



INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Your Guide to First Impressions

"CONFIDENCE COMES FROM BEING PREPARED."
JOHN WOODEN

CONVERSATION PREPAREDNESS



Take some time and put some thought into the initial list of questions that you'd like to ask during your interview. To get started, think about what questions you need answered to know if this is the right opportunity. What areas do you need clarified to feel comfortable that this environment is one in which you can thrive?

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- How do you measure success in your company? Tell me about the best person you have ever had in this position and what made that person unique.
- What are some of the common denominators that exist with the more successful employees of this company?
- What are the biggest challenges one will face in this role?
- What are the two most important problems that need to be addressed or corrected in the first six months by the person in this position?
- What are the key responsibilities for this position and which are most important?
- What results are expected of this position? What are examples of the best results produced by people in this role?
- Why did my predecessor leave this position?
- Tell me about your background and what attracted you here.
- What advancement can a person expect, in this company and in the industry at large, after doing this job well?
- What are some of the company's short and long-range objectives?
- In what areas does this company excel? In what areas does this company have some limitations?
- What are the company or department goals for this year and next?
- How will I be evaluated, and how often?

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

List out professional accomplishments and achievements, as well as the strategy behind those results. Start with your most recent company and any other organizations in recent history.

THINK THROUGH

- Did you help to increase sales, productivity, or efficiency? What was the percentage or dollar contribution? How did you do this? Did you have a unique approach or different results than others?
- Did you institute any new systems or changes? What was the situation that led to the change? Who approved that system? Why was this system selected over others? What happened as a result?
- Were you ever promoted? Why were you promoted? How long between promotions? Did you do something outstanding? How much more responsibility? Did you get to manage people? How many? Were you promoted by more than one party? Were you given significant salary increases or raises?
- Did you train anyone? Did you develop training technique? Compare your results to others. Is your technique being used by others? Why is that?
- Did you help to establish any new goals or objectives for your company? Did you convince management that they should adopt these goals or objectives? Why were they adopted?
- Did you change the nature or scope of your job? Why or how did you redefine your position? Have others with similar positions had their positions redefined because of you? Were there responsibility changes because of this? What were they?
- Did you ever undertake a project on a voluntary basis?

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

YOUR ATTIRE

- A navy blue, dark gray, or black suit is appropriate for most positions. Be sure it's cleaned and pressed.
- Shirts should be freshly laundered and well pressed, and a quiet tie with a subtle design is suitable for a first interview. For both, avoid loud colors and busy designs.
- Shoes that are black and freshly polished are a safe choice for an interview. Socks should be black or blue and worn over the calf. Ladies, avoid open-toed shoes.
- Fingernails should be short, clean, and freshly manicured if possible. Ladies, choose subtle colors over bright colors for nail polishes.
- Hair should be well-groomed and freshly trimmed. Avoid combing or brushing hair with your jacket on.
- Jewelry should be limited and subtle.
- Avoid colognes or fragrances completely.
- Do not take your cell phone into the interview. For ladies, avoid oversized purses if possible.



INTERVIEW CHECKLIST (cont.)

YOUR ARRIVAL

- Arrive no earlier than fifteen minutes, but no later than five minutes, prior to the interview.
- Prior to entering the building, chew mint gum or a breath mint – but do not chew gum during the interview.
- Allow adequate time for traffic, parking, and a last-minute appearance check.
- Treat everyone you meet as if they are the decision maker, including the receptionist.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Try to maintain a 50/50 balance between talking and listening.
- Be aware of body language; maintain good posture, lean forward slightly to indicate interest, and maintain eye contact.
- With any open-ended question, reframe to understand what specifically the interviewer would like you to cover. For example, if the question is “tell me about yourself,” your response could be, “of course! Is there a specific area you’d like me to start?”
- With any confusing, or multi-angled questions, reframe to

BRING WITH YOU

- Printed directions to the interview, as well as JFSPartners' phone number and the client's phone number (in the case you run late).
- A pad of paper and pen (preferably a folio).
- Three copies of your resume (make sure the resume is identical to the one supplied to the interviewer).
- Samples of your work, if relevant and appropriate. Never discuss or show proprietary information.
- Your prepared questions for the interviewer.

clarify if you are responding with the type of information they are looking for. For example, if the question is “tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a supervisor,” your clarifying response could be “would you like me to discuss my relationship with my last supervisor?”

- If you are even slightly unsure about a specific question, or need time to formulate and process your response, ask for clarification: “can you be more specific? I want to make sure I respond accurately to what you are asking for.”

AVOID


- Speaking negatively about your current situation, boss, or working environment.
- Asking questions about or sharing information regarding current or expected compensation.

CLOSING

- Unless you are absolutely certain you would not like to move forward in the interviewing process, close for next steps. Ask how they perceive you fitting in to the organization, and if there are any areas that haven't been covered that are important to the hiring decision.
- An example close: “I like what I have heard today and am very interested in moving forward. I understand you are looking for someone in this role who has (A, B, and C) and as we've discussed, I have (specific experience with A, B, and C). Before I leave, are there any more questions about my background or qualifications that I can answer or clarify for you to better assess my fit within your team?”



FOLLOWING THE MEETING

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- Call your JFSPartners Search Consultant and we will discuss what you liked, what questions you still have, what questions you perceive they have about you, and your interest in next steps.
 - Send a hand-written card or an email to each person that you met, thanking them for their time. Cite specifics from the meeting and cover any areas further you think may need supplementation.