



Congratulations on your scheduled interview! Getting to this step in the hiring process is a big accomplishment. Making sure you are prepared to have a successful interview is important so here are a few things to support you in this next step.

If you have any additional questions regarding your interview, please don't hesitate to reach out to us directly.

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BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Dress to impress – for both in person and video interviews.
 - For a video interview, the urge to be less formal because you're in your own home is understandable, but it might send the wrong message about how interested you are in the role. You also want to make sure your outfit looks good on camera. Try it on in front of the same platform you'll be using for the interview.
- Arrive a little early.

IN PERSON INTERVIEW

- Know the location of your interview and plan your route accordingly. Don't forget to allow for traffic.
- When the interviewer greets you, smile warmly and give a firm handshake.
- Greet everyone pleasantly and politely.
- Expect a few minutes of small talk. Check your surroundings for clues on the personality of your interviewer and culture of the company.
- Maintain eye contact without staring. Don't cross your arms across your chest, and do not slouch in your chair.

PHONE INTERVIEW

- Choose an appropriate interview space that is quiet, comfortable, and private.
- Have a copy of your resume available for your reference when answering questions.
- Keep a short list of your qualifications and skills specific to the job you're interviewing close at hand- a "cheat sheet" will help you respond to related questions without fumbling for words.
- Make sure your phone isn't set to block unknown callers.
- Be ready to take notes.
- Be sure to smile. Smiling will project a positive image to the listener and will change the tone of your voice.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.

VIDEO INTERVIEW

- Test Your Tech
 - Cut down on technical difficulties by testing out your setup ahead of time using the same platform, internet connection, and hardware you'll be using for your interview.

- Set Up Your Shot
 - Choose a quiet area and set up in front of the most neutral background you can—either a blank wall or a room without a lot of distracting clutter or decoration. Make sure you're well lit (natural light is best) with your light source behind your computer or phone, not behind you. (And if you must use a phone, prop it up rather than holding it in your hand.) If it's hard for you to find a space with good natural lighting in your home, you might consider investing in a selfie ring light that sits around the camera on your laptop or phone.
- Don't Sit Too Far or Too Close
 - Just like you wouldn't sit three inches or eight feet from your interviewer in a conference room, you don't want to sit an uncomfortable distance from your computer. When you're setting up your chair, you'll want to make sure you don't end up looking too tiny or too huge. To be well proportioned, make sure there's a bit of empty space on the screen above your head and check that your shoulders and upper chest are visible.
- Prep for Optimal Eye Contact
 - While actual eye contact isn't possible in a video interview, you'll want to get as close as possible. Make sure you've found a comfortable distance that allows you to look straight ahead rather than down at the camera. And place the window where your interviewer will appear on the same monitor as your camera and move it as close to the camera as possible centered is best.
- Pay Attention to How You Sound, Too
 - People are usually concerned with how they look in a video interview and often forget to think about how they sound. Take note of how fast you speak, how you pause, and the tone and pitch of your voice. Be sure to speak clearly and at a reasonable pace but keep it natural. Since there's less body language-based communication in a video interview, you also want the *way* you speak to help get across how you feel about what you're saying. Make sure you sound excited when discussing the things you're passionate about, for example.
- Minimize Interruptions—But Take Them in Stride If They Happen
 - Do whatever you can to cut down on the chances of being interrupted. If you can, set up in a room where you can close the door and inform anyone you share a space with that they shouldn't disturb you during your interview (and give yourself a cushion on either side.) Check your space the day before for any unexpected distractions. You don't want to be caught off guard by an ongoing construction project, for example. And make sure you turn off or silence your phone or any other electronic device that might make noise and pause any notifications on your computer.
 - If there's a high chance of you being interrupted by something outside of your control, mentioning it at the start can prepare your interviewer and show them you're proactive. It can also help settle your nerves about the situation. For example, if you have a dog in the next room that might start barking, you can make your interviewer aware of that possibility.

RESEARCH THE EMPLOYER

The importance of “doing your homework” before the interview cannot be overstated. One of the first questions you may be asked is “what do you know about our company?” Unless you are able to speak intelligently about what they do, you may not be able to recover for the rest of the interview.

What should you find out about the company?

- What products or services do they provide? Is there anything new they will be promoting soon?
- Have they received any publicity lately? What are the important aspects of the company’s history? Have they been bought? Recently merged?
- What are the current trends or issues in that industry? What kind of predictions is there for their type of business?
- Who are the key players in their company and/or industry?
- Who is their competition? How do their products and/or services compare?
- What is the organizational culture like? Conservative? Risk-taking?

DEVELOP YOUR OWN INTERVIEW STRATEGY

You only have limited time to express to the interviewer how your skills will benefit them, so be succinct, but with enough depth to be meaningful.

- Make a list of the key points you want to make sure you cover in the interview. This could include your most valuable skills, your knowledge of their market, a networking contact you made there.
 - Insert these points in appropriate places during your interview to ensure the interviewer receives this important information, even if he or she does not directly ask a question, which would elicit this response.
- Develop a three or four sentence statement about yourself, which describes your best skills and attributes. Having this kind of statement prepared in advance keeps you focused on expressing your most important assets without rambling. It can also be used as a starting point to the question “tell me about yourself.”
 - Think of examples that illustrate your skills. For example, if an interviewer asks “what are your strengths?” replying with “I’m a good communicator” is not very descriptive. Backing up this claim with “I would say I am a good communicator based
 - on several experiences that I had in my last job. For instance, Practice interviewing with a friend.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following is a list of common interview questions. If you come to the interview with a clear understanding of who you are, your strengths and abilities, and what you want, you will be able to answer any of these questions.

- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you know about our company?
- What special qualities do you bring to this job?
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you want to be doing in five years? Ten years?
- What do you look for in a manager?
- How would your coworkers and boss describe you?

- Tell me about a difficult work situation and how you handled it.
- Describe how you typically approach a project.
- How do you motivate people and what is your management style?
- What would you want to work on first if you were offered the job?
- Why should we hire you?
- What was your toughest job challenge & how did you deal with it?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What do you think it takes to succeed here?
- Do you prefer to work w/ others or on your own?
- What do you look for in a job?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- How do you spend your spare time?
- Describe your ideal work environment.
- What motivates you?
- What decisions are difficult for you to make?
- How do you handle stress?
- Tell me about the best job you ever had.
- Do you have any questions?

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Listen carefully to the questions you are asked. Take a moment to reflect on a difficult question before jumping into a response. Ask for clarification of a question if you need it.
- Be positive in all your comments about previous employers and coworkers.
 - Even if a direct question is asked which requires you to discuss something potentially negative, e.g. “What kind of people (or bosses) do you have a difficult time working with?” find a way to say what you learned from this experience, how this ultimately helped you in some way, etc. Conclude your answer on a positive note.
 - Your interviewer will probably ask you open-ended questions, which require more than a yes/no answer. If your interviewer is less experienced and doesn’t ask these types of questions, be sure to elaborate on your responses to provide a complete picture of your skills.
 - Give plenty of concrete examples of your abilities. If appropriate, tell a short story about how you solved a problem, took the initiative on a project, motivated coworkers, etc. A brief story that illustrates your personality and talents in action will be remembered more than a dry statement of a specific skill.
 - Express your enthusiasm for the position - appear confident that you know you would be an asset to several organizations.
 - If the interview is getting off track on unrelated tangents, subtly bring the conversation back around to your strengths and what you can offer the company.

- Remember that you are interviewing the interviewer as well. Both of you have the same goal which is to determine if you are a good match for each other. Find out what you need to know so you can make an informed decision if the job is offered to you.

ASK QUESTIONS

Asking intelligent questions of your interviewer accomplishes two important goals. First, it shows your interest and understanding of the position and company. And secondly, it provides you with the information you need to make an informed decision about accepting an offer should you be extended one. Below are some sample questions to consider.

- **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMPANY**

- What plans does the company have for future growth?
- What specific goals do you have for this department and how does this position fit in with those goals?
- Is it common for the company to promote from within?
- Can you describe the corporate culture here?
- What is the company's philosophy (regarding customer service, employee relations, quality, etc.)?

- **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MARKET SHARE**

- What are the primary goods and/or services?
- Who are your customers and/or suppliers?
- How is this market special and what is the company's market share?
- What can you tell me about the competition?

- **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MARKET SHARE**

- What kind of personal qualities are you seeking in candidates for this position?
- Is this a new position? If not, why did the last person in this position leave?
- What is the typical career path for someone in this position?
- Can you describe the reporting lines?
- What is expected of the successful candidate?
- What is the timeframe for achieving these expectations?
- Who will provide the training for this position?

- **CLOSING QUESTIONS**

- What is the decision timeframe, and will there be a follow up interview?
- Do you have sufficient information about my qualifications to decide or may I provide additional information?
- What are the next steps? (Who will contact whom and when.)

WRAPPING IT UP

- Follow the interviewer's lead about when the interview is ending. Don't initiate this step yourself.
- Conclude with more than "thanks for your time." Express your interest in the company again and reinforce briefly why you are a good match for the position.
- Find out what the next step is. Do they have more candidates to interview? Will there be a second interview? When does the position start? Is there any other information you can supply to help the interviewer in his or her decision?

- Ask if you can follow up in a few days to see how their decision-making process is going. Thank the interviewer for meeting with you.
- Always send a thank you letter to your interviewer(s). This is yet another way to gain positive exposure. Once again, say more than “thanks.” Comment on something you learned from the interview if appropriate. Also reiterate in a few sentences how you can benefit the company.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Always follow up an interview with a thank-you note.

How to Write a Thank You Email

- Your email should be short, sincere, and sent within 24 hours of your interview.
- Address the email to the person who interviewed you and make sure you spell their name correctly. If their name is Christopher and they asked you to call them Chris in the interview, address them as such in your follow-up. If you interviewed with multiple people, it’s a good practice to send each person a brief message as well.
- Thank the person for their time and consideration.
- Briefly highlight why you are interested in the company/opportunity - express your continued interest in the job opportunity.
- Include a sentence or two about what you can bring to the organization.
- Offer to answer any questions.