

Interview Guide

Interviews

Below you can find detailed advice about how to nail your interview in terms of what you communicate and how you communicate it to the interviewers. But first impressions can communicate a lot as well, so first let's discuss the very basics of interviewing.

- The general rule regarding attire is to dress one step above what the employees in the department you're applying for would typically wear to the workplace. Attire expectations may vary depending on the type of job and manner of work you are applying for, but it is highly unlikely that you'll be considered a lesser candidate for "dressing too well" in an interview.
- Respectful communication is incredibly important during the interview process. Be mindful that you are addressing any given individual with the proper title, maintaining eye contact when speaking to or being spoken to by interviewers, and speaking with a clear and professional tone. A good practice is to try and mirror the enthusiasm and seriousness of the interview team you are communicating with.
- There are some items you should always be prepared with at any interview and those are as follows: copies of your résumé, pen and paper to write on, portfolio of work or projects (when applicable), and a list of questions you have for the interviewers. Almost every interviewer will give the interviewee a chance to ask their own questions about the company and role, typically at the end of an interview. This gives you a great chance to understand the role better while simultaneously demonstrating and reinforcing why you think you are well suited for the job, meaning you should always be prepared to ask at least three questions.

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Preparedness

Interviewing can be a scary process for even the most qualified and tenured applicants. Marketing yourself directly to a company's representatives can be incredibly nerve-racking and draining. However, as is the case with any situation where you are called to speak knowledgably in front of others, preparedness is your best friend. Having a deep understanding of the job requirements and how your experiences and motivations fit well with those requirements is integral to a good interview. Think of a personal interest or hobby you have that if you were grilled on your understanding of it, experiences with it, and ideas about it you would have enthusiastically informed answers for every question. This same level of preparedness is what you should strive for in any interview.

Confidence

Many believe that interviewing is an unfortunate game of social aptitude and extroversion that arbitrarily decides who deserves a role and who does not. While there may be some truth to the idea that those with more outgoing personalities have a natural advantage in interviews, in no way does this mean introversion immediately removes any chance you may have at a successful and effective interview. There are numerous ways for less extroverted people to play to their strengths in other areas while working to maintain a baseline of social aptitude. On the flip side, extroverted individuals can utilize their natural social aptitude to sway the odds in their favor during the interview process. While some roles may require or lend themselves to certain personality types, you should never view yourself as “wrong” for a job you are truly interested in or passionate about. If you pair your preparedness with confidence, you can overcome any disadvantages you feel you have and embolden any advantages you feel you have.

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Honesty

There is unfortunately a popular belief that to have the best chance of getting hired you must lie about or misrepresent your skills, abilities, and competencies to the interviewers. This approach can not only cause serious issues down the road for both the employee and the employer, but it is often obvious to the interviewers when someone is speaking from knowledge and experience vs. when someone is misrepresenting the truth. Being honest about areas in which you need to grow, topics you may not be fully knowledgeable about, and weaknesses you are working towards fixing will both demonstrate your desire to do genuinely good work while signaling to the interviewers that you are a trustworthy and genuine person, traits that almost everyone appreciates.

FAQs

One of the best practices you can engage in to be prepared for your interview is to write down a list of questions that are highly common in interviews and write out a succinct and informed response to each of them specific to the role you are interviewing for. Once you've done this, practice those answers repeatedly out loud to yourself or to others. Not only will this give you a chance to workshop how your answers sound in your head vs. on the page, but it will also be a great way to pick your own brain about how well prepared you really are. Make sure that when you are responding to these questions, your answers are demonstrating moments and ideas specific to you as an individual and what you bring to the job. If you feel that there's any chance your answer could be said by any other interviewee, it is likely too vague or unspecific to leave a strong impression. Simply stating that you possess a skill is much less memorable than communicating a moment in which you used that skill to achieve positive results for a previous organization or entity. There's a good chance that the individuals interviewing you are interviewing many other people as well; so, when creating your answers, keep in mind that you want to communicate abilities, achievements, skills, etc., in a way that truly demonstrates your unique capabilities.