

SUMMARY

Everyone is asked this question hundreds of times throughout their career, whether they are searching for a job or not. With all that practice, you’d expect clear, concise, and compelling answers. Few are. Most people answer the question in a bland unmemorable way which causes the conversation to veer to another topic or end quickly.

OBJECTIVE

1. Answer the question clearly, directly, concisely, enthusiastically, and even intriguingly.
2. Get the other person to talk. Learn what they do so your next response can be tailored to them.
3. Build on the conversation so that your meaningful follow up the next day will be warmly received.
4. Show you have value and uniqueness.

CONTENT OF YOUR ANSWER

1. Say enough information to answer their question but not too much so they won’t ask for more.
2. Don’t give an “elevator”/sales pitch. Be natural. Start a dialog so you can connect with them.
3. Make it intriguing enough so the listener says, “Tell me more.” but not overly hyped.
4. A little humor in the right situation can help get their attention, but keep it positive and non critical.
5. Add in a little personal information. This could connect you a little emotionally to the person.

10 SECONDS, THEN 20 SECONDS

1. Start with a 10 second or less answer. This is the critical attention getter.
2. If you really get someone’s attention, their next question might be, “How can I help you?”
3. Answer that question in 20 seconds. Read our article “How Can I Help You?” to improve your response.

10 SECOND EXAMPLES

1. Try to combine your expertise, target customer, the problem you solve, and the resulting benefit.
2. Examples include:
 - A. "I specialize in working with(whom/what?).... helping them(achieve what?)...."
 - B. "I’m a (functional specialty).....working in the (industry).... fixing... (problem)....."
 - C. "I help with” “Been doing it for 15 years.”
 - D. "I solve problem for” “Spent most of my career doing this.”