



## ESSENTIALS FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

Interviewing is often a process of elimination, not a process of selection. Employers want to hire people that they like, who like them, and who show an interest not just in the role but the company and its mission. Take the time to prepare appropriately—**DON'T JUST WING IT!**

### PREPARE ANSWERS TO EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER ABOUT YOURSELF:

The key to situational interviews is to provide a story as an example with a clear beginning, middle, and an end. Emphasize what you accomplished as a result- what you learned, saved, or achieved.

- *Tell me about yourself.*
- *What are you looking for in your next position?*
- *Why does this job interest you?*
- *Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years?*
- *What led you to leave your current job?*
- *What is your anticipated salary?*
- *Why should we select you for this position?*
- *What do you see as your strengths and how would you utilize them in this position?*
- *What would you consider a weakness or area that would offer you growth?*
- *What changes would you have made, if you could, in any previous job?*
- *What did you like best and least in your most recent job?*
- *Tell me about an assignment or goal from your last job which you failed and why.*
- *What did you like best and least in any supervisor?*
- *Tell me about an occasion in your career where you exceeded your employer's expectations.*
- *Describe how you organize and prioritize.*
- *What is your approach to customer satisfaction?*
- *Tell me about a situation where you had to make an important decision with limited facts.*
- *What was the toughest work-related decision you have ever made and how did you arrive at it?*
- *When have you had to support an idea or project that you were not in favor of?*
- *How have you previously improved an existing process or work area?*
- *Describe the most challenging ethical decision you have made in the workplace.*
- *Describe when you anticipated potential problems in a previous job and developed preventative measures.*
- *What are some of your significant accomplishments in your career?*
- *How would your previous supervisors/peers describe you?*
- *What do you have to offer us that someone else doesn't?*
- *What if you get a counter offer?*
- *Do you think you are overqualified for this job?*  
*Where did you tell your employer you are today?*

### MAKE YOURSELF RELEVANT DURING THE INTERVIEW

#### REAL

*Be yourself, but reveal only what's applicable to the role.*

#### EXPERIENCE

*Go through primary and secondary responsibilities of the job.*

#### LISTEN

*Let the interviewer lead the conversation and answer carefully what is asked.*

#### ENTHUSIASM

*You may not have the exact experience, but you are willing and want to learn.*

#### VERSED

*Research the company and the team that you will interview with to be prepared.*

#### APPROPRIATE

*Prepare examples of how your traits and previous experience are relatable to the position.*

#### NEGOTIABLE

*Emphasize your ability to start early, drive farther, be flexible, etc.*

#### THANKFUL

*Ask for the interviewer's business card and always send a thank you note within 24 hrs.*



**DRESS CODE**— Always dress better than suggested.  
**DIRECTIONS**— Don't forget to account for traffic, ask about parking beforehand, and know who to contact if you're running late.  
**BE PREPARED**— Take two copies of your resume with you, turn off your phone, and take notes.

## ASK GREAT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMPANY

It is your responsibility to research the company, their mission, and their team prior to your interview. Learn about them by visiting their website, LinkedIn, etc.

*How many people are in the group as a total?  
How does this office/department interact with the others?  
What is the company's long-range forecast/plan?  
How has the company changed in the past few years or how will it change?  
How does this job relate to the overall structure and goals of the corporation/group/department?*

## ASK GREAT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE JOB

Let the company lead the interview, but be prepared with questions that are specific to the role you're interviewing for and the person you're meeting with.

*What special projects are being worked on that I would be involved with?  
Who would I be reporting to? What is his/her background? What sort of management style do they practice?  
How would I spend a typical day?  
How can I improve upon the performance of the last person?  
What type of budgetary/operational responsibility will this person have?  
What challenges has this role faced in the past that you'd like to avoid in the future?  
Where do I have the opportunity to make the most significant contribution?  
What are the one or two biggest challenges I will face in the first 90 days?  
How can I make an immediate impact on the bottom line of the department/company?*

## IF YOU WANT THE JOB, TELL THEM SO!

Reiterate your interest in the role by asking genuine questions about where you stand. Companies want to hire those who are excited about the role and want to contribute to the overall success of the company.

*How can I show you I am the best person for the job?  
How can I make an immediate impact on the bottom line of the department/company, etc?  
How do I compare to other candidates you have seen so far?  
Where do I stand from your perspective?  
What, if anything, about my background or experience, would prevent me from moving forward in the process?*



*For your in-person interview, strive to be 10 minutes early. Arriving too early can cause scheduling problems for the interviewer. Receptionists are instructed to inform people of their guests' arrival no matter what time it is, even if it is your intention to sit quietly in the lobby. Wait in the car or in a coffee shop around the corner until 10 minutes before your scheduled appointment.*

**Interviewing is a matching process.** Try to respond to questions with answers that relate specifically to the skills necessary for the job you are interviewing for and the person you are interviewing with. Tell them the things they're interested in hearing about.

**Ask and answer appropriately.** By asking a lot of questions, you'll know what they're looking for and you'll be able to pick and choose things about your background that apply. If you can answer their questions appropriately, you will keep their interest and build rapport easily. Ask big-picture questions about the company, based on your research, to HR and specifics about the role requirements to the direct supervisor.

**Always send a thank you note.** Even if you're no longer interested or don't think that the interview went well. A quick e-mail reiterating your interest in the role and thanking them for their time is also a great way to include anything you may have forgotten to say or would like to elaborate on. Make sure your note is specific to the topics discussed during the interview and that it's spell-checked and grammar-checked.

## DO NOT ASK ABOUT: SALARY, BENEFITS, OR UPWARD MOBILITY

You want to focus your limited, valuable interviewing time on why you are good for the job—not what's in it for you.

**SALARY:** Salary is not always as negotiable as some may think. When presented by a search firm, your recruiter will work with you on this.

**BENEFITS & FLEXIBILITY:** Everyone has different needs. HR should provide the answers to your questions when an offer is extended.

**UPWARD MOBILITY:** If you are a good and loyal employee, you will move up! Promotions are earned on the job, not negotiated during an interview.



## REFERENCES

Don't provide references unless asked, and only provide references that have given you permission to use them. If an application asks for the contact information of a previous supervisor, it is likely that they will be contacted.

When you work with a recruiter, the recruiter will complete the reference checks for the client. If the client asks for references, let them know that you have provided a list to your recruiter and that they will provide completed references, not just a list.

