
INTERVIEW PREPARATION CHECKLIST

1. **Be professional, confident and look your best.** The first impression is a lasting impression. Unfortunately, most hiring authorities draw conclusions about candidates' way too early in the interview process.
2. **Bring a pen and pad (notebook) with questions written down pertaining to the position.** (i.e. What is expected of me? What happened to the prior incumbent?).
3. **Have the interviewer talking 60%-70% of the time.** Answer questions with a question. For example, if you are asked about a specific qualification, answer the question fully, then inquire as to how that fits with what the company is looking for. Don't be afraid to probe into the duties of the position. When a requirement is mentioned that fits one of your strengths, bring it out. An excellent question to ask is: **"if you have two candidates with almost identical backgrounds, what quality or qualities would make you choose one over the other?" Or, you might say: "If the perfect candidate was standing in front of you, reporting for work, could you describe that candidate?"**
4. **Energy, Drive, Initiative** - Don't ever compromise on this one It is the universal trait of success. The key to personal success is to do more than you have to, so give the interviewer some examples of your initiative and personal successes and extra efforts.
5. **Trend of Performance Over Time** - Indicate the impact you have had with your current and previous employer(s) over the past five to ten years. This would include; Major accomplishments and organizational changes that you have implemented. **This is a good time to share what you can to for the interviewers company. HAVE A PLAN BEFORE THE INTERVIEW!"**
6. **Experience, Education and Industry Background** - Use this along with the Past Accomplishments category: Strong education and experience can sometimes offset a weaker accomplishments rating.
7. **Problem Solving and Thinking Skills** - Express that you have the ability to solve job-related problems and anticipate what needs to be done. (Elaborate)
8. **Management and Organization-** (If are going in for a management role position). Let the interviewer know that you have the ability to persuade and motivate others. Team leadership is a component of both management and personality. Share your management ability and style and your organizational skills.

9. **Team Leadership** - (If you are going in for a management role position) The ability to persuade and motivate others. Explain how you motivate your immediate subordinates and motivate people who work in different departments.
10. **Character: Values, Commitment and Goals** - Summarize your integrity, honesty, responsibility, openness, and fairness in dealing with others. Express your commitment to the organization, and **have a plan as to what you can do for the Company**. THIS TOPIC SHOULD BE SAVED FOR THE END OF THE INTERVIEW, OR WAIT FOR THE SECOND INTERVIEW.
11. **Watch your body language. Maintain good posture, leaning slightly forward indicates interest. Maintain eye contact.** Leaning back could give the impression of a lax attitude. The interviewer gives body language as well. You can determine if you are keeping the interviewer's interest by reading his or her body language. This holds true to some extent for a telephone interview as well. Although you cannot see the interviewer, you can detect from voice inflections whether you have his or her attention. If the interviewer is on a speakerphone and you hear their voice fading in and out, it means that he or she is probably walking around the room and you may not have his/her full attention. If that happens, ask the interviewer to pick up the receiver, as you are having difficulty hearing and don't want to miss anything he or she says. At that point, you will again have the interviewer's full attention.
12. On your pad, **have a list of your strengths**. Let the interviewer know why you are the perfect **fit** for the position. EXAMPLE: If interviewing for a supervisory position, one major weakness may be the tendency to "do everything yourself". This is a very common problem that indicates a lack of willingness to delegate work. The best way to overcome this is to step back from your desk, look at the project you have for the day and determine which REALLY requires your personal attention. Anything that can be delegated should be given to subordinates who can then use them as a learning tool while your time is freed up to attend to the more urgent and sensitive issues. What you have done at this point is turned a negative into a positive.

One of the toughest interview questions that you can be asked is "Tell me about yourself". Rather than guess where the interviewer wants you to begin, use the very simple response to this, "I'd be happy to, where would you like me to begin?" Once you have the interviewer's reply, you have a point of reference and can begin answering the question.

13. **STAY POSITIVE!** Even if you decide that you don't feel the position is right for you, never communicate that during the interview. Once you get home, you may change your mind. After you have considered it, if you still feel the position is not a good fit for you, let us know and we can withdraw you gracefully, but keep the door open for future consideration.
14. **VERY IMPORTANT!** At the conclusion of the interview, ask, "**where do we go from here?**" or "**what is the next step?**" If you really think you hit a home run, ask, "**When do I start?**" What you are doing is asking for feedback on

how well you did. Another excellent "closing" question would be: **"Is there any reason that you could not offer me this position (job) today."**

15. **Do not discuss salary or benefits.** If asked about your current salary, advise what it is but indicate that you wouldn't want to comment on the salary without knowing all about the opportunity. Just like you wouldn't want to buy a car without knowing all about the options available, you wouldn't want to comment too early on your "price". You might indicate that **"Compensation is extremely important to me, and I will consider your best offer, but frankly what is most important at this point is what I can offer your company and what the future will hold for both of us in a long term relationship."**
16. **Have available a list of references that you can present if requested.** These references should include names of former supervisors in previous jobs who would be willing to discuss in detail your work performance, usually for positions covering only the last five years. Be sure that you have checked your references thoroughly so that you can be assured that they will provide you positive feedback. If you feel it may be necessary, have a friend call them to see what they will say about you. If desired, your recruiter can call your references and provide you with feedback on their responses.
17. **Bring two to three additional original copies of your résumé, each in presentation folders (the number of copies depends upon how many people you are going to see).** This has the effect of setting your résumé out above the others. In addition, bring a copy of your most recent performance review (if applicable) and a sample of any written material prepared by you in the course of performing your duties (again, if applicable). Take care to make sure that the write-up does not contain any proprietary information such as the names of the customer or any other items that may lead to the customer's identity.
18. **Call your recruiter as soon as possible right after the interview** to advise of how things went. We will then call our client for their feedback and advise you of their impression.
19. **Send a thank you letter** pointing out your strong points that were brought out in the interview and that you are indeed very interested in pursuing the opportunity.

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