

13 Steps to Help You Prepare for Job Interviews like a Pro

Summary: Break down your interview preparation into 13 easy steps so that you don't miss a step and blow the entire interview.



Failing to prepare for your interview will pretty much ruin your chances of impressing the interviewer enough to be remembered for a second interview or job offer. The more you prepare, the easier it will be each time you get an interview.

Prepare for your interview like a pro in 13 easy steps:

1. Research the company

Scour the news for anything that involves the name of the company, including sponsorship events. Start with their website and social media sites and then branch out to annual reports, industry publications and newspaper stories. Being able to drop a comment about the company's recent sponsor of the Special Olympics camp, as an example, will tell the interviewer that you are impressed with the company and support their activities. The events they are involved in also



demonstrate the values. You want to be familiar with their products and services, locations, competitors, mission statement, values, history, financials, leadership team structure, and growth prospects.

2. Research the interviewer/hiring manager(s)

When you have been offered an interview and accepted the offer, ask for the names of those that will be interviewing you. If you have their names, then you can research their specific position in the company and their previous positions. You may learn that you have a connection with them that can be valuable such as the same alma mater, hometown, first job, industry, etc. Look on LinkedIn, the company website, and any published blogs or articles with their name.

3. Review your application

Going over your application to make sure you remember what claims you made about your skills will be important should the interviewer ask you something specific that you don't remember. Know your past job titles, company names, achievements, responsibilities, and dates so that the interview flows smoothly without you having to skim over your resume frequently. Have answers prepared for weaknesses and strengths in your resume.

4. Review accomplishments & abilities

You want to know your listed accomplishments and responsibilities perfectly so that you can prepare how to sell yourself to the company based on these talents. Not knowing how your abilities translate to the needs of the company will not benefit you.

5. Master story-telling

A great interviewee will have a strong grasp on story-telling. A big part of this is practicing the story before the first time that you try to tell it.



6. Prepare general answers

You know you will be asked the basic questions like “Tell us about yourself,” “Why do you want this job?” and “What are your strengths/weaknesses?” Prepare strong answers for these general questions so that you can make them sound stronger than they may be. If you do not have much work history, prepare to elaborate it so that you can make it sound better than it actually is.

7. Prepare questions to ask

A strong candidate will be one that has genuine questions that are not answered during the interview. Make sure you are paying close attention, because there is nothing worse than asking a question about something that was just answered. Avoid salary or benefit related questions. Instead, keep your questions focused on the company and position. Here are some good ones to get you started:

- What do you like about the company?
- What are the biggest challenges of this position?
- What does success look like in this position?

8. Review and practice

Ask a friend or family member to sit down with you and do a mock interview. This goes as far as dressing the part and acting like it is a fully legitimate interview. Practicing beforehand will show you what nervous ticks you have that need to be addressed such as fiddling with your hair, saying “umm” too much, and not making eye contact. If you don’t have someone that can help you practice, you can record yourself on video so that you can watch the mock interview after.

9. Research fair salary rates

Do your research of the area and the position to get an idea of what a fair salary would be for the specific job. Interviewers may ask what you are expecting as far as pay. Responding with too high of an estimate may immediately disqualify you for the job, while coming in too low may cause the



interviewer to question your value or hire you for a steal of a deal. There are a number of websites that provide information that may help determine a rate such as Glassdoor, PayScale, and Live Salary.

10. Pick out an outfit

Pick out your best strong outfit for the interview. If your suit needs ironing, then do that now so it is done. If your blouse needs dry cleaning, get it done before it is too late. Take a shower either the night before or morning of the interview so that there is no chance of unpleasant body odors. This includes washing your hair, cleaning your nails, brushing your teeth, trimming facial hair, wearing deodorant, picking out minimal accessories, using minimal perfume or aftershave, and wearing neutral makeup for women. Avoid flashy clothing, uncomfortable shoes, clothes with logos, and showing too much skin.

11. Pack your bag

Pack the bag or briefcase you will be taking to the interview with a few extra copies of your resume, cover letter, references, portfolio, etc. in case they need a copy. Include any other items you think you may need in your bag like a pen, blank paper, and a breath mint. Don't load your bag with excessive stuff that will just get in the way and make you look like a pack rat.

12. Plan your travel

Figure out the best method for getting to the interview. Whether you take a bus, subway, taxi, train, car, or some other method of transportation, go on a practice run a few days before at the time of the interview so you can know of any heavy traffic that may delay you getting to the office on time. You want to arrive 10-15 minutes early. If you get there more than 15 minutes early, sit someplace to practice some more before going in.

13. Sleep

The most important part of preparing for an interview is to get plenty of sleep the night before.



Arriving to an interview on just a few hours of sleep won't do you any favors. Go home early the night before and relax. Skip the partying the night before the interview. On the other hand, don't go overboard and sleep so much that you are groggy during the interview.

To learn more about preparing for an interview, read these articles:

- [10 Ways to Describe Yourself during a Job Interview](#)
- [19 Interview Tips to Help You on the Big Day](#)
- [The 7 Best Questions to Ask Your Interviewer](#)

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