

YOUR COMPLETE INTERVIEW GUIDE



Do you have a big interview coming up? The below expert end-to-end overview of the whole interview process gives insight into the best ways to prepare, how to handle key questions you might be asked and how to close the interview in a way that makes you stand out to a hiring manager so you land your dream job.

Preparation, preparation, preparation

The better prepared you are, the more confident you'll be. As soon as you know your interview date, start working on your research:

- **Research the company.** Research its history, mission, financials and competitors. Check out its social media presence and employee reviews. Don't forget to look at latest news, services and product reviews too.
- **Review your current employment.** Don't forget to think back over your current and previous companies and review your key achievements at each.
- **Prepare questions to ask.** You might want to ask about career development and training opportunities. Ask about the company's plans, and about any topical issues that could affect its performance or its future.

One of the most common things people get wrong when asked what they know about the company is to recite facts and figures from the company website. What employers are really looking for is someone who demonstrates they've put in extra research by discussing something relevant, unique and interesting about the company.

Opening the interview

Making a strong start gives you the best chance of interview success. Make sure you're listening to the questions and tailoring your answers – you can prepare but you need to understand the nuances of the person interviewing you

- **Don't be late!** Arrive 10 minutes beforehand, make yourself known at reception, and sit and wait patiently.
- **Look at your body language** – are you tense and nervous or relaxed and poised? Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and make sure your muscles aren't clenched.
- **Enter confidently.** Shake hands firmly and sit down when asked. Find a relaxed position in your chair, but make sure you stay focused and alert at all times.
- **Show off your interpersonal skills.** Make eye contact, and don't forget to smile. Use non-verbal cues such as nodding to show that you are listening actively to what your interviewer is saying. Respond to questions with full answers, and don't be afraid, when appropriate, to steer the conversation towards the key points you want to make.

Overfamiliarity is something that really puts hiring managers off of candidates. You should always let the interviewer lead the tone of the interview and not behave or speak informally unless the interviewer does so.

Closing the interview

The final impressions you make are almost as important as your first ones...

- **Take the opportunity to ask questions.** When invited, ask two or three insightful questions that underline your interest in the role and the company. Avoid questions about salary and bonus – look instead to ask questions that reveal a motivation to add value to the company.
- **Be ready to flex.** You may want to tweak or swap the questions you ask, depending on how the interview has gone or what you discussed. So be ready to think on your feet.
- **Stay polite and professional.** There may be some more small talk towards the end of the conversation. Don't get too relaxed – this is still part of the interview, and you want to leave a last positive impression. Shake hands firmly, maintain eye contact, and project a professional image as you head off to your next commitment.
- **Don't forget the follow-up.** Always send a brief, prompt email thanking the interviewer for their time, and alerting them to any changes in your movements or contact details should they wish to come back to you.

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