

Why Would I Want to Work With You? Preparing for the compatibility interview question

Written by Julie Desmond

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By Julie Desmond
julie@insightnews.com

The recession is over. The National Bureau of Economic Research says so. Therefore, it follows that many people who were looking for work over the past year will now be interviewing for new jobs. For many of these people, the word interview is synonymous with phrases like nervous stomach and cold sweats. Bringing your best self to the table is paramount, and never easy, but being prepared for the most obvious questions will help. One of these has nothing to do with job skills.

Considering that most people spend more time with their colleagues than their own children, interviewers have to assess whether candidates are compatible with the people already on board. They wonder, Do I want to work with you? Why would I want to work with you? Does anyone else like working with you? Interviewers rarely come right out and ask these questions. It is a candidate's responsibility to recognize the spirit of the question and be ready with a satisfactory response.

Before the interview, do the agonizing homework of determining why these people, at this company, in this department, at this time, would appreciate working alongside you. Reach into your past and develop answers for questions such as:

- Describe your personality.
- What would former co-workers say about you?
- After we work together for six months, what will annoy me most about you?
- Do you prefer working with a team or alone?

Create responses that describe specific events or situations which somehow relate back to this company or this position. Regarding teams, for example, do you know whether this is a team-based role or a more independent situation? Your preference for flying solo or not does not change, but the stories you tell will convey your ability to function one way or another. Substitute Willing for Prefer and you will be closer to answering the question the interviewer meant to ask.

Anxious candidates should remember that by the time you get to the interview, the company is hoping they can hire you. They sincerely want yours to be their last interview. Prepare and believe that these people will appreciate you once they know you. Then you can interview with confidence, spending more time selling your skills and less time convincing hiring managers that you're fun at a party.

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Julie Desmond leads job search and career planning workshops in Minneapolis, MN. Please send your questions or comments to julie@insightnews.com.