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How to answer why do you want to work for us

Photo by Andrew Neel on UnsplashYou might think that sending work emails is the worst. It's not. It's the second-worst. The worst is waiting for people to reply to your work emails. And some people just never reply, no matter how much you follow up. IT professional Antoinette Maria wrote about one of these problem co-workers, "Alex," a contact from another team who's holding up a whole project.Alex won't answer my emails asking about getting the integration set up. I've sent a follow up email every day for the past 3 days and on the last email I cc'd our project manager and my leader. I'm beyond frustrated at this point, because this isn't this first time Alex has done this.Commenters suggested a variety of tactics, some carrot, some stick, which might help you deal with the Alexes in your workplace.Boil down your requestOne of the hardest things about answering an email is processing the information and figuring out how you're supposed to respond. Web developer Chris Raser suggests stripping out any need for that analysis:Be super-concrete in your email about what you need from Alex: "Can you please set up new login credentials for the Frob service, and whitelist IP 123.23.45.223? Thanks in advance!" The less analysis Alex needs to do, the more likely they are to take action. I generally send a bullet-point list of what I need.Bring in the bossAlex did finally answer Antoinette, after she CC'd her leader and project manager. Bringing your boss into the conversation can be a risky move, because however you present it, everyone will know you're snitching. So do it as soon as possible. As Will Smith once said, the time to go to a couple's counselor is when you're still happy. Make a habit of CC'ing bosses from the start, or at least on any thread with a potential for tension. Then, when they do need to intervene, it feels more natural, and not as a failure of the usual process.Of course, now your boss will be getting a bunch of extra emails, but that's their job.Email. Can't live with it. Can't get your job done without it. Am I right? Last year we sent over...Read moreSwitch modes of communicationCan you Slack? Can you text? Can you call? Is your Alex more likely to respond to these methods? Try one. But only one.Obviously, leaving unanswered messages on email and another platform, no matter how justified, makes you seem a bit crazed. So be careful. Apologize for the intrusion, or give an excuse for switching modes. And that's important, you're "switching," not "piling on until Alex cries."So: "Hi! Switching to Slack so we can break this task down better." Or: "Switching to text just so we can whip this thing together by the deadline." Or: "Hey Alex! I called cause we can probably fix this without a million emails." Don't leave a voicemail though. Voicemail is just email but worse.Developer Patrick Minton suggests using a more formalized process system, like your team's Trello, JIRA, editorial calendar, or any other shared resource. That helps frame the problem as a task to complete, not as a "conflict" between you and your recipient. It also puts the problem in front of your team and your boss. Get face to faceOn the other hand, email is already a stand-offish mode of communication, and escalating to superiors can ratchet up the hostility. You might need to hit the reset button. Chris suggests:You need to figure out what emotional reason they have for ignoring you, and get them past it. Go in person, and bearing gifts, and make Alex really feel that they're appreciated, and that you're grateful for their help. This helps defuse a multitude of psychological/emotional blockages.Be NiceIf you can't get face to face, at least try easing tensions in your email: "Hi Alex! Sorry about all these requests, this is just a really important project." Swallow your pride and indignation, and be friendly. You need to make replying feel less stressful than not replying.By being friendly, you're also giving your Alex a reset button, a debt forgiveness. If you're just cornering them, they'll find it even harder to reverse course, like a rat, or a teen, or Macbeth.Whatever approach you take, remember that you'll probably have to deal with this person again. The happier everyone comes away from this, the easier it will be next time. Until the day you quit, or Alex gets fired. Whether you're developing a disaster readiness plan for a large company or simply trying to field work-related messages while you're on vacation or a business trip, there's probably an answering-service provider with the services to meet your needs. You'll find that while some companies provide a wide variety of phone answering services, including Internet answering services, others specialize in a specific type of answer service.A list of answering services and call centers shows the diversity of services these companies provide:Americall -- Provides inbound and outbound call center service, order taking, customer service, class and seminar registration, Remote Receptionist answering services (24/7 support for medical professionals, heating and cooling contractors, government agencies and others) and Web-enabled customer support.AnswerConnect.com -- Offers 24/7 national answering service, local answering services, business answering (live message taking, online order taking service dispatching, paging and live call transfers) call center and voice mail services that deliver messages directly to the customer's e-mail box for indefinite storage.SuccessfulOffice.com -- Emphasizes virtual office services for home offices, including a dedicated toll-free number; customized call answering; electronic faxing; instant notification of messages by e-mail, pager or fax; dedicated staff members; and sales support, appointment setting and order taking.AnswerLive.com -- Provides live answering service, interactive voice mail, flexible message delivery (via phone, e-mail, Web site, fax, pager or BlackBerry), inbound telesales and outbound calling services using bilingual Spanish-English speaking staff and virtually disaster-proof technology.VoiceNation -- Offers a toll-free or local business number answered by a live professional who can take messages, enter data into a Web form or forward calls. Services can be combined with voice mail, e-mail and electronic fax.1-800-We-Answer -- Provides live answering plus call center services from order taking to customer service. Also offers a health telephone call center, emergency recovery and contingency, and virtual office services.Specialty Answering Service -- This is a nationwide network of industry-specific call centers with operators trained to handle each industry's needs. Among the industries are medical, limousines, funeral homes, locksmiths and more.MyAnswering -- Provides live phone answering with Web services that include making messages available on a Web site in real time. Among other services are appointment setting, virtual office assistant, secretarial and voice-mail services, and medical answering.[source: Global-CallCenter]These companies only reflect a small portion of the answering service providers available. The Association of TeleServices International, an international trade organization for teleservices providers, provides an extensive listing through its Connections magazine.ATSI recommends that you carefully check out an answering service provider before you sign a contract. You can click "Find a Member" on ATSI's Web site to see a list of member companies. Be sure to also check with the Better Business Bureau for unresolved complaints against the company. Choose a company with a track record in the business and relatively low operator turnover. And ask for names of satisfied customers that you can contact to learn about their experience.Answering services can be a tremendous help, but if you're not careful, you may have problems with them. Find out how you can prevent that on the next page. Explaining in an interview what you recently learned on the job is easy when you consider that you're hopefully learning something new each and every day. Simply respond to the question with specific examples that show you recognize and welcome learning opportunities. Describe a time you had to learn new technology, for example. An applicant who looks great on paper won't necessarily perform well on the job, which is where behavioral interview questions come in. Hiring managers ask the "What's something interesting you learned recently?" interview question to discern what you actually do at work, not what you claim to do. Simply put, actions are more revealing than words. Anyone can say they're a hard worker or a team player. Behavioral interview questions assume that a job applicant's past performance is a strong indicator of how that person will act down the road. Many jobs require continuing education and on-the-job training to stay abreast of emerging trends and cutting-edge technology. That is why employers want to know if you're the type of person who enjoys learning and devotes time to professional development. Behavioral interview questions can rattle you if you're not prepared. Job applicants who hesitate and can't come up with examples of what they've learned recently make a poor impression. Equally important, your examples must be specific, not some fluff about how you learned to contribute to a team. Have a cache of true stories you can share that demonstrate your ability and desire to learn quickly and contribute to the success of the company. Avoid embellishing or taking credit for something you did not do. The hiring manager may ask your references to verify information you provided during the application and interview process. Example: When I first started working in customer service, I lost my temper and hung up on a caller. Luckily, I wasn't fired and worked alongside a supervisor to learn how to handle my emotions and treat customers respectfully. Don't be surprised if an employer comes directly asks you to describe a situation where you had to learn a new technology. Given the importance of technology in virtually every industry and sector, hiring managers like to gauge a candidate's level of comfort and proficiency with technology. Don't want to be asked if you're comfortable with technology. Share a time you took it upon yourself to learn and use new technology or software systems. Expound on your answer and mention how your new skills could be useful in the job you're seeking. OK answer: I took a couple of web design courses at a community college last year. Better answer: I enrolled in web design courses and recently made some needed changes to my company's website. Best answer: I took web design courses, revamped my company's website and increased traffic by 50 percent this quarter. I noticed your website has some broken links and outdated information. If hired, I would enjoy bringing the website up-to-date and maintaining a strong web presence. Interview questions become increasingly tougher as you climb the career ladder, according to the Robert Half Blog. What's more, candidates are expected to answer queries with specific examples that demonstrate initiative and leadership. When asked what you learned in the past year of work, be ready to discuss a time that you rose to the occasion and took the lead even though you didn't have much experience in that area. Example: Just four months after I was hired in the shipping department, our team leader left for a higher paying job. Even though I was new to the company, I was eager to learn, so I applied for the position and was hired. I soon learned how to organize and motivate teams, set goals, give constructive feedback and consistently meet deadlines. Hiring managers seek problem solvers who recognize opportunity where others see obstacles. When asked what new things you learned in the past year, share a time that you learned how to solve a problem that had left everyone else flummoxed. Demonstrate your creativity and ingenuity. Example: This past year I worked at a call center for a political campaign. Most people were busy and hung up right away. I learned that if you ask people to share their opinion on a hot topic, they are more likely to engage in conversation and listen to you explain your candidate's position on that issue. Forbes suggests that personality stereotypes can hold professionals back from recognizing their own potential. For example, introverts can be extraordinary teachers, facilitators and public speakers even if they're not the life of a party. In an interview setting, you may wish to share a time you ventured outside your comfort zone and learned you had hidden potential in areas you had never before considered. Example: I took a job last year that required speaking to community groups about healthcare. Being an introvert, I was very nervous at first. To my surprise, I learned that I love giving presentations when I am well-prepared and passionate about my topic. Knowledge of industry concepts, tools and terminology is also measured through the use of behavioral interview questions. When asked "Tell me about a time you had to learn something quickly," leverage the question to demonstrate your familiarity with the business, especially if you are an entry-level professional. For example, a recent college graduate might want to talk about using key performance indicators (KPIs), as explained on the KPI.org website. Example: I never really understood the difference between business metrics and KPIs until I started my internship and worked on a marketing campaign. I quickly learned that the two terms are not interchangeable when I helped track whether we were on target for reaching our goals. You may be asked some iteration of "Tell me about a time you had to adapt to a difficult situation." The goal here is to show that you are receptive to change and ready to learn new ways of doing things that may be more efficient and productive. Think back to a time that your organization went through some difficult changes, such as a merger, layoffs, new leadership or implementation of new software. Explain how you responded and adapted. Example: My boss's job was eliminated last year when management consolidated three departments. Losing a great boss was difficult, but I understood the reason for the change. I soon adapted and recognized the many benefits of reorganizing. Your answers to behavioral questions are not the only thing being judged during an interview. When a hiring manager says, "Tell me about something new you learned at work," you are being evaluated on your poise, maturity and nonverbal communication, too. Candidates who blurt out a vague answer, roll their eyes or grimace don't make the best impression. Practice interviewing with a friend who can offer feedback on your verbal and nonverbal communication. Be self-aware of nervous quirks and work on maintaining good eye contact in daily conversations. The Career Center at UC Berkeley stresses the importance of sitting up straight, smiling and relaxing your shoulders whether you're interviewing virtually or in person.

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