



Entry level  
job seeker's  
guide to  
interviewing

# Got a job interview coming up?



We would love for you to get that job!

We've been connecting students and grads to entry-level jobs for many years now, so we know a thing or two about what will make you stand out.

Don't make the mistake of showing up unprepared. Here's how we recommend you get ready.

A common mistake that costs people the job is not doing research to prepare. Make sure to read about the organization, any news about the industry, and review LinkedIn profiles of people who work in the same department as the job you applied for.

If you can't demonstrate in the interview that you understand anything about their organization, they won't be convinced you really care about the job.

# Research the organization



# Prepare some stories



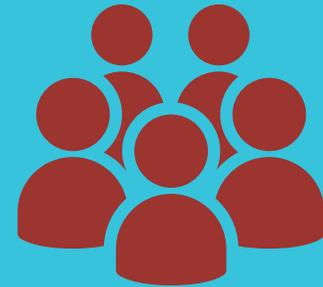
Prepare these beforehand. Think about what you are proud of, like when you went above and beyond to help a customer, or when you exceeded your boss' expectations, or when you worked hard to achieve something.

Your success stories should have a happy ending, preferably with a specific result such as completing a project, gaining a customer, saving your company money, etc. Practice your stories out loud before the interview.

Don't underestimate how powerful this can be. Connect with people who currently work there (e.g. via LinkedIn), and ask them about the organizational culture, and whether they know the hiring manager.

A week after your interview, send them a message about how excited you are and ask if they're willing to remind the hiring manager about you.

# Network with people inside



# Practice describing your skills



Some people struggle with “selling” their skills to a recruiter. But if you are honest about your strengths and experience, it won’t sound like bragging. To get comfortable talking about what makes you special, practice with people you trust or in front of a mirror.

It might help to think about how professors or friends would describe you. Reflect on what you have done well in school or work, and describe that with confidence. Just saying it out loud a few times will make you sound more confident!

Interviewers want to know how you've acted in challenging situations. Give specific answers that describe the situation, the action you took and the results from your action.

Nervous candidates tend to either give too short or too long answers. Make sure you know what points to cover. Elaborate but don't repeat yourself or go off on tangents.

# Give specific answers



# How to answer 4 common questions

## ④ Why should I hire you?

If you've researched the position and company, you'll know what to focus on. Explain your relevant skills and how they relate to the position, the organizational culture, and how you are eager to make contributions as soon as possible.

## ③ What are your strengths & weaknesses?

Provide examples or stories about your strengths that relate directly to the job posting. When you describe your weaknesses, avoid talking about an area that is specifically called for on the job posting. Also, don't provide a canned response like, "I work too hard." Follow your answer with how you are taking steps to strengthen this area.



## ①

## Tell me about yourself

It is good to mention a few of your personal interests, which help to build a relationship with your interviewer. However, you should describe how your experience relates to the organization and the job, and explain your career goals.

## ②

## Why do you want to work here?

Talk about their products and services, industry, and any related or recent news affecting the company—if all that interests you and relates to your career goals. Then, tie in how you believe you can contribute to the organization's mission or fill business needs.

Dress more  
formally  
than most  
employees



You will almost never get punished in an interview for dressing too formally. If you dress too casually, you risk making the impression that you're not taking the job seriously. At a finance or law firm, wear a neutral colored business suit (black, gray, navy blue), a button-down shirt, dark closed-toe shoes, and a tie for men. At a creative marketing firm or a tech startup, you would add color or an accent piece like a necklace or flashy tie, and a less formal blazer cut.

Make sure you have showered, you have a professional haircut, your nails are trimmed, your shoes are polished, and go easy on the makeup and perfume or cologne.

# Ask good questions at the end

## ① Employee evaluation

"How will my progress will be measured?" "What are your expectations for this role during the first 30 - 90 days?"

## ⑥ The hiring manager

"Would you please tell me about yourself and your own career path?" "What skills or characteristics have led to your success here?"

## ⑤ The organization

"How do you believe the organization makes a positive impact in the community or the world?" "Is the company growing?"



## ② The organizational culture

"How would you describe the culture here, and how do people espouse organizational values?" "What do you like best about working for this company?"

## ③ Growth opportunities

"What cross-functional training might be available to me to explore new skills?" "What is the typical career path for someone in this position?"

## ④ The job

"What are the biggest challenges of this job?" "What can you tell me about why the last person left this position?"

Arriving late shows disrespect for your interviewer's time, so give yourself enough time to arrive 10 minutes early. If there's an accident slowing you down on the way and you know going to be late, you need to call.

Don't put your phone on the table. Turn it off so you're positive it won't distract you.

Don't be late  
and put your  
phone away



# Follow up afterwards



The interview is just the beginning. Following up is critical. Get your interviewers' business cards so you don't forget their names. Ask them to connect on LinkedIn and send them a thank you card or email. Depending on the timeline they gave you for the hiring process, follow up later to reiterate how excited you are.

When you follow up, mention something specific your interviewer said, especially about a common interest, and reiterate your enthusiasm and interest in the job.

It will likely impress the heck out of your interviewer if you ask how you can improve yourself in a future interview.

Asking for feedback is a sure way to show them that you want to improve and succeed. In addition, even if you don't get the job, you will have an idea of how to correct your mistakes.

# Get feedback!



# Combat bias against you

## ① Get a true sense of the organizational culture

Do you really want to work there? Chat with the front desk person about the office culture. During the selection process, if you feel disrespected, don't discount those feelings. Your goal is to find a job where you will be respected and valued. Share details of your interactions with an advisor or parent to get a second opinion.

## Make sure your likability is off the charts

This does not mean happy-go-lucky or being a jokester. It means being a little vulnerable, open and relatable. Try hard right away to find some level of commonality with your interviewers. Request to meet any additional team members. When you do, make sure you smile and ask about their jobs.



## ② Work hard to build a network

Employers rely heavily on their networks to hire new people and those networks are filled with lots of white, middle class males. If that doesn't describe you, you need to work hard to build a network of people who can vouch for you. When you meet anyone who works at the organization, look them up on LinkedIn and ask to connect. When they accept, ask them about their organization, and if you're interested in their own career path, ask for an informational interview.

③

# Now go get that job!



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