

SESSION VI

JOB INTERVIEW

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A *job interview* is an interview consisting of a conversation between a job applicant and a representative of an employer which is conducted to assess whether the applicant should be hired.

During the job interview, the employer has the opportunity to appraise applicant's qualifications, appearance and general fitness for the job opening. The job interview is probably the most important step you will take in your job search journey - it's your best chance to show the company and hiring manager that you're the best person for their job.

How To Prepare The Job Interview ?

✓ Read and Review The Job Description



The first step in the preparation process should be to go back and review the job description. Most job descriptions follow a similar pattern and are usually categorised by the following points:

- a. Job title/Department
- b. Duties and tasks
- c. Skills required

The job title and department will give you an understanding of the major purpose of the position and where the role fits into the organisation, allowing you to discover who your potential line manager could be.

Read and review the job description very thoroughly and be sure to align your competencies with the skills required for the job. You will consequently ready yourself for questions around your previous experiences, performing similar duties in other organisations.

✓ **Research The Company**

Organisations look to hire people with similar values to those of the company culture. Researching the company before an interview will give you an insight into the organisation's future goals and plans and being able to discuss these points will make you seem like a long-term investment to your future employer. The following aspect of the company should be researched :

1. Company Financials
2. Culture
3. Executive Team
4. Competitors

✓ **What to Wear to a Job Interview**

Wearing the right clothes to the interview won't get you the job, but wearing the wrong clothes will sink any chances of impressing the interviewer. There is one rule that stands above all: **Dress professionally**. Wear business attire appropriate for the role, while still making sure you feel comfortable.

WHAT TO WEAR DURING JOB INTERVIEW

JOBSFOREVERYJUAN.COM

MALE

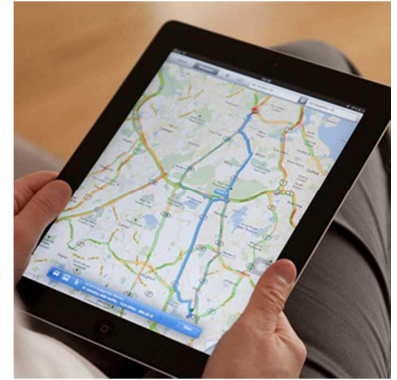


FEMALE



✓ **Plan your journey to the job interview**

- Go to bed early the night before and wake up early to give yourself plenty of time.
- Make sure you arrive on time, or better yet, at least 15 minutes early.
- If you are planning on driving to the interview, make sure you fill your car with fuel the night before.
- Knowing the address and if you can, have a trial run a couple of days before.
- Check the traffic reports and have a backup route planned just in case.
- If you are travelling by train or bus, make sure you check the weather report the night before and keep an eye on the public transport websites for any delays.



Tips & Tricks !

- ✓ Be sure to smile while giving your answers; even if the interviewer cannot see you, the tone in your voice will come across as energetic and positive.
- ✓ After the phone interview it's a good idea to send the interviewer a thank you note. This would be a good opportunity to also reiterate your key points and show your interest in the role.

How To Prepare For a Phone Interview



Employers usually receive a large number of applications. Because many of the candidates can look very similar on paper, recruiters and hiring managers often revert to phone interviews for preliminary screening. This process helps to narrow down the pool of talent prior to bringing in potential candidates for face-to-face interviews. Here are five phone interview tips for making your phone interview a success :

✓ **Use The Landline**

If you have access to a landline, you would be wise to use it for the phone interview. Mobile drop outs and black holes are phone interview killers. Not only is it the best connection option available, it will show commitment and effort.

✓ **Eliminate distractions**

Turn off the TV, sit down and have all your phone interview preparation material handy. You need to concentrate a little more during a phone interview so make sure you create or are in a quiet environment.

✓ **Make a list of questions**

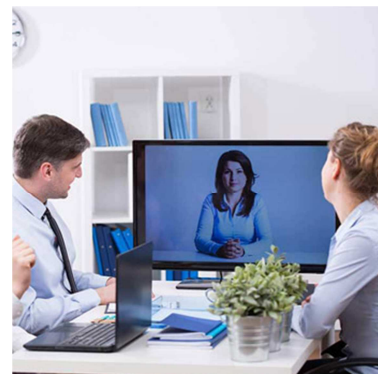
Keep your notes close and put some thought into making a list of pre-written questions. Jot notes down during the phone interview and ask your questions clearly.

✓ **Speak clearly**

To be sure the interviewer can hear you, ensure you speak directly into the phone or headset. Let the interviewer finish speaking before responding to his/her questions.

How To Prepare For a Video Interview

Video interviews are a great way to connect and can save both parties the hassle of travel. Before your video interview make sure your technology is up to date and working. Take the time to also check that your surroundings are clean and tidy. It may seem obvious, but in the midst of delivering an answer, it can be easy to forget that you're sitting in front of a camera. Here are ways to prepare for a video interview :



✓ **Equipment check**

Get familiar with the webcam and microphone and understand how they work. The audio and video must come through clearly and the camera should be set at eye level. If you have a friend or family member who can assist doing a trial run, this will help prevent potential equipment issues. You'll be more at ease during the video interview if you do a technical trial run.

✓ **Charge your battery**

Charge your laptop or tablet the night before. If you are using a tablet be sure to set it up on a solid surface so that the screen doesn't look shaky.

✓ **Lighting check**

If you put a light behind your computer your face will be illuminated. This will help avoid shadows.

✓ **Appearance**

When preparing for a video interview, appearance matters a lot. Even though you are not interviewing face-to-face, you should still wear business attire. To avoid contrast issues, stick to solid colours that aren't too dark or too light and stay away from stripes and plaids .

Common interview questions and answers

The most important part of preparing for an interview is practicing how to answer interview questions you might be asked on the day. Knowing the most common types of job interview questions is an advantage - that way, you can craft your answers well in advance, and feel confident in your responses when the pressure is on. Here are the common interview questions and answers :

1. Tell me about yourself

Be prepared to talk about yourself, and why you're an excellent fit for the job. Try to answer questions about yourself without giving out too much, or too little, personal information. You can start by sharing some of your personal interests and experiences that don't relate directly to work, such as a favorite hobby or a brief account of where you grew up, your education, and what motivates you. You can even share some fun facts and showcase your personality to make the interview a little more interesting.

Example answer :

When I'm not working, I like to spend time exploring with my dogs. I take them hiking, visiting historical sites, or even just walking around town. A surprising number of people are drawn to dogs, and I always enjoy talking with who I meet. I feel that communication is one of the most important aspects of my professional life as well. When talking with people, being able to guide the conversation in a particular direction is one of the ways I've been successful in different situations at the office.

2. What is your greatest Strength ?

- ✓ Describe the skills and experience that you have which directly correlate with the job you are applying for.
- ✓ Make a list of your skills that



match those listed. This list can include education or training, soft skills, hard skills, or past work experiences

- ✓ Note an example of how you have used that strength in the past.

Example answer :

My background as an English major will certainly help me succeed in the job. I restructured, edited, and wrote the employee newsletter for the hospital and brought the focus onto employee profiles and contributions. Our surveys indicated that the new format was more appreciated, more widely read by staff, and helped build morale. I also re-wrote major sections of the employee handbook to simplify the language.

⊗ ANSWERS TO AVOID :

- I am probably the most gifted applicant you will encounter. Everyone says that I am extremely intelligent, hard working, and a fabulous communicator.
- My greatest strengths are writing, project management, quantitative research, event planning, budget development, and social media.
- I'm a talented musician, the life of the party, and a great joke teller. I roll with the punches and don't take defeats too seriously.
- I should tell you about the time when our fraternity was under pressure. The president had mismanaged some money and a lot of the brothers had gotten into trouble for hazing and partying too much. The Dean called all the officers into her office and they had a hearing about all our transgressions. I took over the leadership and turned things around, and we are now a well-respected fraternity with no problems.

3. What is your greatest weakness ?



You can mention skills that aren't critical for the job, discuss skills you have improved on, or turn a negative into a positive. Even though the question is about weaknesses, your answer should always be framed around the positive aspects of your skills and abilities as an employee.

- ✓ Discuss Non-Essential Skills
- ✓ Mention Skills You Have Improved

Example :

One skill set I improved in the past was my salesmanship skills. As a product manager who works with internal teams and does not interface with clients or sales prospects, I don't do much, if any, 'selling' in my role. However, since I do communicate quite frequently with the sales team, I felt it might benefit me to have a greater understanding of their strategies and tactics.

- ✓ Turn a Negative Into a Positive

Example :

I have a very strong attention to detail. Sometimes, this attention to detail can turn into perfectionist tendencies. In the past, I found this leading me to triple-check every item on a spreadsheet, or closely proofreading emails to ensure I've communicated what I'm trying to get across in a clear, concise way, or fiddling with the layout of a presentation to ensure that it is perfect. I've since learned to successfully budget my time and gauge which tasks require, and actually benefit from, this precise attention to detail.

Example for the best answers :

- Organization hasn't always been my strongest point. I've always been inclined to prioritize tasks that directly impact the bottom line, and maintaining a pristine desk or an organized inbox didn't seem to truly move the needle in terms of my output. Over time, I've learned that keeping a clean workspace — both physically, and digitally — does

support my ability to focus and enhance the efficiency of my workflow. I've implemented a time management system that enables me to stay organized without encroaching on my other responsibilities.

4. Why should we hire you?

When you're getting ready for the interview, take a moment to review the job description.

- Make a list of the requirements for the position, including personality traits, skills, and qualifications. Then, make a list of the qualities you have that fit those requirements.
- Select five to seven of your strengths that correspond closely to the job requirements, and use these as the core for your answer regarding what distinguishes you as a candidate.
- Don't forget to think beyond the job description and consider which of your skills and accomplishments make you a better candidate than the competition.
- Tell a story about how your skills and abilities play out at work, be sure to conclude with any positive outcomes that resulted from the actions you took.
- Focus on one or two qualities you possess that are different from what other interviewees might offer, or are more difficult to find in candidates generally.

Example for the best answers :

- You have explained that you are looking for a sales executive who is able to effectively manage over a dozen employees. In my 15 years of experience as a sales manager, I have developed strong motivational and team-building skills. I was twice awarded manager-of-the-year for my innovative strategies for motivating employees to meet and surpass quarterly deadlines. If hired, I will bring my leadership abilities and strategies for achieving profit gains to this position.

5. What are your salary expectations?

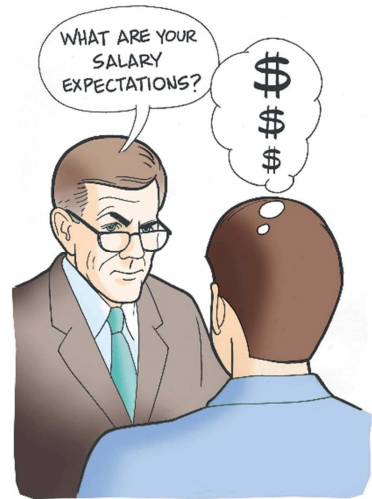
This is not an easy topic, but while there may be no right answer, there is a way to think about the question and get what you want.

- ✓ Research salaries

Find one of the many websites that offer salary averages and estimates. Therefore, if you have time to look at more than one source, you may get a better perspective of range.

- ✓ What to do on an application

Some paper and electronic applications require you to list your salary expectations. In this case, you can do a couple things. You can put in a salary range based on your research. You can also write a phrase like “Negotiable” to demonstrate your flexibility. Avoid putting down one specific salary. This will make it seem like you are unwilling to budge on salary.



Tips for Answering Interview Questions About Salary :

- ✓ Say you're flexible.
- ✓ Offer a range
- ✓ Think about your current salary.
- ✓ Give yourself a raise.
- ✓ Only give numbers you'd be happy with
- ✓ Highlight your skills.

6. Why are you leaving or why have you left your job?



Focus on the past and any negative experiences, your answer should open the door to a discussion about why this new position is the perfect job for you. Don't forget that the delivery of your answer is just as important as its content: be sure to practice aloud so you sound positive and clear in your responses.

Example for the best answers :

- I found myself bored with the work and looking for more challenges. I am an excellent employee, and I didn't want my unhappiness to have any impact on the job I was doing for my employer.
- I'm looking for a bigger challenge and to grow my career, but didn't feel like I could give equal attention both to my job search and to my full-time work responsibilities. It didn't seem ethical to slack off from my former job in order to conduct my job search, and so I left the company.
- I am interested in a new challenge and an opportunity to use my technical skills and experience in a different capacity than I have in the past.

7. Why do you want this job ?

When answering this question, you want to show that you have researched the company and prove that you are a good fit for the job.



- ✓ Research the company ahead of time.
- ✓ Be specific about why you're a good fit.
- ✓ Emphasize what you can contribute.
- ✓ Avoid reasons that focus on you.

Examples :

- I want this job because it emphasizes sales and marketing, two of my greatest skill sets. In my previous job, I increased sales by 15 percent in what was at the time considered a flat industry. I know I could bring my ten years of sales and marketing experience to this company, and help you continue your years of growth.
- I have admired this company's successful strategies and mission for years. Your emphasis on creating a relationship between your company and the surrounding community have brought you success everywhere you have opened an office. There are values I greatly admire.

8. How do you handle stress ?

To answer this question successfully, you will want to provide specific examples of how you have handled stress well in the past. You might also provide examples of times when pressure actually made you a more productive employee.

Examples :

- Pressure is very important to me. Good pressure, such as having a lot of assignments to work on, or an upcoming deadline, helps me to stay motivated and productive. Of course, there are times when too much pressure can lead to stress; however, I am very skilled at balancing multiple projects and meeting deadlines, which prevents me from feeling stressed often. For example, I once had three large projects due in the same week, which was a lot of pressure. However, because I created a schedule that detailed how I would break down each project into small assignments, I completed all three projects ahead of time and avoided unnecessary stress.
- I try to react to situations, rather than to stress. That way, the situation is handled and doesn't become stressful. For example, when I deal with an unsatisfied customer, rather than focusing on feeling stressed, I focus on the task at hand. I believe my ability to communicate effectively with customers during these moments helps reduce my own stress in these situations and also reduces any stress the customer may feel.



Tips & Tricks Answering Interview Questions About Stress!

- ✓ Avoid mentioning a time when you put yourself in a needlessly stressful situation. Rather, describe a time when you were given a difficult task or multiple assignments, and you rose to the occasion.
- ✓ Avoid saying you are stressed by a situation that will be common in the job for which you are applying.
- ✓ Provide an example of a time the stress of a difficult project helped you be a more creative and productive worker.

9. What Are the Most Difficult Decisions to Make?

Employers ask these questions in job and promotion interviews simply because they want to see that, when you face a difficult decision or situation, you're able to handle it. They also want to see what kind of decisions you consider difficult. Whatever answer you give, **be specific**. Itemize what you did, how you did it, and how your difficult decision ultimately profited your team and your employer.



Examples :

- Decisions I have to make within a team are difficult, only because these decisions take more time and require deliberate communication between team members. For example, I was working on a team project, and my colleagues and I had to make a number of choices about how to use our limited budget. Because these decisions involved group conversations, our team learned how to communicate effectively with one another, and I believe we ultimately made the best decisions for the team.
- As a manager, the most difficult decisions I make involve layoffs. Before making those tough decisions, I always think carefully about what is best for the business and my employees. While I don't relish making those kinds of choices, I don't shy away from this part of my job. A few years ago, I had to let some employees go due to the economic climate. It was a hard decision that was ultimately necessary for the good of the company and everyone working for the organization.

YOU'RE
HIRED!

Do's & Dont's:

Interview Body Language Techniques



Do's



Carry 1 item only

A combination of bags, briefcases and big coat makes you seem disorganized.



Shoes count

Many employers say the last thing they remember is the back of a candidate's shoes.



Sit slightly angled

Sit an angle instead of directly across to show that "we're on the same side."



Be poised

To help convey poise & confidence, practice the "power pose" right before the interview.

Dont's



Smile nervously

Smiling too much can make you seem nervous. Smile upon intro & exit only.



Purse your lips

It makes you look like you're holding something back.



Contract or expand

Claim your space (keep arms uncrossed) but don't be too territorial.



Touch your face & hair

Try not to touch your face altogether -- it's a sign of nervousness.

Source:

Tips are courtesy of Vanessa Van Edwards, Behavioral Investigator at the ScienceofPeople.org. Vanessa has been on CNN, NPR and Forbes. She also has a column on the Huffington Post.

