

# INTERVIEW TIPS

## PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW

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- **Research the company:**

General research:

Read through the company's website, its latest news, their culture info, what products or services they offer, who their customers and competitors are, etc. Think what about this company would make you want to work there.

LinkedIn:

Always use LinkedIn to research if there is anyone you already know working in the organization. It can be very helpful to have firsthand information about the company, the selection process and what they usually look for in employees.

Glassdoor/Wikijob:

Here you can find employee reviews, tips for the application process, and more useful information.

<http://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm>

<https://www.wikijob.co.uk/>

- **Identify the most relevant skills for the position and think about previous experiences that prove you have developed those skills:**

You can be asked "behavioral questions" such as *Describe a time when you worked with others who did not work well together. How did you deal with it?* or *Describe a time you acted as leader of a group and improved its performance.* Your answer will illustrate how you might perform in different functions or situations of the job. We recommend using SAR (Situation-Action-Result) as a model for your answer. For more examples of these kind of questions, see "100 Behavioral Questions" document.

You can also be asked more traditional questions such as: *How would someone who has worked with you in the past describe you? What do you expect to be doing in 5 years time? How do you think your education will help you perform in this job?*

In addition, it is convenient to think about your strengths and flaws. Always, when you mention a flaw try to explain what you do to compensate it. Example: *"I am a bit forgetful but I always take notes on my agenda to make sure I fulfill all my duties"*. Try to pick strengths that are particularly relevant for the position you are being interviewed for, and pick flaws that are not indispensable for the job.

For more examples we encourage you to read "How to answer the 31 most common interview questions".

- **Prepare your questions. This demonstrates that you are prepared, enthusiastic and committed.**

At some point during the interview, you may be asked if you have any questions. It is important to have your questions ready as this demonstrates a serious interest in working for the organization. Good questions also demonstrate your communication skills. Things like: *What are the organization's top priorities? What is the structure of the team? How is the day-to-day of a person in this position?*

Questions not to ask in a first interview? Things like: *How long is lunch? How much will you pay? Can I work from home? When can I go on vacation?* These can leave a bad impression, and can wait.

- **Dress code:**

You only have one chance to make a first impression, so make sure to look your best!

Business attire is key for most companies. When you choose clothes, make sure your clothes fit well, are not visibly worn out and are comfortable to sit down in. It is not the same to have an interview to cover a position in a bank or in a startup, so try to match the company's style. However, when in doubt, always choose business attire. Also, make sure you are well groomed.

- **Plan your journey:**

Spend time prior to the interview working out how you'll get there. Public transportation timelines, fastest routes on Google maps... Plan how long it will take for you to get to the destination and be sure to arrive on time (at least, 10 minutes early!).

- **Stay calm and confident:**

Naturally, you can feel nervous, but try to stay calm and confident. Take deep breaths and practice positive, self-affirmation thoughts.

- **Try to sleep well.**

## **THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW**

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- **Be punctual!**

- **Waiting room:**

Avoid using your phone, instead take any of the company's brochures, newspapers, etc. you may find in the room. Also, take care of your body posture.

- **First 5 minutes of the interview:**

Come in with energy and enthusiasm, and express your appreciation for the interviewer's time. Studies indicate that interviewers make up their minds about candidates in the first five minutes of the interview – and after that, only look for things to confirm their decision. Maybe start with a positive comment about the company, for example: *"I've really been looking forward to this meeting (do not say "interview"). I think (the company) is doing great work in (a particular field or project), and I'm really excited by the prospect of being able to contribute."*

- **Can you tell me a little about yourself:**

90% of interviews start with the interviewer asking you to talk about yourself. This question seems simple, and so many people fail to prepare for it, but it's crucial. Don't give your complete and detailed professional (or personal) history. Instead give a well-structured pitch—short and convincing that explains your current situation, your experiences and shows why you're the right fit for this position. Start off with a couple of specific accomplishments or experiences that you most want the interviewer to know about and then wrap up talking about how that prior experience has positioned you for this specific role. No more than 2 minutes.

- **Be assertive and take responsibility:**

An interview should be a conversation. Politeness does not equal passivity. Do not wait for the interviewer to ask you about your Nobel Prize winning, it is your responsibility that he/she walks away knowing your key selling points.

- **Talk positive:** Don't dwell over negative experiences during the interview. Even if you are asked something like *"What classes did you like the least?"* make your answer somewhat more positive like: *"Well I've actually found something that I liked about all my classes, although I found (class) very hard, I liked the fact that (something positive)."*

- **Send a "Thank you email":** Write a thank you email after every interview. Express your gratitude for the opportunity, try to highlight something about the content of the interview *"I was particularly excited about... what you said ..."*, and reiterate your interest in the position.