

ACE THE INTERVIEW!

CONGRATULATIONS!

You've got a job interview scheduled!

That means you've successfully tailored your resume and matched yourself to the opportunity well enough to pique the interest of the hiring manager.

Now it's time to prepare for the conversation.

How you get ready for this discussion will go a long way to calming any anxiety or nervous energy you may be feeling.

We'll take this in three parts:

- 1. Pre-Interview Activities**
- 2. In-Progress Interview**
- 3. Post-Interview Follow-Up**

Let's get started!

PRE-INTERVIEW ACTIVITIES

The Interview set-up phase is all about research!

Get familiar with the company.

- Get to know the company, its products, services and structure and what effect current trends or events may be having.
- Go beyond the job description and get to know who and what the company is and does by checking out their website, LinkedIn and other social pages, as well as their reviews and overall reputation. The following are great for company reviews:
 - CareerBliss
 - Comparably
 - FairyGodBoss
 - Glassdoor
 - Vault

PRE-INTERVIEW ACTIVITIES

Get familiar with the company (continued).

- What are the company values listed on their site?
- Do their social and community presences support what their website says?
- Do their reviews support what their website says?
- How do former employees talk about the company?
 - Not just in reviews listed on the sites above, but in social posts?

Getting to know the company - beyond the role you're interviewing for - will help you easily, honestly and quickly answer more than the typical 'tell me why you're right for this role' questions everyone expects.

PRE-INTERVIEW ACTIVITIES

Get familiar with your interviewer.

Google them, check them out on Glassdoor, as well as their LinkedIn profile and/or website to find out what they write about or are passionate about, what others have said about being interviewed by the person or company, as well as anything you might have in common.

- If you know the name of the person interviewing you, this step is a lot easier, but it's not impossible if you don't.
 - If the job posting is active on LinkedIn, can you see the name of the person who posted it? If so, reach out to them to thank them (on behalf of the company) for your upcoming interview, and ask if any specific interviewer has been assigned.

PRE-INTERVIEW ACTIVITIES

Get familiar with your interviewer (continued).

- If you're still unable to get an individual's name, check out the Interviews tab on the company's Glassdoor page to find first-hand accounts of what the interview - and interview process - is like at the company.

The more you know about the interviewer or interview process with the specific company, the less intimidating the experience will be.

You can start the discussion already feeling like you know the person and/or company, which makes the entire conversation much less stressful, more organic, clear and rewarding.

PRE-INTERVIEW ACTIVITIES

Get your questions (and answers) ready.

Prepare **for the common interview questions** you know will be asked. Here are just a few:

- **Tell me more about yourself.**
 - Be prepared to tell your story - as it relates to and is valuable for the role and company at hand.

- **How did you hear about the opening/position?**
 - Did you seek them or their role out yourself? What led you to them?
 - Were you recruited? What was communicated that caught your interest?
 - Were you recommended for it or urged to apply by someone? Pro tip: Make sure you credit them in your answer.

PRE-INTERVIEW ACTIVITIES

Get your questions (and answers) ready (continued).

- **How do you handle pressure?**

- Everyone's going to say they're ok with pressure, sure. But every situation is different, so be ready to quantify your answer.
- Have an example ready of a situation that tested your stress-management skills and how you handled it.
- Understand that everyone feels stress and some situations you'll just never see coming - so your in-the-moment thinking and reactions, planning, pivot and learning abilities, as well as communication skills will be imperative - and equally important to be able to talk about when this question comes up.

PRE-INTERVIEW ACTIVITIES

Get your questions (and answers) ready (continued).

Prepare **your own questions**. This is where your research will help you shine because you will have found:

- Company/business topics you'll want to know more about.
- Natural conversation starters in commonalities, curiosities and more.

You want to be sure you're interviewing the company just as they're interviewing you.

Fit goes both ways.

This can't be stressed enough, especially when you factor in that the amount of time we spend working/at work/in the enterprise of work is larger than the time we spend on any other single activity in our day.

PRE-INTERVIEW ACTIVITIES

Get your questions (and answers) ready (continued).

Some questions to consider asking are:

- **What does a typical day or week look like for this role?**
 - This should be easy to communicate. If the interviewer responds with something vague like 'every day is different' - ask about a specific day or time period (last month, last quarter, etc.)
 - If you have to probe on this one, it could be a sign that the department or company is unstructured or chaotic.
- **What do you see as the most challenging part of this position?**
 - This question can also give you insights beyond the advertised job description. Again, watch out for anything vague. You want something specific you can hopefully relate back to a similar challenge you've faced - and overcome!

PRE-INTERVIEW ACTIVITIES

Get your questions (and answers) ready (continued).

- **How will you measure 'success' in this position?**
 - Lots of job descriptions are boilerplate, so this question helps you understand what's most important for the role outside of the 'requirements' listed on the job posting.
- **How did this role come to be open?**
 - Did the person who had it before get promoted? This can give you insight into growth potential.
 - Is this a new position? This can tell you if the company is growing. Even better - if it's in response to a new business need or advantage, because that can be a sign that the company invests internally.

PRE-INTERVIEW ACTIVITIES

Get your questions (and answers) ready (continued).

- **When you think about the people in this role before - what was the success difference-maker?**
 - This question can be a game changer because it immediately signals that you're not just looking to get hired or do the job - but that you want to excel in the role. What is important to the company here? The management? And, of course, how you are a match for it. It can also give you more detail about the role than the job description itself.
- **What is your timeline for next steps?**
 - Ask this question to level-set your expectations. This will help prevent you from making assumptions if their process is a week-review before reaching back out and you're expecting a day or two. Save yourself the stress - ask the question.

IN-PROGRESS INTERVIEW

It's the day of your interview - you've done your research, and now it's on!

The Formats

In the post-Pandemic work world, that live event could be a video chat, a phone conversation or an in-person interview.

- **Video Chat:** Test your connection, make sure any software or permissions required are set, make sure your webcam is working and your audio connections (headphones, mic, speakers) are set and working, dress and/or present yourself appropriately, be prepared to take notes, be on time.
- **Phone Conversation:** Make sure your cell-reception is solid, take care to control any (or preferably) all background noise, mute or set re-route for incoming calls, be prepared to take notes, be on time.
- **In-Person Interview:** Dress and present yourself appropriately, have a copy or two of your resume, be prepared to take notes, be on time.

IN-PROGRESS INTERVIEW

The Conversation

- Listen carefully (this can't be stated enough for any format).
- Stay relaxed, focused and observant.
- Be positive and specific.
- Understand that a job offer likely won't be extended at this stage.
- Understand that a first interview is likely not the place for a salary query.
- Thank your interviewer(s) and ask about next-steps timeline.

POST-INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

You're doing great!

- You've put together a resume that opened the door.
- You've executed an interview you can be proud of.
- Now comes the hardest part - waiting.

In truth, much of the job process is waiting and, like so much in life, the closer we get to the goal - the more anxious we are about getting there. But don't let your anxiety get the best of you.

Stay smart and keep your sanity by using these simple follow-up steps:

Be patient

- As we said - a lot of the job process is a waiting game. So be patient - NOT pushy!

POST-INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

Say Thank You To The Interviewer

- You can send a quick thank you email to your interviewer a day after your conversation.
- You already asked about the timing of next steps at the end of your interview, so this is NOT the time to ask again. Instead, thank them for their time, mention a key takeaway you got from the conversation and let them know you're looking forward to hearing from them. That's it. Short and sweet at this stage.

Mark Your Calendar

- Put a note on your calendar for one (1) week AFTER the date they said they'd get back to you by.
- If you haven't heard from them by this time, send a follow-up note very similar to the previous email and asking if there is any additional information you can provide before closing with a statement of enthusiasm for the role/company.

POST-INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

Final Thoughts:

The post-interview phase is the toughest because it's the one we have the least control over.

I've always said that in the absence of information, people make their own reality. This is both true and dangerous.

Just keep a few things in mind:

- **The interviewer is a real person doing a real job.**
 - This means your interview is just one part of a larger job, and yours was likely one of many interviews for the position.
 - Be respectful of the process the interviewer has and the time it takes them to do it.
- **Be patient.**
 - There are many things happening related to the role and the interview process.
 - Your part is one of many. Be patient while the others all play out. You won't necessarily know what those are - and you don't need to.

POST-INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

Final Thoughts: (continued)

- **Stay positive.**
 - This will help you avoid destructive behaviors that can damage your chances of an offer.
 - What are those?
 - Beginning to doubt your own abilities during the wait.
 - Mental comparisons to candidates you don't know.
 - Excessive outreach to the interviewer/employer (which makes you look desperate - don't do it).
- **Be prepared.**
 - For an offer, for a decline or (hopefully not but it happens) for ghosting. Always keep your options open.
 - Sometimes business plans, needs and budgets change. Sometimes your priorities will change. Sometimes things just happen - good or bad.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and red corduroy pants, is captured in a celebratory pose. She is looking upwards and to the right with a wide smile, her right hand raised in a fist. The background is a blurred office environment with bookshelves. The entire image has a light red/pink tint.

REMEMBER

**YOU'VE
GOT THIS!!**

Career Insights
Consulting

careerinsightsconsulting.com