

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Cheat Sheet



NOTE : In this cheat sheet, we are going to provide you with example answers to this question from three different situations. Whether it is an entry level, middle management or executive position, the response to the question will change depending on what the hiring manager (and company's) expectations are for the role.

Entry Level Position

For an entry level position, it is paramount that you emphasize that your plan is to master all aspects of the job you have been hired for. While doing this, it is important to also mention growth both in your role and within in the company, with the intent of becoming a “lifer” at the company... a member of the family if you will.

A *For me, my next five years will be spent learning the ins and outs of this position, the company, and the core business we are involved in. While I spend time mastering every detail of the role we are discussing today, i also want to assimilate myself within the culture of this company with hopes to grow along with my fellow team members and other employees, while also working with my supervisor to choose a path within the company that will allow me to add the most value using my skillset. Once I have shown a consistent ability to execute the job in question, my hope is that I take the next step toward becoming a long term member of this company.*

Middle Management Position

As you are likely going to be a leader who is responsible for employees underneath you, your answer should include some of what is mentioned above but should focus on developing and nurturing your team members as well. If your goal is to be a member of the executive at some point, you must show an understanding of leadership development and begin demonstrating it right off the bat.

A *If you were to ask me where I see myself in 5 years, I would say that my goal is to have spent my time trying to nurture and empower my team members while executing our goals at the highest possible level. It will be very important to me to lead a results-driven team of overachievers that are keen to move up through the company and have long and fulfilling careers with this company. On a personal note, I hope that through demonstrating my ability to lead my team and through achieving our goals, I will have shown myself to have the potential to be considered for an executive position, but that will be determined by the work I put in over the next five years.*

Executive Management Position

As an executive, you may have already reached the pinnacle of your profession in terms of title recognition. Perhaps you are already a President, a CEO or a Board Member. Your value to this company is not likely your ambition (in terms of your titles, etc.) but in your contribution to the bottom line. Taking this into consideration, your emphasis should be more on where you see the company going under your careful watch. "How will the company look in five years?" might be the question they are really asking you. Specific, quantifiable numbers are a good way to impress the hiring manager in this case, but make sure you are confident that the numbers you are offering are attainable. It's also important to show that you want to affect and be a part of the culture of the company. And finally, try to add a "big picture" item that will solve a problem or concern that the company currently has (which you must try and discover through your research.

A *Five years from now, I'm hoping I will look back on my first five years and think three specific things. Firstly, that our sales department has increased our annual revenue by 3-5% each year based on the plan I am going to put in place beginning on day one, which I'm happy to discuss in detail with you today. Secondly, that I have both embraced and influenced the culture of this company, ensuring that each employee is empowered, motivated and committed to our collective goals. I want to promote people within the company to provide the necessary "carrot" for the people who are deserving of recognition, because my belief is that a motivated workforce is a happy and effective workforce. And finally, by year five I plan to be accepting the award for one of America's 100 Greenest Companies on behalf of our company, as under my tenure we will finally achieve 100% clean energy efficiency and be a model for the transportation industry.*