note any interruptions during the interview.
- Observe preferred communication styles.

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

### Uncovering Corporate Culture - Sample Questions

- If the local paper were going to run a four-page article about your company's culture, what would be impossible *not* to include?
- What's the best part about working in this environment that I won't be able to see from just a walk around the office?
- May I speak with a few of your veteran employees or new hires?
- If you could describe your corporate culture in three words, what would you say?
- What do you love best about the culture here?
- Are There Organizations You Are Expected To Join?
- Are There Any Other Written Materials (Such As Company Brochures) That You Suggest I Read?

## Career Renewal Interview Skills Leadership - Attributes

- Global/enterprise wide thinker
- Exhibits leadership presence; ability to establish credibility necessary to influence at all organizational levels and give projects credibility
- Strategic thinker; processes information through a strategic lens and applies tenants of systems thinking/theory and to issues/assignments
- Innovative thinker and agile learner; able to readily apply past learnings in new situations to generate solutions to MI challenges and/or create something new
- Relationship builder; networker
- Collaborative; team player
- Motivator; inspires extraordinary performance in others

## Career Renewal Interview Skills

### Leadership - Attributes

- Persistent; drives ideas
- Persuasive influencer, without coercion
- Results oriented; delivers results under difficult conditions and demonstrates balanced judgment under pressure
- Analytical; makes decisions using data
- Comfortable with complexity, ambiguity and change
- Trustworthy with strong business integrity and ability to hold sensitive information in confidence
- Engages in fixing the problem
- Organization learner; has acute organizational and self awareness; political savvy. Highly organized and able to handle multiple priorities

## Career Renewal Interview Skills Leadership - Interview Questions

- Thinks and Acts Strategically
  - Examples when you set a direction
  - Describe business decisions you made and why successful
  - How you can simplify complex data for decisions
  - Examples where you anticipate and respond to trends
- Has Enterprise Perspective
  - Describe how you engaged other business units to meet customer needs
  - Have you shared talent or information across the company when needed
  - Do you go beyond your job scope to help the company even if not recognized

## Career Renewal Interview Skills Leadership - Interview Questions

- Attracts, Develops and Retains Talent
  - Do others seek you out for advice and counsel...give examples
  - Describe how you select talent
  - How do you create diverse teams
  - Examples where you took a team to the next performance level
- Is Aspirational and Confident
  - What is your biggest accomplishment as a leader. And why
  - Describe business decisions you made and why successful
  - Have you been under immense pressure to achieve an objective and what happened


## Career Renewal Interview Skills Leadership - Interview Questions

- Has Personal Courage and is Resilient
  - Example where you suffered a tough loss and lesson you learned
  - Tell us about a time you communicated something unpopular and how you prepared, communicated and dealt with pushback
  - How do you develop strong relationships across the organization
- Focus on Getting the Right Things Done
  - Talk about supporting a non-traditional approach
  - Describe how you celebrate success
  - Talk about a time you had to tell a customer about a mistake you made



## Career Renewal Interview Skills Leadership - Interview Questions

- Willing to Roll-up Sleeves
  - Describe how you jump in to help on a stalled project
  - Do you do what it takes to meet timeline and objectives. Give examples
  - Examples of intervening on a project or activity when things where not going well
- Focus on Getting the Right Things Done
  - Talk about supporting a non-traditional approach
  - Describe how you celebrate success
  - Talk about a time you had to tell a customer about a mistake you made



## Career Renewal Interview Skills

- What Questions do you have now?