



INTERVIEW PREPARATION TIPS

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AN INTERVIEW IS A SALES PRESENTATION. KNOW YOUR PRODUCT AND BE PREPARED TO SELL YOURSELF.

Research shows that there are **three** critical factors in a successful hire

1. Skills: *someone who knows what they are doing*
2. Personality: *someone who has a likable personality*
3. Enthusiasm: *someone who is always asking what to do next*

SKILLS

Make a bullet point list of your skills and write an example about each one. **Using quantitative** information makes you sound more technical.

"I handle reporting for 6 subsidiaries with over 500 million in revenues"

STRENGTH

- Your main strength should be a technical skill
 - *Usually the main hiring factor*
- Complement technical strength with soft skills

WEAKNESS

- Try to turn your weakness into a plus
- Identify a skill that shows you are looking to improve yourself

SOFT SKILLS

Discuss soft skills. They are good for filling in "dead air."

Potential list of non-technical skills:

- Good people skills
- Quick learner
- Team player
- Organized
- Good planner
- Likes a challenge

Prepare your answers to popular interview questions

Some common interview questions are:

- Tell me about the biggest obstacle you have had to overcome?
- How have you handled people who were hard to work for or with?
- Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years?
- Why are you looking to leave your current employer?
- Why are you interested in interviewing with this company?

Employers want to know why you are making a change:

- Make your reasons about business, not personal
- Be upbeat and positive about your current employer (regardless of circumstances or personal feelings)
- You are looking for a new opportunity so you can continue to grow and increase your skills

Questions are usually asked about areas of concern. Make sure to elaborate on your response.

"How are your computer skills?"

- **Bad** answer: "They are good."
- **Good** answer: "They are really strong. I use Excel and Lotus at the macro level and in fact, computers are a hobby of mine. Is there anything else I can tell you about my computer skills?"

Money

Don't bring up the subject of money. Money is usually a 2nd interview topic.

Your goal is to get invited to a 2nd interview

- If asked on an application about your current earnings—be honest
 - Include overtime, bonuses, and any other perks
- If asked what you are looking for—tell them you are looking for "an opportunity"
- If asked how much—tell them you are making a decision on the opportunity, not money
- If persistent—tell them that you are sure you are within their range and that if they make a reasonable offer, you will be on board

Salaries are decided in the interview—let your presentation and sales pitch do your negotiating

Prepare questions to ask them

Always prepare a few questions in advance. Make sure your questions are ones that will help you make a decision.

DO NOT ASK ABOUT SALARY & BENEFITS. IF THEY ASK, TELL THEM IT IS NEGOTIABLE OR THAT YOU BOTH CAN DISCUSS THE ISSUE LATER IN THE HIRING PROCESS.

General questions to ask the interviewer:

- What is the organization of the department?
- Who do I report to?
- Ask the interview their background and what attracted them to the company
 - Will provide information about the company
 - When people talk about themselves, they feel like they know *you* better
- Future oriented questions should be asked in the hypothetical
 - "If someone were successful in this position, where *would* you see them advancing in the organization?"
 - Such a question allows the manager to speak freely and makes you sound career-motivated

General guidelines

- Eye to eye contact
- Keep talking 60/40—*you should be talking 60%*
- Watch for body language—folded arms or lack of eye contact
- When you meet someone:
 - Firm handshake
 - Smile
 - Good eye contact
- **Being nervous is OK!** It shows you're excited and can put you on your game.
- Personal considerations
 - Perfume can be overpowering; use sparingly
 - Fresh breath; no gum
 - Use a neutral or common nail polish color

Ending an interview

Imagine yourself as an attorney at the end of a trial doing a summation to the jury. Briefly reiterate the key skills that the position requires and how you feel you could contribute.

Then with good eye contact, ask the interviewer if they have any concerns about your ability to do the position.

THIS IS HARD TO ASK, BUT THE FIRST INTERVIEW IS THE TIME TO HANDLE CONCERNS. MOST EMPLOYERS SAY THAT THEY FEEL THIS QUESTION SHOWS THE PERSON HAD A GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE IN THEMSELVES.

- Most interviewers will say “No, I think you are very qualified”
- Some might tell you their concern:
 - If it is something you have done—share experience
 - If it is something you haven't done—have in your mind an example of something that you had to teach yourself.
 - Let the interviewer know they is right, you don't have that experience but you did not have experience in [example] and through your own efforts you succeed. **Emphasize that you feel you could quickly learn and are excited to build this experience.**

At the end of the interview:

- If you **don't** want the job:
 - Thank the interviewer for their time and tell them you are looking forward to hearing from them.
- If you **do** want the job:
 - Let the interviewer know! E.g.
 - *“I really enjoyed meeting with you and feel I would really enjoy working with you”*
 - *“I just want you to know that I want to pursue this position, Mary. What will be our next step from here?”*
- Send a follow up & brief thank you note