

## Preparing Ahead for Curveball Job Interview Questions

If you have a spotless background—never made a single error—then hats off to you. You are a rarity. As humans, it is normal to commit gaffs on the job such as misjudgments, hasty decisions, misspoken words, overlooked details, and so on at some time in our careers. Since not everything goes perfectly all the time, you need to think ahead how you would handle a curveball question.

It's the curveball questions that can trip you up, especially if you are not ready for them. Try answering one of these without any preparation:

1. Tell me about a decision you have made that turned out to be wrong.
2. Describe an incident where you disagreed with an executive decision.
3. We all make mistakes. Tell me about one of your worst.
4. What was the worst job you ever had?
5. In what area are you weakest?

The list could go on, and I suggest that you make your own list of questions. Include the questions you'd rather not have to answer, ones that might point to embarrassing events or your own errors.

Then, as an exercise, privately write out your answers truthfully, laying out the worst details in no more than a paragraph. Next take a look at what you've written and think about how you resolved these situations when you were under fire, in a tight spot, or just plain wrong. Did you learn anything from these experiences? Did they influence how you acted later to ward off the same kinds of ill events?

Whatever actions you took during or after a mishap—the ones that fixed the problem, saved your school unneeded expenses or embarrassment, or kept you from repeating the

unfortunate situation—those are the ones you want to focus on during an interview. By demonstrating that you can step up to the plate to solve problems, learn from your errors and shoot for positive outcomes, you will show how you can handle any pitch, even a curveball.

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