

# Calcasieu Workforce Gazette

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## Common interview questions — and how to answer them effectively

Every hiring manager has a different set of go-to interview questions. In a recent survey by Careerbuilder, they asked more than 650 managers in the United States and Canada to name the single questions they ask that provides the most insight about a job applicant. Responses ranged from classic queries (“Where do you see yourself in five years?”) to less-traditional ones (“How would you describe yourself in five words”).

While there’s not always one right way to answer an interview question, some approaches are better than others. Here are some questions from the survey that you may face in your next interview, along with tips on how— and how not—to answer them:

### “Can you tell me a little about yourself?”

**Do:** Prepare for this popular question—which is often the first one asked—by developing an incisive summary of your career. Your sound bite should be succinct but include enough detail about your pertinent skills, work experience, accomplishments and goals that the hiring manager can quickly see what you bring to the table.

**Don’t:** Give your life story, discuss leisure pursuits or describe aspects of your professional background that aren’t relative to the position you’re interviewing for.

### “Why do you want to join our company?”

**Do:** Walk into the interview with beyond-

the-basics knowledge of the company.

Read the company’s website, marketing materials and relevant news stories to gain a good grasp of its mission, history, reputation and corporate culture. The more information you collect, the more specific you can be about why you’re an excellent fit.

**Don’t:** Answer in the context of your financial needs. Saying “I hear you provide good pay and benefits” or “Frankly, I need a job” won’t score you any points.

### “What’s your biggest weakness?”

**Do:** View this an opportunity to demonstrate your self-awareness, sincerity and problem-solving skills. Mention an area where you could improve and spotlight the steps you’ve taken to do so.

**Don’t:** Offer a transparently fake flaw (“I care too much about my work”) or pretend to be perfect (“Weakness? None come to mind.”) And, of course, don’t be your own worst critic by citing countless shortcomings.

### “Where do you see yourself in five years?”

**Do:** Position yourself as ambitious but flexible realist. One way to do this is to speak of your desire to continually take on broader responsibilities and grow professionally no matter what role you’re in. You also might emphasize your commitment to lifelong learning by mentioning your interest in attaining advanced industry certifications.

**Don’t:** Focus on an overly lofty objective. For instance, boldly proclaiming you intended to be the firm’s next CFO when you’re an entry-level accounting candidate certainly shows drive, but it’s not a practical five-year-objective. In addition, steer clear of fanciful daydreaming (I’ll be counting my lottery winnings on a Hawaiian beach”).

### “Why are you looking to leave your current employer?”

**Do:** The interviewer is trying to figure out if you truly want the position, or if you’re looking for any way out of a bad job. As such, reiterate what you like about the role you’re seeking rather than gripe about the one you hope to vacate. Make it clear you’re chasing a great opportunity, not running away from an unpleasant situation.

**Don’t:** Speak ill of your current employer. Regardless of how unhappy you are with your job or company, never act bitter or resentful in an interview.

Finally, despite your best efforts, you can’t anticipate every question you’ll be asked. If an interviewer throws you a curveball, maintain eye contact, take a deep breath and pause to consider your response. Many of your competitors will fluster easily. Set yourself apart by keeping your cool in the hot seat.

By: Robert Half/Career Builder

## Calcasieu Workforce



# YOUTH SUMMIT

### Calcasieu Workforce Center Youth Department

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This program is sponsored by the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, in conjunction with the Workforce Investment Board, and the Louisiana Workforce Commission and funded by the Workforce Investment ACT



On behalf of the Calcasieu Workforce Center, we would like to thank the youth, parents, teachers, City and Parish officials for your commitment to and support of the Calcasieu Workforce Center, Youth Program. 164 youth of Southwest Louisiana enjoyed our annual Youth Summit/Job Fair, and the event is getting rave reviews.

Mr. TaMarlon Carter, keynote speaker shared the following quote: *"It is important for us to Equip, Engage, and Empower from one generation to another..."*



### Upcoming Community Events:

#### Stress Management Leadership Seminar

Guest Speaker: Dr. Earl Soileau 05/31/2013  
Time: 4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.  
Location: Elcie Guillory Rm., 2424 3rd Street, Lake Charles, LA, 70601  
Admission: Free to Youth

#### LCCB Spring Performance (Ballet)

5/19/2013  
Times: 3 p.m.  
Location: Rosa Hart Theatre, Lake Charles Civic Center  
Address: 900 Lakeshore Dr., Lake Charles, LA 70601  
Admission: Free

#### Calcasieu High School Rodeo Finals

5/31/2013 - Recurring daily  
Location: Burton Coliseum  
Address: 7001 Gulf Highway, Lake Charles, LA 70607  
Admission: \$7, children 6 yrs & under free

