

*Getting hired in today's economy isn't easy, and men and women over 50 often have an extremely rough time. Some employers assume these candidates are overqualified or out of touch. So Next Avenue asked [Martin Yate](#), author of the new book, [Knock 'Em Dead: The Ultimate Job Search Guide 2012](#), to tell us which questions are toughest for over-50 job seekers to answer in an interview — even more important, the best ways to answer them.*

**Aren't you over qualified for this job?**

**How to answer:** If you are told you have too much experience, respond with the positives: How your skills and experience will help you deliver for the employer immediately, and why the position fits you.

You might say something like this: "I really enjoy working and I have excellent skills for this job. At crunch times and emergencies, my experience makes me a steady influence. I'm not looking for a promotion, so I'm not after anyone's job and I'll be a reliable and trustworthy person to have at your back. I'm qualified, I can bring real benefits to the team, I want the job, and you can count on me."

**Are you up to date with the latest technology and use of social networks?**

**How to answer:** Your answer can address this issue and still show that you are capable of staying on top of things in a rapidly changing workplace. First talk about these constantly evolving challenges, then follow with examples that show how you are keeping up with technologies that affect your productivity, "I'm currently reading about..." "I just attended a weekend workshop..."

Then, show how comfortable you are using social networks for work, especially [LinkedIn](#). You might say: "I have an up-to-date profile on LinkedIn.com (be sure you do). I belong to professional networking groups through LinkedIn and monitor posts there weekly. I consider social networking to be a valuable tool in my ongoing professional development, and the information shared in those forums keeps me up to date with happenings and innovations within the industry."

**Why have you been out of work for so long?**

**How to answer:** Use facts. Be honest. Say something like this: "If you look at my work history you'll see it has been steady for many years. Then I lost my job in this last recession. I'd never had a problem finding a job before, but when I've applied for jobs lately, my resumé often got stuck in a database and was never even seen by recruiters or prospective employers."

Then move the conversation forward to what's most important to the interviewer: What you can do for him or her and how quickly you'd be productive. You might finish with a question of your own, asking about the most difficult and/or urgent responsibilities of the job. The interviewer's answer should give you ammunition to talk about how well suited you'd be for the position.

**What is your greatest strength?**

**How to answer:** If you know about specific skill requirements for the job, choose one of them in your reply. If not, talk about one of your key technical skills that speaks to your ability to do the job.

Talk too about your skills that would be valued for any job (critical thinking, multitasking, creativity, teamwork, and leadership) and your professional values (energy, commitment, reliability, integrity, productivity). Whenever possible, give real-world examples to illustrate your points, like recent accomplishments, challenges and goals that show your skills in action.

Interviewers try to determine how well you possess these types of skills and values. Be sure you can easily communicate how well they've contributed to the success of your career. That way, they'll become an integral part of a desirable professional brand that happens to be you.