
Interview to get the job offer

Why do you need an action plan for an interview?

You only get one chance to interview

You saw an advert for an interesting job, applied for it and received a call from a real human being who wants to meet you. Congratulations! You're on of the 2% of applicants on average who will be called for an interview. However your work has just started.

The most qualified and smartest job seekers prepare for job interviews. Interviewing is a learned skill, and there are no second chances when it comes to making a great first impression.

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Preparation

During a job interview, your task is to convince the interviewer that you have the knowledge, skills and experience for the job. This calls for adequate preparation to ensure you make a terrific impression.

Research

Research the role and the company. This means more than a quick skim of the company's website but real research into organizational goals, team challenges, news articles and LinkedIn content.

47% of interviewers said that they wouldn't offer the job to a candidate if they had little knowledge of the company. Review your resume and prepare tangible examples of how it matches the job requirements.

Practice

Practice interviewing with your career coach. Schedule a coaching session as soon as you are invited to an interview.

Practice answering questions you are likely to be asked during the interview. Think of how you will respond to each question.

Practice interviewing in the same format to be used in the actual interview (for example, phone interview, panel interview, etc.)

Questions for the interviewer

See an interview as a two-way street. The interviewer is asking you questions to find out if you are the best person for the job. In return, you should prepare smart questions for the interviewer.

This isn't just to signal them that you are interested in the job, but it is also your opportunity to identify whether the job and organization is a good fit for you.

Ask focused, open-ended questions, show your interest in the organization, and don't baffle the interviewer.

Prepare for success

Your level of preparation is obvious to an interviewer. 33% of hiring managers knew whether they would hire someone in the first 90 seconds of an interview. Take extra steps to come across as professional and organized and it will help you stand out from others.

Dress well for the interview
Prepare a number of copies for your resume

Bring your portfolio or any extra material that is relevant to the interview

Get a paper and pen and make important points and questions to ask the interviewer.

Arrive early

It's essential to be on time to your interview. It's a basic action that signals you respect your interviewer's time that they have set aside to meet with you.

Start your travel early to allow time for delays

In case you are held up, contact your interviewer as soon as possible to notify them.

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The 3 C's to a Successful Interview

Most interviewers don't have a specific right or wrong answer that they're looking for. They're judging you on how you answer rather than what you answer.

Confidence

Employers want to hire a confident individuals. You don't need to be loud and outgoing but you do need to be sure of your experience and qualifications. One of the best ways to do this is to demonstrate it in interview through your non-verbal communication.

Position your body correctly so that it occupies a full amount of space. Your arms should be at your sides, not crossed.

Smile with your eyes as well as your mouth. 40% of interviewers thought that a lack of a smile was enough to not hire a candidate.

Remain humble, but confident.

Don't fidget but remain still, controlled and make calculated movements.

Maintain eye contact while listening and speaking.

Communication

The way you communicate will overshadow what you communicate. Interviewers are looking to hire somebody with superior communication skills. This means both verbal and written skills as well as excellent body language.

Speak at a clear volume while taking note of your pronunciation, rhythm and intonation.

Practice active listening skills.

Be concise. Take 20 seconds to 2 minutes to answer each question.

Maintain a good level of eye contact.

Content

Content is essential in interviews. Your knowledge about the company, your interview responses and your resume will determine your chances of success in the interview.

Do a thorough research about the company and its current challenges. Ensure your responses relate directly to the company's goals.

Review your resume so you have concrete and measurable examples of your success in mind.

Know how your skills will benefit the organization.

Consider the interviewer's perspective

Now that you've prepared your side of the interview, the question is, what is it that the interviewer is looking for in you? Or what will make the interviewer consider you the right candidate for the job?

Competence

Do you have the skills necessary to perform the job well?

Manageability

Are you able to work with little or no supervision? It is up to you to prove to the interviewer that the job is yours. We can all dig ditches, but few are willing to, and even fewer want to. Prove that you really want the job.

Environment

Are you able to relate and work well with other employees in the company?

Motivation

What made you apply for the job? Is it to earn a salary because you desperate for a job? Or is it to use your skills to grow your career and benefit the company?

Compensation

Can the company afford to compensate you in terms of salary and other demands?

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Follow Up

So you have finished the interview and gone home excited expecting to hear from the interviewer. It is now few days but you haven't heard from them.

Send them a thank you card

It shows your respect for them taking time to consider you for the position. It will remind the interviewer that you are still waiting.

It is an indication of interest and thoughtfulness.

Mention details

Mention some of the important details that didn't come up during the interview

Take this as an opportunity to ask questions you wished you'd asked during the interview.

Be patient

The interview process takes an average of 22.9 days so be patient after following up.

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Sample questions

For you to win a job interview, you must be able to anticipate what the interviewer will ask, know the intention behind every question and craft a strategic answer. The best candidates for jobs are not lucky. They spend their time preparing and practicing.

“Tell Me About Yourself”

This question normally comes at the start of the interview. It is a good opportunity for you to give an elevator pitch giving the interviewer an idea of who you are. If you use this opportunity wisely, the interviewer will be left wanting to hear your next answer.

The interviewer needs to know whether you will be outstanding in the job. Talk about why you took other particular jobs. Explain the reason you left. Explain why you chose your school. Explain why you took a whole year off to tour Europe. What did you learn from the tour?

When answering this question, connect your points to what you have written in your CV for the interviewer. You don't want them to have to guess why you answered a specific way.

“Tell Me About Your Greatest Weaknesses”

Your interviewer knows you're human so they want to know what areas you're growing in. You should answer this question by picking an example of an area you're weak in but have taken specific steps in the past to improve. Illustrate to your interviewer that you recognize you need to grow and that you're actively seeking to change for the better.

For example: “My greatest weakness is that I sometimes focus on the details too much of a task and forget to think to the greater strategic goals of the team and organization. In order to improve this I now make sure that integrate strategic goals into the beginning of every project, no matter how small, so that I'm always thinking about how this contributes to moving the team forward.”

The interviewer will see that you are both honest and coachable.

“Tell Me About Your Biggest Strengths”

When asked this question, give a response that sets you apart from the other candidates. The response should match your qualifications to the job requirements.

For example: “I have a very strong work ethic. When working on a project, I don't simply work to meet the deadline. I prefer to complete the project work ahead of schedule. This year, I have earned two awards for completing my projects 2 weeks ahead of time.”

“Why Should We Hire You”

You must explain what you will offer the employer. You need to prove that you are the best candidate for the job. Your response should be concise, confident and a focused sale explaining what you have to offer your potential employer. Also, don't forget to review your qualifications and job requirements to craft a response that is in line with what the employer is looking for.

For example: “Based on the job description and what you have said, your organization is looking for an administrative assistant with strong communication and interpersonal skills. It is my belief that my experience aligns me to that very well. I can communicate excellently with all people via various platforms, phone, email and in person.

When I worked with company ABC as the administrative assistant, they organized a six months national conference and I was the point man for all the conference attendees and participants. As the main point of contact I was able to reduce attendee questions by 32% from the previous conference by developing a “frequently asked questions” document. This was a great return on investment for the company and also demonstrates my strong written communication skills.”

“Where Do You See Yourself In 5 Years”

You should use this question to show that you think strategically about growth in your career and how that will help the company.

For example, “I would like to see myself have more responsibility overseeing projects that allow me to improve efficiencies within existing process. I understand that this type of oversight requires strong organizational and strategic thinking skills both of which I'd like to grow in.” In all cases, assess what the interviewer is expecting from you and make sure to incorporate that in your answer.

“Why Do You Need To Leave Your Current Job”

If you are currently employed in another company, this question is inevitable. Most importantly, if you are leaving because you dislike your position, you must avoid bad mouthing your current employer. Think of the roles of the position you are being interviewed for. How will it help you in your career? How will your skills add value to the employer?

For example, “I am looking for a job with more responsibilities and so I can continue to be challenged in new ways.”

“Why Were You Fired”

If the interviewer asks you this question, the best way to respond is by being honest. However, don't make it a deal breaker. Share what you learned, how you have grown and how you approach life and your job as a result. Position the experience you learned as an advantage for the job you are being interviewed for.

“What Are Your Salary Expectations”

Make sure to do research in advance to understand a reasonable amount or salary range for the role. Then take into account your particular experience and skills and identify where you are within that range. Then state your expectations clearly and confidently when asked. Don't forget to think about additional compensation expectations like vacation and benefits.

For example, “According to the search I had done, similar positions pay between A and B. With my experience and skills, I expect a salary that ranges between C and D.”

“What Do You Know About This Company”

Anybody coming for the interview can read the “About us” page of the company website. When the interviewer asks you this question, they are not expecting you to tell them about the company mission, but they need to know whether you care about it. Start with a line that shows you understand the company goals. Use keywords from the website. Make it personal by saying, “I am interested in this mission because...” or “I believe in the approach since...”

“Do You Have Any Questions For Me”

The kind of question you ask here may leave a lasting impression on the interviewer or overshadow every good thing you have achieved during the interview. Take this opportunity to ask what you need to know about the job, the department, the team or the company.

Don't forget to ask questions that is directly related to the interviewer. For example, “What do you like most about being a worker here?” Or “What are you currently planning to grow yourself or your career?”



Next steps

It's important to continuously be reassessing your interviewing skills. After each interview you need to analyse what went well and what you can improve on for the next interview.

Go back through each stage of the interview from preparation to follow up and write down how you would have made that better. This will give you an even better chance at securing that next role.