

Street Vendor interview questions

careertips.com.au: common questions and what they're really testing

What to expect

Interviews for Street Vendor roles tend to be practical and informal, focusing on your ability to handle customers, manage stock, and follow regulations.

- **Process:** Questions about how you set up a stall, manage payments, and pack down at the end of the day.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for examples of past customer service or conflict resolution.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations such as running out of stock or dealing with bad weather.
- **Technical:** Questions about food safety, hygiene practices, and local council permit requirements.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about how you approach customer service and build repeat business.

Often a single interview with the stall owner or market manager. It may start with a casual chat about your experience, then move to scenario-based questions to assess your judgement. You might also be asked to demonstrate a task like setting up a stall or handling a transaction.

1. Can you walk me through how you set up and pack down a stall or cart at the start and end of a trading day?

Why they ask

To assess organisational skills and knowledge of equipment.

How to structure your answer

Process walk-through. Start with pre-setup checks, then steps in order, then pack down.

Example answer

"I start by checking the location and any council requirements, like making sure I'm within my permitted area. I unload the cart and set up the canopy, table, and signage. I then arrange products for easy access and set up the payment system, whether that's a card reader or cash register. Throughout the day I keep the stall tidy and restock as needed. At pack down, I clean all equipment, secure cash, and load everything back into the vehicle, leaving the site clean."

2. Tell me about a time you had to handle a difficult customer. How did you resolve the situation?

Why they ask

To gauge customer service and conflict resolution.

How to structure your answer

STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result).

Example answer

"At a market stall, a customer complained that their food was cold. I apologised sincerely, offered to replace the item immediately, and gave them a free drink while they waited. I also checked the warming equipment to ensure it was working properly. The customer left satisfied and returned the following week."

3. What would you do if you noticed that a popular item was running low and you still had a few hours of trading left?

Why they ask

Tests inventory management and problem-solving.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: assess, decide, act.

Example answer

"I would first check if I had any backstock nearby. If not, I would consider whether I could quickly restock from a nearby supplier or if I should adjust my display to promote alternative items. I would also let customers know it's selling fast, which can create urgency. If I couldn't restock, I would focus on upselling similar products to avoid losing sales."

4. How do you ensure you comply with food safety regulations and local council permits?

Why they ask

Technical knowledge and compliance.

How to structure your answer

Step-by-step explanation of practices.

Example answer

"I always keep my food handling certificate current and display it. I check that my stall has the required council permit and that I'm trading within allowed hours. I follow strict hygiene practices: washing hands regularly, using gloves, keeping food at safe temperatures, and cleaning surfaces. I also keep a record of temperature checks and waste disposal. Before each event, I review the local council's requirements to make sure nothing has changed."

5. Describe how you handle cash and card payments during a busy period.

Why they ask

Assesses accuracy and efficiency.

How to structure your answer

Process description with emphasis on accuracy.

Example answer

"During busy times, I stay calm and focus on each transaction. I use a Square POS system that clearly shows the amount, and I repeat the total back to the customer. For cash, I count change out loud. I keep the cash drawer organised and never leave it open. At the end of the day, I reconcile the till with the sales records. If there's a discrepancy, I review transactions to find the error."

6. Why do you want to work as a street vendor, and what do you think makes a successful one?

Why they ask

Motivation and fit.

How to structure your answer

Personal motivation and key qualities.

Example answer

"I enjoy the energy of working outdoors and interacting with different people every day. I think a successful street vendor needs to be reliable, friendly, and organised. You have to be able to handle rushes, keep the stall clean, and manage stock well. I also believe in treating every customer with respect, because that's what brings them back."