

Executive Secretary Interview Questions And Answers Guide.



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Executive Secretary Job Interview Preparation Guide.

Question # 1

Explain me about the most difficult job you've had as an assistant?

Answer:-

You'll want to be careful with this one. The recruiter is trying to find out what type of working environment you like and what irritates you. Give the wrong answer for that particular job, and you could find yourself passed over, even if you're qualified. The best way to answer this question is to gather as much information as you can about what your prospective employer is like. Pore over the job description for clues. If you know anyone at the company, get their input. And listen closely for hidden clues in what the recruiter says. If you can do that, then you can tailor your answer to be a perfect match. If not, say something that won't backfire on you, like "I worked at a company that was struggling financially and where everyone was looking for any opportunity to stab someone else in the back. It went far beyond normal office politics; it was vicious. I didn't like working in that environment."

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Question # 2

Please tell me how do you prioritize your work?

Answer:-

Executive assistants must handle a variety of tasks of varying importance and scope. This question is designed to find out how you handle the workload. A good answer shows how you used a combination of input from your boss and your own time management skills: "I made a plan each morning based on the tasks I had to do, how important each one was, and how much time I thought they would take. Of course, there were always things that came up unexpectedly. When that happened and I wasn't sure of the importance or urgency, I would touch base with my boss to find out whether I should drop what I was doing or get to it later."

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Question # 3

Explain me what do you think will be your daily job if we choose you?

Answer:-

Based on my experience in the field, no two days are alike so I am aware that my day to day tasks will vary. However, my main duty that remains constant is to be the executive's right hand man and make sure his business is organized and taken care of.

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Question # 4

Tell me of a time when your abilities as an executive secretary helped bring you out of a fix?

Answer:-

About 10 months ago, I found myself in a quandary when I had to schedule appointments for 5 executives at the same time! It was a first for me as I had only been assigned a max of 3 executives at one time before this. However, I put my best foot forward, brought out my multitasking abilities and managed to correctly schedule all appointments without giving anyone cause for complaint!

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Question # 5

What are your weaknesses as Executive Secretary?

Answer:-

In my previous role I had to work with a lot of strong-minded and opinionated consultants and found that I lacked the ability to be assertive with them and sometimes I felt they were able to get me to do work that I was uncomfortable with. After discussing this with my Manager I attended an assertiveness course and gain the training I needed to deal with them. I find it hard to say no. It is a work in progress, but I am getting there

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Question # 6

Please tell us what motivates you to do a good job?

Answer:-

What does motivate you will depend on your background and experience but try to make it relevant to what this position and company provides. Different motivators



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include challenge, increased responsibility, team involvement, interpersonal interaction, task complexity, learning opportunities and growth.

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Question # 7

How do you organize monthly management reports and keep the information tables turning efficiently?

Answer:-

If your current or past experience conforms to the position, you should briefly describe your background and the related responsibilities.

In fact, the interviewer wants you to tell about yourself - your greatest achievements as a manager assistant and how efficiently you performed the various tasks required for the position.

You should demonstrate that you are detail oriented and confident in providing higher quality benefits to your superiors.

You can describe the working relationship with your chief executive, including workload management, organizing reference material for bids/proposals, outlining new business opportunities, and tracking progress on all up-to-date projects.

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Question # 8

Tell me what are top 3 skills for PA position?

Answer:-

The most important skills are good organisation, excellent computer skills and a very high standard of writing, copying and audio typing. A PA's role is to ensure that the manager is well organised and to produce perfect written documents.

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Question # 9

Tell us what do you know about the position?

Answer:-

If you have done your research, read the company website and annual reports you will be able to give a concise answer about the company and then say what you know about the role. The job description should be accurate so use this information.

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Question # 10

Where Do You See Yourself in Five Years Time as Executive Secretary?

Answer:-

I would love to work as a secretary in five years time and do a really good job. I enjoy doing this job and would be more than happy to have this position for a long time. I really feel this position is what makes me happy in my daily life, so I am not looking for anything else.

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Question # 11

Tell me can You Work with MS Office?

Answer:-

We live in 21st century. Each and every secretary needs to work with computer, on a daily basis. You, as a good applicant for this job, should have a pretty good knowledge of MS Office, including MS Outlook. So, you should rate yourself 10 out of 10. It is simple, isn't it?

In fact, it is not as simple as it seems. First of all, your answer should be more complex. You should backup your knowledge with some experience, saying where and when you have worked with MS Word or Excel. You should also elaborate on it with your efforts to improve.

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Question # 12

Tell us how do you work with your boss?

Answer:-

The purpose of this question is to find out what kind of working relationship you have with your boss. Do you handle issues on your own, and inform your boss later? Or do you get instructions first, and then carry them out? Since different executives have different preferences, it's best to just be truthful when answering this question. If you're used to being self-directed, you'd be miserable working for an executive who didn't want you to move an inch without being told to do so (and vice versa).

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Question # 13

Explain me about how you use a computer each day?

Answer:-

Executive assistants usually need to have at least basic skills in a broad spectrum of computer programs. Talk about any experience you have using word processing programs, spreadsheet programs, social media, calendars, email, etc.

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Question # 14

Explain me how do you prioritize tasks as Executive Secretary?

Answer:-

I prioritize my tasks using to-do lists so that I can clearly lay out the things I need to accomplish. I prefer to sort my responsibilities by deadline because I believe that



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to be the most crucial component. Through my years of experience, I have become adept at multi-tasking without losing the quality of my work

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Question # 15

Tell me how do you deal with conflict at the workplace?

Answer:-

I try to avoid conflict as much as I can because I do not feel that it is very constructive. However, in the event that I do have to deal with it, I always have a pro-resolution approach to it. Conflict does not affect me because I begin thinking about effective solutions as soon as I am faced with one. My stance on conflict is to keep a straight face, resolve the problem and move on.

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Question # 16

Tell us what made you apply for this secretary job?

Answer:-

Use the information you gathered from your background research to prepare for this interview question, this way you will stand out from the other candidates for the secretarial vacancy. Find something specific about the company and position that attracts you.

Look at the company mission, vision and successes and at the responsibilities and activities involved in the job itself.

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Question # 17

Tell us what are you looking for?

Answer:-

I am looking for a position that will allow me to use my experience in the _____ field, including xxx and xxx. I am also ready to take on increased responsibilities in a management capacity when the opportunity arises. I am eager to work in a company that can provide the opportunity for professional growth.

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Question # 18

What are your salary requirements as Executive Secretary?

Answer:-

Answering the salary question at this stage of the interviewing process can be dangerous; however, you must answer if asked, and your answer must be an honest one. Most advice you hear or read will tell you to avoid answering this question whenever possible. But, by avoiding it, you may cause your interviewer to think that you are hiding something or not being honest about your earnings. Our suggestion is to answer in one of the following ways:

* "I'd like a salary that reflects the responsibilities of the position. My current salary range is low- to mid- \$30's."

* "At this point, salary is not an issue for me. I'm more concerned with the position and the opportunity to learn".

You may then feel free to inquire if your salary requirements are within the company's range. Do not feel obligated to justify or apologize for your current salary! Do not offer to take a cut in pay unless asked, and only you truly mean it. This could be appropriate if you are changing careers or looking for less responsibility.

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Question # 19

Why do you want to work here as Executive Secretary?

Answer:-

Research the company, read their values and mission statement and make your answer fit with these values. Explain how you are impressed with the company ethos and that you wish to be able to contribute to the future success of the company.

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Question # 20

Explain Me a Little about Your Past Working Experience?

Answer:-

Many job applicants underestimate questions about past working experience and education. However, they have no idea what the answer can reveal about them. Interviewers are actually assessing way more than just your working experience when using this question in an interview.

First of all, the task is to tell a little about your experience. But many applicant do not catch this important word in the question. They start to talk about each job they had, similarly to the act of reading their resume to the interviewer. It's a clear sign that they do not listen carefully, that they do not speak to the point. It is something a good secretary can not afford in her job. She should be an excellent listener, understand the orders of the boss and do exactly what she is told to do.

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Question # 21

Tell me would You Mind Accompanying Your Boss on Business Trips?

Answer:-

Well, this is a really tricky question. Before you start to think about an answer, you should ask yourself the following question: Will there be any business trips in this job?

When I was interviewing women for positions of secretaries, we used this question all the time, doesn't matter if accompanying on business trips was a part of a job, or not. If it wasn't and candidate got too excited about a question, saying how she would love to travel and enjoy such a part of a job, the decision was clear- we did not choose her.

Why did we do so? Well, she would not be happy about her job. She would expect something more than the position could offer... Some other applicants got offended with the question. They imagined everything that one can imagine, when I mentioned "accompanying boss on business trips". Needless to say, these candidates were also not hired, doesn't matter if there was need to do such trips or not. It is a common thing to accompany a boss on a business trip and it's work - nothing else,



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nothing more, nothing a job applicant should get offended with.

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Question # 22

Tell me how would you handle a person who called repeatedly demanding to speak to your boss, when you knew your boss wanted to avoid that person?

Answer:-

One of the main roles of an executive assistant is that of gatekeeper. Controlling access to the boss is an extremely powerful role, and your potential employer wants to know that you can handle it. A good answer would be something like this, "First, I'd try to understand the situation so I can know why that person is trying to reach you and why you're trying to avoid it. Then I'd see if there's any way I could help that person myself. If not, I'd just continue to politely take messages without making any promises on when you'd be available to respond."

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Question # 23

Explain me about the type of financial transactions you conducted on the company's behalf?

Answer:-

The purpose of this question is to find out the degree to which your boss trusted you with access to the company's funds. Be ready to describe every type of transaction you made, including whether you did them autonomously or had to get approval each time. Examples could include using credit cards to book travel, writing checks for expenses, or managing a petty cash fund.

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Question # 24

Explain me what have been your specific duties as an executive secretary in the past?

Answer:-

As an executive secretary, I have been actively involved in maintaining executives' calendars, by planning appointments, board meetings and conferences. Furthermore, I was required to attend meetings and take and record minutes, and prioritize all outgoing and incoming correspondence, including letters, emails and packages.

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Question # 25

Explain me what are the most satisfying and the most frustrating aspects of your present job?

Answer:-

The most satisfying aspect of my role is being able to help the executives make informed decisions that affect the rest of the Company. I enjoy working with and supporting successful people at the top-level of their career. The most frustrating aspect is the slow pace in the office and it can be difficult to get things done on occasions.

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Question # 26

Tell me what qualities do you consider the most important in a Secretarial or Administrative Professional job?

Answer:-

Secretaries today are increasingly taking on the roles of information and communication managers. Secretary interview questions will explore key qualities that include planning and organizing ability, oral and written communication skills, initiative, confidentiality, adaptability, integrity, reliability, accuracy and attention to detail.

Look at the key tasks of the position in the job posting and see which qualities would be essential for performing these tasks - for example if "scheduling" is a key activity then the secretary would need to be organized and able to plan and prioritize effectively.

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Question # 27

Tell me how Do You Imagine a Typical Day in Work if We Choose You for This Position?

Answer:-

This is a tricky question. It reflects what you expect from the job of a secretary, as well as what you are willing to do. You should actually think about this question at least for couple of minutes. Think about the needs of the company and try to write down a list of duties a secretary carries out on the daily basis.

Average secretaries often believe that the work is only about making coffee and answering phone calls. However, this should not be your case in the interview. There is much more you can do for your boss, of course on a professional level. You should try to mention as many working duties as possible, and not hesitate to stress that you like to be busy in work. It is an answer employers desire to hear from a perfect candidate. To such tasks belong:

- * administrative work
- * organizing the schedule of one or more employees
- * answering phone calls
- * greeting visitors
- * operational cleaning of the office
- * building good atmosphere on the workplace

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Question # 28

Tell me how would you handle a situation where other executives come to you to find out what the boss is thinking?

Answer:-

A lot of people try to get information out of executive assistants so they can be better able to impress the boss. A good answer could be something like this: "I would



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see my job as helping you do your job. So, first, I'd find out how you wanted me to handle it. If you wanted me to stay out of it, then I'd politely tell people they'd have to talk to you. If you wanted me to work behind the scenes, I could release information that would help steer things the way you wanted them to go."

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Question # 29

Explain me about the most stressful or awkward situation you had to handle as an executive assistant?

Answer:-

With this question, your interviewer is trying to find whether - and how well - you can maintain your composure under pressure. This is a good one to plan ahead of time, so you'll be able to identify a situation and portray your actions in the best light. Possibilities include: a major incident (like an industrial accident), an environmental mishap, criminal charges against a senior executive, a plummeting stock price, or an angry spouse showing up and causing a scene.

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Question # 30

Explain me as far as inter-departmental relationships are concerned, what has been your role as an executive secretary in the past?

Answer:-

I have been extensively involved in inter-departmental work and have efficiently created and maintained effective relationships between key members of each department. Ascertaining that communication channels are open and that all information flows in a professional manner has been my focus.

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Question # 31

Top 30 Executive Secretary Job Interview Questions:

Answer:-

- * 1. Do you consider yourself a patient person?
- * 2. Are you an introvert or an extrovert? Are you more outgoing or a private person?
- * 3. How do you describe your personality? Bubbly? Upbeat? Reserved?
- * 4. Do you speak any other languages?
- * 5. Are you able to multitask? Provide me with an example of what you might be juggling on an average day.
- * 6. What office equipment are you able to use?
- * 7. With your current employer, what has been your attendance record?
- * 8. How are you with understanding accents and working with individuals who are foreign nationals?
- * 9. How do you handle stressful situations?
- * 10. How many phone lines are you comfortable handling?
- * 11. Are you capable of handling multiple inquiries simultaneously; staff, front door, customers, phone?
- * 12. What software are you comfortable using?
- * 13. Are you comfortable placing cold calls to leads and existing clients?
- * 14. Do you have experience making national and international travel arrangements?
- * 15. Are you willing/capable of traveling should we require you to accompany a manager or executive on a business trip?
- * 16. Would you be able to comply with our company's dress code?
- * 17. How are you at handling as-needed projects? Do you mind unexpected tasks?
- * 18. Do you consider yourself a brisk worker, or one who is slower paced yet persistent and consistent?
- * 19. Outline the types of people or teams that you have supported over the years.
- * 20. Do you have experience managing an executive calendar and scheduling appointments? What software?
- * 21. Tell me about your customer service experience.
- * 22. Provide me with an example of a recent challenge you've faced with a visiting sales rep, vendor, customer. What happened and how did you handle?
- * 23. Tell me about your experiences working with your current manager. What do you find the most challenging?
- * 24. Provide me with a quick list of the last few projects you've worked on through the last 2-3 years.
- * 25. Do you like taking on ad-hoc projects? Or are you someone who prefers a set day-to-day schedule?
- * 26. If asked, what would your current employers say about you?
- * 27. Have you had any involvement with introducing new systems or technologies to help improve performance within the company?
- * 28. Any professional involvement with social media and online networking, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn?
- * 29. Do you help your current manager with maintaining his online presence?
- * 30. Lastly, do you like working on the front lines of a company? What do you think that is?

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Question # 32

Operational and Situational Executive Secretary Job Interview Questions:

Answer:-

- * How do you ensure confidentiality?
- * Imagine your executive has to travel to a city they've never been before. How would you go about making travel arrangements?
- * How do you ensure lower level support staff are performing their duties effectively?
- * If a high level executive asked you about your boss's plans regarding a specific matter, what would you say?

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Question # 33

Behavioral Executive Secretary Job Interview Questions:

Answer:-

- * Have you ever made a mistake while handling files? How did you correct it?
- * Recall a time when you had to complete multiple projects with tight deadlines. How did you prioritize your tasks?
- * Describe a complex project that you worked on with a group. What was the goal, and how did you work with others to accomplish that goal?
- * Tell me about a time you had to make a difficult decision in the absence of your boss



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Question # 34

Basic Executive Secretary Job Interview Questions:

Answer:-

- * Why do you want to become a secretary?
- * Why do you want to be an assistant here (at our school, in our office, etc.), and not somewhere else?
- * What do you want to accomplish on this position?
- * Where do you see yourself in five years time?
- * Can you tell me a little bit about your past working experience?
- * What makes from you a better personal assistant than other applicants?
- * How do you imagine a typical day in work if we choose you for this position?
- * Tell me about a situation when you needed to work under pressure. How did you handle that?
- * Can you work with MS Office? How would you rate your skills with typical Office software components?
- * What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- * Would you mind working overtime?
- * Would you mind accompanying your boss on business trips?
- * How would you cope with an angry customer or business partner?
- * Have you ever prepared a weekly schedule for someone?
- * Do you have experience with preparing letters, reports, bulletins, handbooks, etc.?
- * When are you able to start?
- * Do you have any questions?

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Question # 35

Role-specific Executive Secretary Job Interview Questions:

Answer:-

- * How does your experience make you ideal for this role?
- * How fast can you type?
- * What's your experience with "back-office" software?
- * Have you managed a budget before? What's your experience with expense reporting?

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Question # 36

Tell me five groups of people you have regular contact with as an executive assistant and how you relate to each?

Answer:-

This question is designed to find out how adaptable you are. The idea is to show that people are different and that you're most effective if you treat people in a way that's appropriate for them. Your answer could go something like this: "Well, first is your spouse and anybody else you want me to put through right away. Another important group is your direct reports. They'll be trying to impress you, so it's important for me to know who's who so that I can sort things out. Another group consists of executives at the same level as you. This one is very much about politics. There's a lot of jostling going on at that level to see who's next in line for succession. There is also a lot of political maneuvering to see who's on whose side. Finally, there are the customers. I need to know how you relate to customers so that I'll know how to handle those calls when you get them."

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Question # 37

Tell me what skills do you have that make you a great choice to work as an executive secretary for our organization?

Answer:-

I possess in-depth understanding of office management and basic accounting procedures, along with demonstrated expertise in scheduling appointments, responding to questions in person and over the telephone, and handling filing and record-keeping duties.

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Question # 38

Tell me what did you like best about your last secretary job and what did you enjoy least?

Answer:-

The interviewer is trying to assess your fit with the job so try and make your answers relevant to the requirements of the position. Appropriate general answers about what you enjoyed can include meeting new challenges, dealing with diverse people, learning new skills, meeting daily and weekly goals. Your dislikes should not relate to the characteristics of the job you are interviewing for.

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Question # 39

Tell us why do you want to be a secretary?

Answer:-

I really enjoy talking to people, making company and being responsible for organizing and scheduling things. I have been doing this for years and have a good skills in it, so I believe I can be a pretty good secretary. I can see myself doing a good job here and enjoying it. That is the main reason for my job preferences. From my point of view, secretary is a very important element in the office. She keeps the boss informed about important things, takes care of the schedule and represents a first line of contact for the guests. What more, a good secretary should do her best to keep the atmosphere in an office positive and motivating, what I always try to do. I would really love to carry out these duties and that's why I want to get this position. However, it is up to you to consider if I am a right candidate, or not.



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Question # 40

Tell us what is your reason for leaving your current/former employer?

Answer:-

Be as honest as you can here. If your company has relocated, say so. If you were downsized, right-sized, or outsourced, just say so. But say so in a positive light. Remember, NEVER, EVER say anything negative about your former employer or former co-workers!! If you were terminated, practice your response carefully. You might respond in the following manner:

* "Things at ABC Company did not work out well for me. It was not a good match, and I decided to move on/switch gears/etc.".

* "ABC Company was experiencing financial difficulties and, as a result, laid off 20% of its workforce. My position was eliminated."

* "ABC is a small company with limited opportunities for advancement. While I have thoroughly enjoyed my work there, I decided it was time to move on in order to advance."

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Question # 41

Tell me what don't you do very well?

Answer:-

This is a question that makes most people go weak in the knees during an interview. Interviewers commonly employ this question for a number of reasons:

To see how well you think on your feet

To detect any negativism about yourself or former employers.

This is also a way for the interviewer to obtain your honest appraisal of your abilities. There is a very simple and easy way to handle this question: candidly and honestly. While you should not throw caution to the wind when you give your answer, your interview preparation session will have given you ample opportunity to develop a terrific response. No one is perfect; we all have strengths and weaknesses.

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Question # 42

Tell me what is your greatest strength and how will it help your performance in this position?

Answer:-

When I looked into how to become an executive assistant, I thought my skill set was a great fit for the position. If I had to pick my greatest strength, it would be my interpersonal skills. I am a true people person. It will be beneficial in this position because great customer service is essential. Initially, I started off as a secretary in my last position, but was promoted to executive assistant because my strength translated into the ability to win clients over.

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Question # 43

Explain me what sort of confidential information you dealt with and how you handled it?

Answer:-

This question is intended to reveal information both about your discretion and your attention to detail. What you definitely don't want to do is go into too much detail about the type of confidential information you handled. Even if the person who's interviewing you asks, it's not their information to request; nor is it yours to give. Speak in very general terms. "Because of the confidential nature of the information, I really can't go into a lot of detail about what the information was. It involved everything from business plans to legal matters to employee records. I kept paper files under lock and key. I also had password management software on my computer so that I could have a different password for everything without having to write any of them down."

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Question # 44

Explain me if you had several tasks and had to finish them all by the same deadline, how would you approach this?

Answer:-

I would assess the amount of work involved for each task and begin with the tasks that require the most effort. I have a quick turnaround time with my work so quickly approaching deadlines do not intimidate me. If necessary, I am open to staying late in the office in order to complete an urgent task.

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Question # 45

Please explain what are your accomplishments?

Answer:-

Now is the time for you to brag a little! Tell the interviewer about situations in which you did well and events that relate to the position for which you are applying. In order to brag effectively, do the following during the interview: 1. State the problem 2. Explain how you handled it 3. Describe the results (i.e., cost savings, automation, increased sales, etc.)

We will cover behavioral interviewing in a future article, but the advice here follows the S.A.R. guideline that is taught to hiring managers and other interviewers so that they can understand how you behaved in certain situations.

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Question # 46

Tell me what additional job training have you done recently?

Answer:-

When seeking a new role it is a good idea to further your training. If you are not already doing so enrol on some courses to help improve your typing skills or IT skills. You could also use books or the Internet to learn new skills. Explain what you are doing and why you have done it.

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Question # 47

Explain me what are the most important qualities to have as an executive assistant?

Answer:-

A crucial quality to have as an executive assistant is the ability to communicate effectively. Since my role requires communicating on behalf of the company via telephone, email and face to face interaction, it's important that information is relayed correctly and in a professional and timely manner. In addition to communication skills, organizational skills are just as important. It's vital that I stay on top of things and maintain order not only for myself, but the executives I work with as well.

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Question # 48

Tell me why do you want to leave your current job as Executive Secretary?

Answer:-

For a long time I really enjoyed working for my current employer and I have felt that I learnt a lot from the role and also from my manager. However, the job is limited and doesn't provide me with much room to grow (you can expand this for whatever reason fits your circumstances). I feel that this position will give me the opportunity to expand my skill set and also move forward in my career.

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Question # 49

Tell us as a secretary, highlight your strengths and your weaknesses?

Answer:-

Focus on three or four strengths that refer directly to the secretarial job requirements. Potential examples include organizing and planning, adaptability, information management, attention to detail, problem-solving, reliability, initiative, discretion, multi-tasking, prioritizing, good judgment and communication and interpersonal skills.

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Question # 50

Tell me what do you know about our company and products?

Answer:-

Again, do your research and know what the company does. Also, you should go into the interview with a clear idea of the role of the manager you will be PA for.

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Question # 51

Tell me how do you make sure that you stay organized?

Answer:-

As an executive secretary, organization is the basis of my work. I make sure that I make lists and schedules for myself and I do not let myself waver from them. Using technology to self-remind about appointments and tasks also helps.

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Question # 52

Tell me what are your career goals as Executive Secretary?

Answer:-

For a PA, this is a hard one to answer. Really the best answer you can give is to say that your goal, for now, is to be able to provide the best assistance possible in your next role and that you do not currently have any career aspirations outside of PA because you really enjoy this work.

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Question # 53

What are your strengths as Executive Secretary?

Answer:-

I'm very organised, I don't get stressed out easily and can deal with most situations. I'm also very intuitive and can juggle lots of different tasks

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Question # 54

Explain me what experience do you have for PA role?

Answer:-

Here you should just speak honestly about your experience. If you do not have much direct experience speak about any related work you have done, such as with voluntary groups or helping to organise events.

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