

# TOUGH IT OUT

Your CV might get you in the door, but it's how you impress in the interview that will be the key to your success, says Page Personnel

**O**ne of the best ways to show off your skills is to provide strong answers to tough interview questions, but this takes preparation, practice and creative thinking

Imagine this – one of the most dreaded interview scenarios. You're cool, calm and collected, recounting your career history and exam results with confidence. Then the interviewer throws in a tricky question that you don't know how to answer.

Instead of getting flustered, try to stay calm and craft your answer to present your strengths. A good way to buy some time while you think things through is to ask the interviewer to clarify what they're after in your answer.

Interviewers often ask unconventional questions to see the type of reaction they'll get, and to test your ability to think on your feet. They're also expecting to hear more about your skills, your track record and information to help them understand you as a person.

Here are our top three tough

questions, with suggested answers to help you shine.

**Why should I hire you?** This gives you the perfect opportunity to outline all of your skills and talk about your suitability for the role. Make reference to the job description, and pick two or three of the mandatory skills and match them with real life examples of where you've excelled. Convey your enthusiasm for the industry/ company/role and demonstrate how your track record will really help you add value to their organisation.

**Tell me about the last time you had a disagreement with your manager?** This question is designed to gauge how you deal with criticism and confrontation. Again, relate a real-life example but choose one where the situation was resolved in a rational way. It's far better to show your ability to

diffuse a tense situation, rather than to speak about how the disagreement wasn't your fault as you were in the right all along.

**Have you failed any of your qualifying exams? What did it teach you?** Although you're probably wishing you could say 'no', it's important to be truthful and admit when exam results haven't gone your way. The interviewer probably already knows that you needed to resit a certain exam, but they're probing how you deal with failure. It's key to explain the reasons why you didn't succeed, but back them up with the positive traits you've learned as a result. For example, "I didn't meet the pass mark for my P2 exam as I was heavily involved in a transformation programme at work and neglected my revision. It taught me the importance of time management, and dedicating enough energy to my studies and I'm pleased to say I passed on my first resit."

We hope this advice will help you prepare for your interviews.

Visit our website for more tips and the latest jobs – [www.pagepersonnel.co.uk/finance](http://www.pagepersonnel.co.uk/finance). **PG**



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