

TURNINGPOINT GUIDE

TIME-TESTED BEST PRACTICES FOR JOB INTERVIEWS

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You've scoured job boards, got a hot lead from a recruiter, set up job alerts on Glassdoor, networked your way through your business contacts, proofread and perfected your resume and sent it out to a myriad of opportunities.

At last, the reward for all of the effort you've undertaken - the job interview.

Here are best practices culled from thousands of interviews, in all types of industries, at all levels to help you seize this opportunity to shine.

It will show you what to prepare, how to think about answering different types of questions, and what your overall interview game plan should be.

Preparation matters, and we hope you use this guide to gain a competitive edge in your search.

REAL WORLD INTERVIEWING

In an ideal world, before the interview ever happens, you will have chosen the right type of role to interview for in the first place. You will have gone through the process of tailoring your resume to the job description, choosing the right results and stories to highlight, including the right keywords, and making it easy for the hiring team to draw parallels between your experience and this role.

Also in the ideal world, that job description would be available, complete, truthful, and transparent about what the organization really needs. Hopefully your interviewer will have carefully reviewed everything you wrote on your resume (and/or cover letter) beforehand, and thought about what your background has in common with the role. The interview would be fair, collaborative, and honest in both directions.

In the real world, none of this happens to the extent that it should.

You've probably walked into an interview to find that the person hasn't looked at your resume; you've been called to interview for one role but found out they just changed the duties or level; you think you have all of the requirements they listed but there's just that one little skill they forgot to mention that happens to be the MOST important one. Yikes.

For better or worse, the responsibility for spending the time to research, plan and map out your interview strategy falls solely on YOU, and this guide is here to lead the way.

WHAT (AND WHY) TO RESEARCH BEFORE AN INTERVIEW

How much research should a job seeker do before an interview?

A recent discussion on LinkedIn explored this question, garnering opinions from recruiters, hiring managers, career coaches and job seekers.

Job seekers mostly said that their interview preparation time typically takes 15-20 minutes, and they do the majority of that preparation before the phone screen stage.

Recruiters, managers & career pros said somewhere between one and 15 hours.

FIFTEEN HOURS. That seems a bit excessive, right? You may wonder, how on earth am I supposed to find the time to prepare for 15 hours for one 30 minute call, times the number of jobs I'm applying to, plus all of my other responsibilities?

The answer, of course, is that you can't. At least, you can't do that for every phone screen, and you can't do it for every person you talk to. You can't do it for jobs you don't really care about, or that you're interviewing "for practice." However, if you're progressing through interview stages and things are getting serious, your research should get close to that target, over time.

If you're wondering what on earth you could possibly research and prepare for 15 hours, we'll get to that in a bit. For now, here's a best-practices guide for how long interview prep should take you, for real.

YOUR GOAL FOR INTERVIEW PREP TIME

ONE-TIME DEEP-DIVE PREPARATION: 10 HOURS

Preparing and practicing general answers to the 100 Interview Questions in this guide.
Researching target ROLE competencies, technologies, skills, keywords and themes.
Checking your target INDUSTRY conferences, panels, influencers to understand what's state-of-the-art in that market.

JOB-SPECIFIC PREPARATION: 2-5 HOURS

Investigating the company and the background of the people you'll meet.
Learning what this specific company is up against in the market - its customers, its competitors, its differentiators, etc..
Mapping your own experience directly to the job posting.

STRAIGHT TALK ON INTERVIEW RESEARCH

But I've never spent that long preparing for an interview, and I've gotten jobs before. Is it really necessary?

In some instances, no! If you're working at a competitor company, with pretty much the same job title, you're likely to do pretty well no matter what you do. If your friend owns the company that's hiring, ditto. If you have a really rare skill set, or if you've cultivated your thought leadership so you're an industry "rock star," you're also likely to do quite well for yourself, even with a shorter preparation time.

Right now, however, is not a candidate's market, in most industries. Right now is not the time to wing it, with both unemployed and unhappily-employed job seekers eyeing the same role you are.

While employers are continuing to hire, you'll need to optimize your chances to land the job you want. Let's take a look at what type of research you can do before the interview begins and how you can differentiate yourself from other candidates.

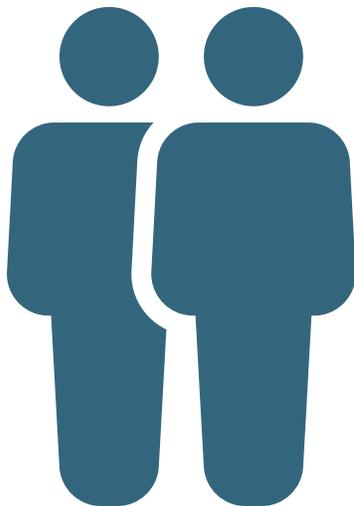
**THERE'S LOTS OF COMPETITION, BUT
THERE'S ONLY ONE YOU!**

A TALE OF TWO CANDIDATES

Candidate A

Like the majority of job seekers, **Candidate A** does a few common things to prepare for the interview. **Candidate A has:**

- Read the job description
- Browsed the company's site
- Looked for LinkedIn contacts who work there
- Mentally rehearsed an answer about his fit for the job & industry experience
- Thought about what he needs to know about pay/culture/role before he accepts the job



Candidate B

Candidate B takes the time to research the company, the role and the industry.

Candidate B has:

- Read the job description
- Turned the description into practice questions
- Prepared case studies and metrics/results specific to the role
- Researched any new terms/keywords from the description
- Reviewed other postings from the company to glean insights about initiatives, needs & structure
- Browsed the company's site, all executive bios, all products/services, and read the blog if they have one
- Read recent press releases
- Researched the company in Google News, LinkedIn and Twitter
- Watched product videos on their YouTube channel
- Researched the industry's emerging news via associations & conference descriptions
- Identified emerging ideas, best practices and skills for this role and has a game plan for how to talk about those on an interview
- Watched the organization's most recent webinar
- Researched company competitors
- Looked for LinkedIn contacts who work there
- Look up the background of interviewers
- Practiced answers to the top 100 questions
- Planned thoughtful questions for the employer that are specific to the role/company

Which candidate is poised to make a better impression?

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Even without mentioning having done all that up-front homework, Candidate B has a better chance of coming across to the interviewer as:

More confident

More grounded in the role & the industry

A better communicator, with examples top of mind

Fluent in the challenges of the company

Aware of the competitive landscape

Up-to-date on emerging trends and skills

Invested in the company's success

More likely to stick around and not jump ship for a better opportunity

A high-value candidate that's worth premium pay

Someone who's ready and willing to do what it takes to learn quickly

In short, your research shows you to be a go-getter - precisely the type of person they want on their team.

THE NUMBER ONE THING YOU NEED TO KNOW

Here's the question you need to be able to answer if you're going on a job interview in a competitive job market:

What do you bring to our team right now, beyond what's on the job description, that will help us grow in this economy?

Is it a unique skill or approach?

Is it a demonstrated track record of solving the same problem we have right now?

Is it a history of innovation, efficiency and doing more with less?

Is it deep knowledge of our industry?

Is it subject matter expertise in your field?

Presumably, everyone else applying for the same role has reasonably the same SKILLSET as you do. That's what we call "table stakes" - you wouldn't be invited in for an interview if they didn't think you had the skills for the role.

What they want to know on the interview is whether you have ingenuity, perspective, communication skills, perseverance, and a track record of going above and beyond what's required. (Another reason why doing interview research pays off.)

A data analyst candidate can talk about finding improvement or efficiency insight within the data, above and beyond running reports and tracking metrics/KPIs.

A manager can talk about how to create lean team performance, optimize remote team communications, and bring in best practices for distributed operations.

An executive can talk about leading change management, finding untapped opportunities, running "Plan A, B and C" simultaneously, and embracing disruption as a growth strategy.

This is what will make or break your candidacy. They may not ask it directly, but they want to know ... so make sure you have your answer ready!

HOW TO ANSWER THE TOUGH QUESTIONS THAT COME YOUR WAY

The Why and What (and Rarely How) Method

Most people instinctively answer interview questions in a completely upside-down manner.

Most people focus their interview answers way too much on the prior- company-specific detail (the **How**), instead of the framework/repeatable model (the **What**), or the universally interesting business problem/growth opportunity (the **Why**). In fact, interviewers respond best to the opposite approach.

The best interview answers always start with WHY, then WHAT, and just barely touch on the HOW

"Why" - focused statements - which should begin each interview answer - speak to the reason you needed to do your work in the first place. They pertain to the BUSINESS ISSUE, the ORGANIZATIONAL NEED, the STRATEGY for the process in the first place, and OUTCOME you were hoping to deliver. They position you as someone who cares about the RESULTS you're delivering, and knows how it fits into the big picture.

"What" answers - which should be the meat-and-potatoes of your answers - focus on the general, transferable nature of the work you were doing. They focus on the GENERAL PROCESS, the SUMMARY, and the FRAMEWORK or MODEL you followed in your work.

"How" answers focus on the step-by-step actions you took to deliver your work product. They focus on the TOOLS you used, the DETAILS of the process or project, and the SPECIFICS of your work at your prior employer. They're fine to be sprinkled in here and there, or drilled down at the request of the interviewer, but not the main thrust of your answers. Answering at a "how" level too often counter-intuitively breaks down their confidence in you, instead of making it clear that you know what you're doing.

Some examples of How, What, and Why are on the following pages.

HOW TO ANSWER THE TOUGH QUESTIONS THAT COME YOUR WAY, CONTINUED ...

"How" Answers

Here's an example of a "How" interview answer:

Q: *Talk to me about the KPIs (key performance indicators) you were tracking in that role.*

**HOW: *"Each month I'd email people to get their metrics, and then I'd load them into an Excel spreadsheet and look at how we were tracking for different metrics. I'd pull them out & put them in Powerpoint for us to talk about as a management team. We looked at things like churn, inquiry rate, and number of seats being utilized for our X product."
(how = underlined)***

- positions you as a "following orders" kind of person rather than someone who sees the big picture
- pegs you as a junior level "spreadsheet jockey" (in which case they'll likely hire a cheaper, younger person)
- doesn't display your flexibility, creativity, or strategic thinking
- almost always having some step in the process that's different than theirs (which opens up a question about whether you can follow their model or if you're stuck in your ways)
- likely too specific to your prior employer, often using acronyms and product names, and not focused on your overall capabilities that are transferable from job to job.

"How" answers are more likely to hurt you than help you in an interview.

You should always first answer interview questions with a Why, and then a What, and that should satisfy the interviewer, who will move on to the next question.

However, if an interviewer feels they need more clarification on something, for example what technology or tool you used, then they'll ask and you should readily (and briefly, keeping your answer relatable to their team), answer How.

HOW TO ANSWER THE TOUGH QUESTIONS THAT COME YOUR WAY

The Why and What (and Rarely How) Method, continued ...

"What" Answers

"What" means the overall process, model, framework, or approach you followed. It doesn't list out specific steps, but focuses on what's likely universally true in all similar functions, across companies. A "What" answer generally summarizes at a high level what you did, and allows them to ask for more detail if they'd like.

The "What" should comprise 80% of your interview conversation.

An example of a "What" answer sounds like this:

Q: *Talk to me about the KPIs (key performance indicators) you were tracking in that role.*

WHAT: *"We had a recurring set of metrics - you could call it a business intelligence dashboard- that I led the reporting for, pulling from a lot of different sources. Each month I'd oversee the process of gathering the full data we needed, analyze it and highlight the variances and opportunities for the team to talk about."* (what = underlined)

A "What" answer:

- positions you as someone in control (even if it's just of that process and not a whole team)
- elevates your daily work into truthful, yet higher-level terms
- Displays initiative and flexibility
- Showcases your transferable skills

HOW TO ANSWER THE TOUGH QUESTIONS THAT COME YOUR WAY

"Why" Answers

Since organizations change the HOW all the time (new tools, technologies, team structures), your adaptability may prove more important than your current skill. When you start with the Why, it indicates your flexibility to changing what you're doing and how you're working if there's a more efficient or effective way to get to your goal. A "Why" answer is also much more likely to be the same from company to company, making your experience more universal.

Whenever possible, you should start every answer with a brief "Why" statement before proceeding to the "What."

An example of a "Why" beginning sounds like this:

Q: *Talk to me about the KPIs (key performance indicators) you were tracking in that role.*

A: "It was important to the team to have really solid, predictive metrics that they could use to understand the health of the business and make key decisions. So, we built a recurring set of metrics - you could call it a business intelligence dashboard- that I led the reporting for, pulling from a lot of different sources. Each month I'd make sure we had the full data we needed, analyze it and flag variances and opportunities for the team to make investment decisions for the upcoming quarter." (why = underlined)

"Why" answers sound like:

- "It was important that we ..."
- "One thing we really focused on was ..."
- "We were in a really critical time and so we ..."
- "We were thinking about how we could better ..."
- "One of our strategic objectives for the year was to ..."
- "When it came to (our function), management really valued ..."

Next time you get an interview question, try to start with WHY!

YOUR INTERVIEW A-GAME: HERE ARE THE 100 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE READY TO ANSWER

No two job interviews are exactly alike. You might only meet with Human Resources and your future boss, or interview panel-style with several teammates and stakeholders, or fill a day with one-on-one conversations. But no matter how the employer sets up your interview, there are two things they want to figure out: can you do this job, and do you want to?

We've collected 100 of the most-asked questions you're likely to encounter in a job interview. Don't panic: you don't have to memorize 100 answers. But as you prepare to impress the company with your skills, experience, professionalism, and enthusiasm, it helps to understand the 10 kinds of question interviewers ask.

HOW TO USE THE LIST

To that end, here's how to use this list. First, scan the 10 section headers for an overview of the types of things interviewers ask about. Next, read the questions carefully, noting the ones you don't yet have a ready answer for. Now you have a valuable collection of jumping-off points you can use to practice framing your experience in terms of the lessons you've learned and your desired next steps on your career path.

THE LIST: 100 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS YOU'RE LIKELY TO BE ASKED

GENERAL CAREER PATH QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What kind of job are you looking for?
3. Why are you leaving your current job?
4. Why did you leave your previous job(s)?
5. What's been your favorite job to date, and why?
6. Where do you see yourself in five years?
7. Why did you get into this field in the first place?
8. What sets you apart from other people?
9. What inspires you? What are you passionate about?
10. What gets you out of bed in the morning?

YOUR GAME PLAN FOR THESE QUESTIONS

In general, they're looking to HEAR YOUR CAREER STORY to see if they trust you. They're wondering if you've had performance troubles, if you're looking for "any job" or this one in particular, and if you can connect your passion to your work. They want a broad brush picture of the skills you bring. They're also generally feeling you out to see your general disposition and your work ethic, communication skills, and dedication.

You need to have a COHERENT, RELEVANT CAREER NARRATIVE at the ready.

THE LIST: CONTINUED

MOTIVATION QUESTIONS (RELATED TO THIS JOB)

11. Why do you want this job?
12. How does this role fit into your ideal career path?
13. What do you think you'd learn from this role?
14. What makes you interested in this (industry/sector)?
15. What's the greatest strength you'd bring to this role?
16. Why would you take this role instead of another one?
17. Why should we hire you?
18. What excites you about (this job)?
19. If we hired you and you grew within the organization, what role would you ideally grow into, and why?
20. If you weren't applying for this role, what other roles would you be interviewing for and why?

YOUR GAME PLAN FOR THESE QUESTIONS

In general, they're looking to see if YOU'RE LIKELY TO STAY if they offer you the job. Your answers need to help them understand that you have a passion for the type of work AND an interest in the industry/sector of the hiring organization. They want to hear how you'll go above and beyond the job description, embrace change, and be a positive, dedicated employee.

You need to have examples that demonstrate your INTEREST, PASSION, INNOVATION and DEDICATION.

THE LIST: CONTINUED

EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS

21. Walk me through your background.
22. Tell me about your specific experience that relates to this role
23. Tell me about (particular job on your resume).
24. What skills do you have for this role that others might not?
25. What experience do you have with (each bullet point in the job description)?
26. What role have you held that is the most similar to this one?
27. Have you ever managed (x function) previously?
28. (If managerial) - tell me about your management experience.
29. Have you ever used (emerging technology in your industry)?
30. What's the proudest accomplishment in your career?

YOUR GAME PLAN FOR THESE QUESTIONS

In general, they're looking to see if YOU HAVE THE CONFIDENCE to do the job. Your answers need to help them understand that you have both the background they WANT and, as a change agent, the get-up-and-go they NEED to streamline and improve their operations. They want to be reassured that you can hit the ground running and they won't have to burn valuable time getting you up to speed - and also that you'll help bring their organization some fresh perspective on their existing problem.

You need to have examples that demonstrate your COMMUNICATION SKILLS, COMPETENCIES, BROAD APTITUDE and ABILITY TO ADAPT.

THE LIST: CONTINUED

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE/RESEARCH

31. What do you know about our company/organization? What is our mission?
32. Pitch (name of organization that's hiring) to me as if you're talking to a client or partner.
33. What do you think our strengths and weaknesses are as an organization?
34. What has (recruiter/other interviewer) told you so far about us?
35. How do you think (our offering) stacks up against our competitors?
36. Who would you say are the competitors we need to worry about the most?
37. Have you ever used our product/service or attended one of our events?
38. Have you spent any time on our website? What did you learn?
39. What have you heard about us in the marketplace?
40. What can I tell you about our product/company?

YOUR GAME PLAN FOR THESE QUESTIONS

In general, they're looking to see if YOU KNOW THEIR ORGANIZATION so that you can adapt your skills to the specific challenges they face. Your answers need to help them understand that you have done your homework and have an understanding of the company's positioning, products and trends. They want to hear how you can translate your prior experience into their company.

You need to have examples that demonstrate your COMPANY RESEARCH, PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE, and CURRENT INSIGHT INTO THEIR TARGET CUSTOMER NEEDS.

THE LIST: CONTINUED

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

41. What industry best practices would you bring to this role?
42. What kind of certifications or training have you taken recently (or are thinking about taking)?
43. What's your understanding of what's emerging in our field?
44. What's your take on (current idea or trend)?
45. We're thinking about introducing (industry standard/trend), what advice would you give us as we think about whether or not to do it?
46. What do you read/follow about our industry in order to stay current?
47. (If changing into the industry) What do you know about our industry?
48. (If changing into the industry) How would you get up to speed on our industry?
49. How do you think we stand out from our competitors?
50. What do you think it would take for us to become #1 in our space?

YOUR GAME PLAN FOR THESE QUESTIONS

In general, they're looking to see if YOU KNOW THEIR INDUSTRY so that you can quickly help them evolve to meet their changing market needs. Your answers need to help them understand that you have a passion for the sector and an understanding of key industry trends. They want to hear how you can translate your prior experience into their industry.

You need to have examples that demonstrate your MARKET RESEARCH, INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE, and CURRENT INSIGHT INTO TRENDS IN THE FIELD.

THE LIST: CONTINUED

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SKILLS (SPECIFIC TO THIS JOB)

51. What software programs have you used in the past to do your work?
52. Tell me about your experience with (each of the skills in the requirements section).
53. How are you staying current with the skills/technology we need?
54. Walk me through how you do (a core task for this role).
55. What part of this process do you currently work on? At what point does the work come to you, and at what point do you hand it off to others?
56. What metrics do you track for your work?
57. Give me an example of how you've used (skill they need).
58. What gap do you have in your skillset that you'd need to fill quickly in this job?
59. How would you rate yourself (beginner, intermediate, advanced) on the following skills?
60. Teach me about (skill) as if you're explaining it to a new hire.

YOUR GAME PLAN FOR THESE QUESTIONS

In general, they're looking to see if YOU HAVE THE SKILLS that you can quickly jump in to today's problems and help them not only do the job, but do it better than ever. Your answers need to help them understand that you have a baseline skill set and an appetite for learning and growth. They want to hear how you can translate your prior skills into their own setting.

You need to have examples that demonstrate your SKILLS, TASK KNOWLEDGE, and CURRENT TRAINING/ CURRENT TECHNOLOGY for the job.

THE LIST: CONTINUED

PERSONALITY/CULTURE FIT - GENERAL QUESTIONS

61. How would your coworkers/boss describe you to me?
62. Who's the best (or worst) boss you've ever had, and why?
63. What is your greatest strength? What's your greatest weakness?
64. What are you working on about yourself right now?
65. Why have you left each of the roles on your resume?
66. What motivates you?
67. Tell me what you've improved at your current/most recent role.
68. Give me an example of a team member you didn't work well with, and why.
69. What demotivates or frustrates you at work?
70. Tell me what opportunities for improvement have come up in your past few reviews.

YOUR GAME PLAN FOR THESE QUESTIONS

In general, they're looking to see if YOU HAVE THE PERSONALITY that they want on their team. Your answers need to help them understand that you work well with others and an ability to self-reflect and improve. They want to hear how you can adapt to other people's work styles, act as a leader, and take on challenges with grace.

You need to have examples that demonstrate your COMMUNICATION, LEADERSHIP, and GROWTH MINDSET.

THE LIST: CONTINUED

PERSONALITY/CULTURE FIT - BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

71. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a coworker. What was the situation and how did you handle it?
72. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your supervisor. What was the situation and what did you do to work it out?
73. Tell me about a project that went sideways. What happened and what did you do to turn it around?
74. Walk me through a situation where you had to take a leadership role
75. If you had two projects due the same day and one of them was running significantly behind schedule, what would you do?
76. Tell me about a time there was team conflict. What happened and what did you do?
77. Tell me about a time when you had an idea but it wasn't accepted. What was the situation and what did you do?
78. Tell me about a situation where you felt disappointed by the outcome of something. What was the situation and what did you do?
79. What's been your greatest failure - walk me through the situation and what you learned.
80. Tell me about a time when you needed to communicate something complicated or politically sensitive. What was the situation and how did you go about it?

YOUR GAME PLAN FOR THESE QUESTIONS

In general, they're looking to see if YOU SOLVE PROBLEMS RESPECTFULLY and that you won't be a problem employee on their team. Your answers need to help them understand that you can peacefully resolve conflict and you take a big-picture view of potential problems. They want to hear how you faced difficulty or change and didn't let it throw you off your game.

You need to have examples that demonstrate your RESILIENCE, PROBLEM SOLVING CREATIVITY, and TEAM SPIRIT.

THE LIST: CONTINUED

QUESTIONS ASSESSING YOUR PERSPECTIVE/APPROACH TO THE ROLE

81. Based on your experience and your interactions with our company/team, what do you think we could improve?
82. How would you approach getting up to speed quickly?
83. What would your 30/60/90 day plan look like for this role?
84. We're currently dealing with (broken process). How would you help us redefine it?
85. What ideas do you have for increasing (metric that's important)?
86. What ideas do you have for how this role could improve company growth?
87. What systems, processes or tools would you use to help us achieve our objectives?
88. (If managerial) - tell me about your management style and how you'd manage this team.
89. How would you measure performance or success in this role?
90. How would you work cross functionally with other groups in this role?

YOUR GAME PLAN FOR THESE QUESTIONS

In general, they're looking to see if YOU HAVE AN INFORMED POINT OF VIEW and that you are self-motivated enough to drive change. Your answers need to help them understand that you will take a planful approach to your work and you will offer new ideas. They want to hear how you will take responsibility for your own onboarding, learning and success.

You need to have examples that demonstrate your INITIATIVE, PERSPECTIVE, IDEATION, and COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT.

THE LIST: CONTINUED

SALARY/BENEFITS/WORK LIFE BALANCE FIT/PRE-OFFER QUESTIONS

91. What are your salary expectations?
92. What are you currently making (note: this question is illegal in some states, including MA)
93. What would this commute be like for you?
94. This role requires (travel, evening work, etc.); is that OK with you?
95. This role is (part time/remote/55 hours a week); is that OK with you?
96. (If a step down) The title/pay is X, how does that fit for you?
97. What other roles/offers are you considering at the moment?
98. If we were to offer you the role, what kind of notice would you need to give?
99. Would you be prepared to (take an assessment, do an evaluation exercise, give a presentation) as the next stage of this process?
100. (Last but very much not least): What questions do you have for me?

YOUR GAME PLAN FOR THESE QUESTIONS

In general, they're looking to see if YOU WILL BE HAPPY WITH WHAT THEY MIGHT OFFER YOU and that you won't jump ship at the next better offer that comes in. Your answers need to help them understand that you can see yourself as part of this team already and you will offer new ideas. They want to hear how this feels exciting and fun as a challenge for you.

You need to have examples that demonstrate your VALUE, FLEXIBILITY, FIT, and ENTHUSIASM.

PREPARING FOR JOB-SPECIFIC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How to Prepare for a Specific Role

Once you've practiced those general questions, now you need to prepare at a job-specific level.

If you find yourself wondering what you might be asked on an upcoming job interview, there are a few places you can look for clues.

- 1) Glassdoor, Reddit, Quora or similar websites, often have interview questions for specific companies or organizations, collected from others who've interviewed there previously.
- 2) A Google search for "interview questions for (X Company)" or "interview questions for (Y Role)" can often give you a great head start on preparation. Many comprehensive primers exist for things like "50 Product Manager Interview Questions," built to help you get a head start.
- 3) Of course, if you have a LinkedIn connection who works at the organization that's interviewing you, you could ask if the organization has any particular style of interviewing that would be good to know about as you prepare.
- 4) If you've done your research on the organization, you've probably uncovered recent news that will give you insight into the biggest needs they have at the moment: Integration post-merger? Expansion into a new market? Release of a new product/service? Implementation of new technology? Building of a shared services center? The more you research, the more you'll be grounded in what's likely top-of-mind for the employer.

And then, you likely have the biggest clue of all, right in front of you.

JOB-SPECIFIC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How to Read a Job Posting to Find Out the Job Interview Questions You'll Get

Once you've exhausted publicly- available insight, you've likely got a treasure trove of data at your fingertips.

You can look to the job posting (if one exists) as a major source of insider information. Typically the people on the hiring team have spent time thinking through exactly what they wanted, and spelled it out in writing, before posting the role.

The write-up gives you important clues about what's important to the team and what's required for this role. To help you get prepared for the interview, here's how to read a job posting and use the information to your advantage.

Here's the trick: Turn EACH LINE in the job posting into the 10 possible types of questions you could be asked (see the next page), and then prepare for all of those possible questions.

This may seem like a lot of work to go through. It is! And yet, they're telling you what they're likely to ask you - it's like an open book test that you can use to your advantage, if you take the time to prepare.

JOB-SPECIFIC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How to Read a Job Posting to Find Out the Job Interview Questions You'll Get, *Continued*.

Line by line, you work through each and every line of the job description until you've explored all the possible questions and mapped out your potential answers. (If your immediate response was that you don't have time to do that, then you might need to apply for fewer roles where you're better prepared, instead of more roles where you're underprepared).

It's time consuming at first, but once you become used to this process, you'll find that future interview preparation sessions happen more quickly and easily. Plus, the amount of work involved means that your fellow job seekers likely are not going to these lengths to prepare, and you'll have a competitive edge in the interview. The more times you go through interviews for roles like this, you build up a "bank" of great answers for similar positions and job descriptions.

Of course, one caveat: the posting might be old, in flux, written for a different role and repurposed, or written by someone other than the hiring manager. It's a best-guess document, but it's not the whole picture of what they need and want. You'll still need to be prepared to think on your feet when other questions come up, but at least you'll have the majority of your stories and answers thought through in advance.

The hiring team has told you ahead of time what they care about. Luckily, you can use that to your advantage in the interviewing process. Your ability to read the job posting to prepare ahead of time for the job interview questions you'll likely get will help you feel much more balanced and conversational in the interview. You'll come across as poised, prepared, thoughtful and aware of what the employer needs, all traits that make you a desirable future employee.

JOB SPECIFIC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How to Read a Job Posting, *continued*.

Turn every item in the job posting into these 10 different types of interview questions. You'd start with the first line, and spin it out into the major types of interview questions. Then, you prepare and practice your answers ahead of time. That one job description sentence turns into the following possible types of questions.

For example, here's one line from a recently posted job description. It's for a nonprofit Donor Relations and Fundraising role, and it's one of the first lines in the job posting.

Develop, coordinate and manage a defined group of major donors within the larger donor portfolio. (Basically, they're asking you to have a tighter focus on the biggest spenders but still keep all other donations coming in.)

- **Past Experience:** Tell me about how you've developed a defined group of major donors within the larger portfolio.
- **"How Would You Manage":** How would you go about coordinating and managing a defined portfolio of major donors?
- **"How Would You Grow":** What steps would you take to grow a highly active inner circle of donors within a larger portfolio?
- **Behavioral:** Tell me a time when you had to analyze a donor portfolio that was underperforming – what was happening, what did you do, and what was the result?
- **Specific Role on the Team:** What was your specific role in managing the donor portfolio?
- **Tools & Technology:** What technology did you use to segment the donor portfolio and track donors?
- **Measurement:** What metrics did you establish for portfolio growth? Why did you pick those metrics?
- **Impact:** Tell me what results you saw in your portfolio of donors and how you accomplished the growth.
- **Change Management:** Tell me about how you got buy-in from management (or got others on board) to look at your donor pool differently.
- **Project Management & Launch:** How did you plan for and launch a targeted donor program?

GO CRUSH YOUR INTERVIEW!

We've covered Interview Strategy - Research Checklist - Interview Questions - Job-Specific Preparation - **Now you know what you need to do to have a great job interview!**

I've written this guide as someone who's been on every side of the hiring equation - candidate, hiring manager, recruiter, and career coach.

I hope this helps you focus your interview preparation and learn what the hiring teams are really looking for when they ask you different kinds of questions.

I wish you the best of luck in your interviews. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you think you need more guidance in your career decision-making.

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Feedback? Any other ideas? Share with us!
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