

# Proactive approaches to the interview process

Throughout your career, potential employers will interview you as part of the job application process. Improving your interviewing skills takes practice, and it is an important part of a data professional's communication tool kit. In this reading, you'll learn how best to prepare for an interview and things to remember during an interview.

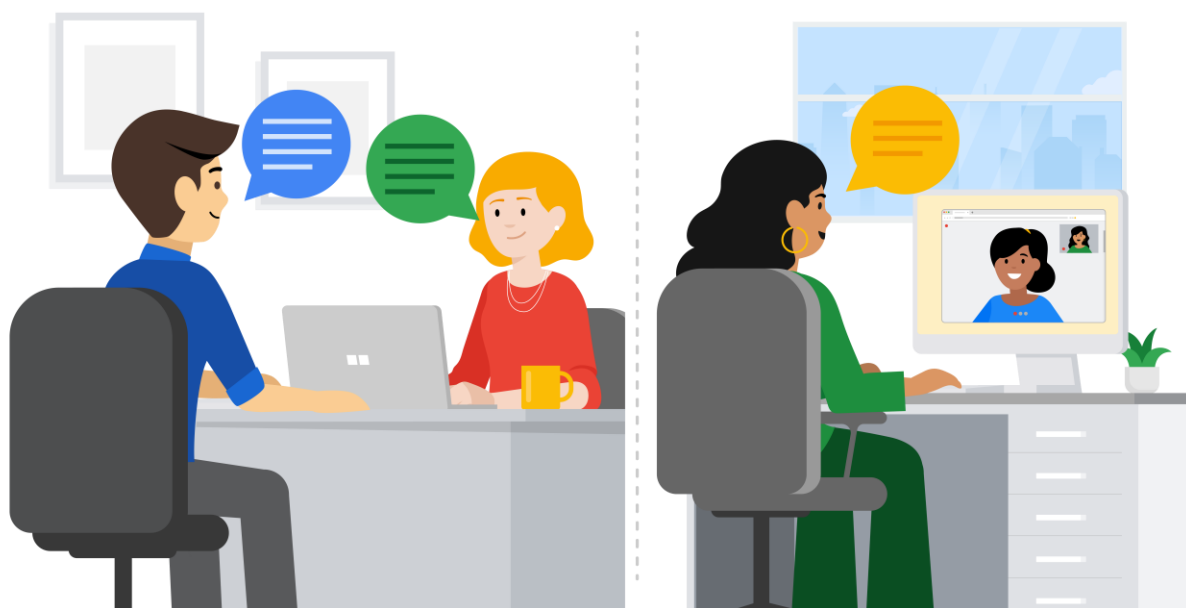
## Prepare for an interview

An interview with a new company often represents the final phase of a job search process. It is never too early to prepare for that step. Whether you've been asked to be interviewed already, or are still in the networking and applying phase, interview preparation will help you feel confident when the time comes.

### Here are a few ideas to help you get started in your interview prep:

- **Review the job skills and responsibilities.** A job posting lists the requirements, duties, and responsibilities of the role. This makes it a key resource for interview preparation. To start, review the requirements in the job posting. Consider your job experiences, education, and certifications, and how these things line up with the listed requirements. Think about how you can share experiences that meet the requirements, and provide evidence that you can handle the listed roles and responsibilities.
- **Conduct background research.** This can entail various steps:
  - Study the business that posted the job listing, including its history, mission statement, product/service offerings, etc. If you found the job posting on a professional networking site like LinkedIn®, consult the company's webpage for additional information beyond the job post.
  - Ask for the names and titles of your interviewer(s) to get an idea of their career path and what types of questions they may ask.
  - Research the company's recent press releases or public announcements. If the opportunity presents itself, you can merge a recent announcement into one of your answers to demonstrate that you are familiar with the company.
- **Gather experiential examples.** Think of some examples of times you solved a problem, led a team, developed a project, or brought structure to ambiguous circumstances. These are great experiences to describe when interviewers ask behavioral questions, such as:
  - *Tell me about a time you disagreed with a superior's decision or approach. What did you do and what was the result?*
  - *Tell me about a project or accomplishment you're proud of.*
  - *Give an example of a time you weren't sure how to solve an issue. How did you resolve it?*

## Online video interviews versus in-person interviews



Whether your job interview is in person or virtual, you should proactively prepare for them accordingly. Here are some tips to consider for both interview settings:

### In-Person Interview Tips

- Print several copies of your resume and bring them with you—just in case
- Arrive to the interview early
- Dress appropriately in business casual or business formal attire, basing the decision on what you know about company culture from your research
- Bring data visualizations and/or a data portfolio that you can leave with your interviewers

### Online Video Interview Tips

- Prepare your room background or a virtual background—keep it professional
- Consider acquiring a video call light and a USB microphone
- Before the interview, get familiar with the interviewer's chosen platform, ensure you know how to navigate and use it
- Check that your computer's microphone, speakers, and camera are working before the interview
- Dress as if you were going to the office, even if you're interviewing from home

## During an interview

- **Answer interview questions fully, but concisely.** Interviews tend to average between 20 and 60 minutes—that's not a lot of time to share all of your relevant work experiences. Listen carefully to the interviewer's questions and answer each question fully, without embellishment, using your most important work experiences.
- **Find connections between the job listing and your resume.** As you respond to interview questions, include specific keywords or phrases from the job description you studied during your research. Seek to align your skills, certifications, and experiences with what is described in the job listing.

- **Get technical.** As you start to think about things you want to highlight in your interview, remember that data professional job interviews tend to get quite technical. Be prepared to answer questions or perform tasks regarding exploratory data analysis (EDA), coding, regression, statistics, and even machine learning.
- **Come ready with your own questions.** Interviews are a chance to learn more about the company, the team, or the role that aren't already publicly available. For example:
  - *If hired, what are some upcoming projects I'd be working on?*
  - *What are some goals the team is currently focused on?*
  - *Can you tell me about the team members I'll be working with?*

## Consider your mindset

Approach the interview with a confident mindset. Employers appreciate a confident candidate because confidence reflects solid experience and quality job performance. One important way to have a confident mindset before and during an interview is to remember that an interview is not only an opportunity for a company to decide whether you're a good fit for them—it's also an opportunity for you to decide whether the company is a good fit for *you*. When you are well prepared and your mindset is focused on the value you offer a company, confidence naturally follows.

## Key takeaways

Job interviews are a useful part of your job search. As you continue in your data professional career, think about preparations you can make for potential interviews. Whether in person or virtual, preparing for interviews can help you have confidence, which allows you to present yourself and your experiences in the best way possible.