

Questions You Need to NAIL!

If I were to call your previous manager, what would they say about you?

This is an interesting question because the answer is fully dependent on your relationship with your last manager. If it was a good one, the answer should be easy to respond to. If you had conflicts with your previous manager and left because of it, you will need to be more careful with your response. If you appear to be even the least bit on edge when you respond, the interviewer will pick up on that, so it's best to be totally prepared for this question.

Your response can be determined fairly easily through a reference check so *honesty* is vital with this answer as with all others. Being candid with your strengths and weaknesses provides an *air of self-awareness* that is refreshing to hear. By speaking in this confident manner, you will give the interviewer the feeling that you have nothing to hide.

2 important tips on how to nail this question:

- 1. Think of all the positive and negative things that your manager could say** whether it's about your core skills, your soft skills, energy etc., all the facets of your job performance.
- 2. Provide specific examples** – that are relevant to the job you are interviewing for, things your manager told you either verbally or as notations on performance reviews or similar aspects. Have documentation ready if asked for it.

The reason this type of response works is it is truthful, fact-based and can be confirmed quite easily. If the recruiter makes a call to your manager and they don't mention the specifics you spoke about, the recruiter can easily say something like "David indicated that he took over the lead role in the x project after the existing project manager left suddenly and he was able complete the project on time and on budget with great reviews from the client." This type of example is specific and fact-based. The manager could easily respond to the validity of this question.

Two examples for you:

"If you talked to Roger, he would say that I was a great relationship builder and that I had the ability to meet and exceed my client needs. I believe he would say this because I was able to get one vice president to work closely with me. Previous to me coming on board, this particular VP did not have a strong relationship with any



client rep. Roger interviewed each client group at the end of each year to get feedback for our reviews. He commented on my performance review that my clients were thrilled with my ability to connect with their team members and to get projects completed. He also indicated that connecting with this one VP was a "first" and he personally was very happy with the inroads I had made.

"Beth and I had a solid working relationship. I think she would say that my IT skills were very strong and she would also say that I could improve on my patience with clients. She would say my IT skills were very strong because I was given the most difficult support calls to respond to and was always able to complete them. In our annual customer satisfaction reviews, my name was mentioned a few times for my ability to get issues resolved.

From a patience perspective, I was always concerned about the lack of accountability there was with the equipment being used. The sales people regularly damaged equipment and it was to be replaced quickly. While I understand their need for proper business tools, in most cases the issues were from neglect and lack of understanding of how to use the equipment properly. We regularly had multiple projects and tight deadlines, so being interrupted by people demanding service quickly for reasons that could have been avoided was frustrating.

I didn't receive any complaints but when Beth mentioned my patience to me, I took it upon myself to write guidelines for the most common problems and sent them to the field sales team. I also sent them along with every new laptop and repaired one that went back out. It helped but what I think helped the most was when I mentioned to Beth that we should charge back for our time for negligence issues, it was approved and then we saw a huge change."

You've got some great support for questions you need to nail! We all have some great experiences and expertise to lend to companies. Being prepared by crafting well thought out, truthful answers helps you display insight, knowledge and confidence!

Good luck and take care,

Lotte