

WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE ANSWER IN AN INTERVIEW



Summary: *Don't get caught in an interview without the skills to work through and handle a question you don't know the answer to off the top of your head.*

Everyone's worst nightmare is sitting in an interview and having the interviewer ask you a question that you have no idea how to answer. While it doesn't look great to not know an answer, there may be circumstances where they don't expect you to know the answer and are **testing to see how you would handle the situation**. Here are eight tips to keep in mind during an interview.

1. Stay calm. There are probably all kinds of thoughts racing through your head. Your blood pressure is rising and your heart is racing in response to this freak out moment. These physiological responses will make it difficult to think clearly, and you may end up blurting out a bad answer, so just take a few deep breaths and relax.
2. Don't immediately say "I don't know". Think it over for a few seconds. You may find that the answer is quite simple to figure out.
3. Never make something up. The interviewer will see right through your answer and know that you lied.
4. Ask questions to clarify the question. Maybe you don't understand the question they asked you. It is alright to ask for a clarification. You might be able to dig deep for more details to help you answer the question.
5. Say what you do know. Tell the interviewer what you do know about the question, even if it doesn't completely answer the question. Saying out loud what you know may help you work on the solution.
6. Explain how you would find the answer. Interviewers are also looking for your **problem solving skills** and will be able to learn a lot about you when you tell them how you would go about answering the question. Telling them what you know and don't demonstrates your integrity and willingness to learn.
7. **Follow-up after the interview.** Explain to the interviewer that while you don't have the answer now, you will follow-up after the interview when you do have it.
8. Send an email. Highlight the good parts of the interview and smoothly allude to the question that you didn't know. Mention that you have been thinking about it and have come up with a few more solutions to solve the problem.

See "**Tips for Mastering the Job Interview**" for more information to help you excel in job interviews.

Photo: communitytable.com