**10 Interview Rules to Live By are an overview :**

**1. Never lie in a job interview.**

That doesn't mean that you have to **advertise** your weaknesses.

**2. Always answer the question asked.**

It's fine to also use a question as an opportunity to bring up or **reinforce a point** that you'd like to make.

However, avoiding a question may arouse suspicions that you're trying to hide something.

**3. Personality does matter...**

but not everyone is looking for a sparkling conversationalist.

**Chemistry is key** in a team environment, and attention will be paid to how you are likely to fit in with others.

Be the most confident version of yourself possible (Big Interview will help you figure out exactly what this means for you).

**4. Don’t be afraid to talk...**

but be concise. **Don’t ramble.**

Don't go beyond two minutes on any single answer unless you are asked for more information.

**5. Always come across as interested.**

**Show enthusiasm** for the job and company.

They want you to be as inquisitive about them as they are about you.

Asking questions is always a plus, as long as they are professional and relevant.

**6. The key to all questions...**

Prior to closing the deal is **what you can do for them**, not what they can do for you.

You want to excel in the role, take on new challenges, and grow with the company, want to contribute, work hard, and make your interviewer's job easier,

You can ask about vacation time, bonus structure and dress code after they make an offer.

**7. Be prepared to tell stories...**

about your work experience, but keep them **short and concise.**

Preparation will help you tighten and refine your stories.

You absolutely cannot prepare too much.

However, you also don't want to sound too rehearsed.

Practice, but don't memorize responses word for word.

**8. Think about how you use “I" and “we.”**

Interviewers need to know that you can **work well on a team**, but they will also be interested in your individual contributions.

In other words, “I” was able to do this and this helped the team, or “we,” to achieve success.

As a manager claiming success stories, recognize team members for their strengths but accent how you were able to harness them and put them to their most effective use.

**9. Future performance...**

can be predicted by past behaviour, so you should always be **thinking of how the job you are seeking applies to the example you are sharing**, the story you are telling.

If they ask you about mistakes or failures, position your answer to convey how you learned and grew from the experience and will never make a similar mistake again.

**10. If you are asked about personal interests...**

.and hobbies, choose to share examples that are interesting and **demonstrate positive qualities** that can be applied to work.

For example, your love of travel shows that you are adventurous and adaptable.

Your charity work demonstrates a thoughtful nature and ability to multitask.

Your love of collecting porcelain frogs may be better left unexpressed.

**Bonus 11. Always follow up within 24 hours...**

of the interview, thanking interviewers for their time and stating how you enjoyed the experience and are excited about the prospects of working for the company.

Email is fine for this, but a handwritten note will help you stand out with some interviewers.

Remember to **proofread carefully** for typos and grammatical gaffes.

**Common Mistakes You Need to Avoid**

**Walkthrough the list and double-check:**

**1: Not being on time**

Always arrive for a job interview **on time.** Being late suggests you are unreliable, disorganized or disrespectful, possibly all three.

Being a few minutes early is great, but arriving more than 20 minutes early might signal that you are insecure or desperate.

**2: Not doing research**

If you have to ask what the company does, you have probably already lost the job.

Information is readily available and if you can't be bothered to conduct a **Google search**, then you probably don't deserve the position.

Human resources experts tell us that lack of research about the company is the biggest *(and most easily avoidable)* mistake that they see.

**3: Not showing clarity**

A hesitancy to answer questions will **turn your interviewer off**, and if you don’t have any stories to tell about your professional life and business triumphs, you should sit down and come up with some right now.

**4: Not being concise**

Having too much to say can be just as devastating.

You may impress the interviewer by sharing that you went to college on a football scholarship, but you needn’t give a blow-by-blow description of your college career or the knee surgery that ended it.

**Tweak their interest**, but allow a little mystery to remain. Don’t dwell on trivial topics, because they trivialize you.

**5: Not putting yourself in the interviewer's shoes**

Don't focus on how the job can benefit you during the early stages.

If you seem too interested in how the position can advance your career or line your pockets, your interviewer will take note and wonder if you are more **diva than team player.**

**6: Not being focused**

Remember your interviewer's name. If you blank, don't attempt to guess.

Trust me. A bad guess will make you memorable in the **wrong way.**

**7: Not being tactful**

Don't bad mouth your current or former bosses, even if they were terrible managers and human beings. Find a way to **keep it positive.**

**8: Not having a clue**

Boasting about your “people skills” and being a people person is rather cliché.

It is appropriate to include people skills as part of your repertoire, but boasting about how much you love people **can seem weak.**

We all have to work with people, with the exception of that guy who lives alone in the lighthouse.

Get more specific about the types of people skills you possess -- mentoring, communicating, motivating, collaborating.

The same may be said about crowing about what a hard worker you are and how you routinely put in long hours. Maybe you are just slow and can’t keep up with your job demands?

If your work ethic is truly a strength that sets you apart, make sure you have an **interview story** about a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.

**9: Not following up**

Always remember to follow up after the interview.

It is easy to rationalize that the employer should be the one contacting you with either the good or bad news,

but you need to **show your interest** with a thank-you note or email before the end of the next business day.

**Closing the Deal**

**Why Should They Hire You?**

You should be ready for this standard question with **three solid reasons.** Each of these three points should reiterate and build upon issues already discussed in the interview and your résumé.

**Those three reasons may be different** for each job that you are seeking. For example, your management skills may be top priority for one position, while another role is as an individual contributor focused on leveraging analytical skills.

**Learning about Them**

**Over the course of this interview,** you should be **listening for clues about the job,** the company and this particular interviewer's priorities and concerns regarding the hire.

If you've prepared well, you will have the confidence and familiarity with your answers to relax and pay attention to the information provided and customize your responses accordingly.

**Covering Your Bases**

**At the end of your interview,** you may take the opportunity to **correct or clarify anything you think might possibly be misconstrued,** without accenting any negatives you may have implied or misstated.

Again, recap your strengths, but don’t be repetitive or overbearing in making your point.

Make it clear that you want the job, if you believe you really do, without appearing too needy or aggressive. Ask about the next step in the process if it hasn't been described to you already.

**End on a Positive Note**

Thank the interviewer sincerely for her time and reiterate your willingness to answer any additional questions that come up later. Shake hands confidently and allow the interviewer to show you out.

Once you've left the building, **congratulate yourself on acing the interview** and get ready to follow up and land the job offer.

**How to Practice Storytelling**

**Want to be more memorable** and engaging during your job interviews? Tell a good story.

**Human beings have been in love with stories** since the days of the caveman -- from cave paintings to Bible parables to the Brothers Grimm to the latest Hollywood blockbuster.

Research has shown that people are much more likely to respond to and remember information when it's presented in the form of a story.

The best stories have **likable protagonists,** obstacles to overcome, dramatic character arcs, and happy endings (of course).

They allow the listener to connect with and **root for the hero.**

**In a job interview, stories can help you make a strong** and lasting positive impression. A good interview story will **showcase strengths,** reveal a bit of your personality, and help you establish rapport with the interviewer.

And you **don't have to be Shakespeare** to craft powerful interview stories. The **STAR approach** provides a template for developing interview stories that highlight the information that job interviewers are looking for.

Go to the Big Interview Answer Builder now to start developing your interview stories.

**S.T.A.R. Approach to Great Interview Stories**

**1. Situation/Task**

First, briefly describe a recent situation, challenge, problem, or goal.

You'll want to offer enough back story to **provide context** and a clear description of what you were trying to achieve and why.

**2. Approach**

Next, describe the **actions you took** to address the issue.

Show your thinking and approach and mention any relevant skills or methods used.

Highlight obstacles overcome and creative solutions.

**3. Result**

All good stories have a happy ending. Describe yours.Outline any **tangible results** and/or feedback that you received from clients, managers, coworkers.

Discuss lessons learned and how you continue to apply them.

**How to Use Your STAR Interview Stories**

**Good interview stories require advanced preparation and practice.** It's very **difficult to come up with a great story on the fly** in an interview situation when you're under pressure and in an unfamiliar environment.

That's why it's well worth your time to **write your stories** using our Interview Answer Builder and practice delivering them before the interview.

The process of writing the stories out will help you **clarify the high points** and may even remind you of details you've forgotten.

You can write the entire narrative or simply capture bullet points for each of the STAR sections.

You should **not try to memorize** these stories, though. You don't want to sound like a robot or come across as false and over-rehearsed.

The idea is to refine the key components of the story, then practice until you feel comfortable with the bullet points. Ideally, the stories will come out a little bit different each time, but will always cover the important details.

Every candidate should **develop and practice at least 3 good interview stories.** Get feedback from trusted friends or a coach about which stories are most effective.

Stories work beautifully for **answering behavioral questions** *(Tell me about a time when you solved a difficult problem. Give an example of your leadership approach. Describe a time when you had to work under pressure.)*

Think about which competencies or areas of expertise are likely to be **most important for the job opportunity at hand** and create stories to highlight your relevant experience.

You can also develop **interview stories to describe your most impressive professional achievements.**

It's the difference between saying you have an MBA and telling the story of earning your MBA while simultaneously leading your department to its biggest sales year ever.

Often, a single interview story can be **adapted for use in responding to different questions.** Your story about saving the day on a recent project could demonstrate your work ethic, your creativity, your calm under pressure, or your negotiation savvy.

You could discuss the same project but stress customer service in one interview and innovation in another.

When preparing for a specific interview, spend some time developing or adapting a **story that directly relates to the job description** and what the employer is looking for.

Include some specific detail to give your story personality, but remember to **keep it short and sweet.** Get to the point quickly and then respond to follow-up questions as appropriate.

Remember to **avoid negativity or whining/blaming.** Accentuate the positive and the lessons learned.

**Don't be shy** about that happy ending. Cite specific numbers if you can (increased sales by 10%, saved the company $50,000, trained 400 employees in 30 days).

If you don't have hard figures, quote any rave reviews or positive feedback. For many candidates, it's much more comfortable to quote, *"My boss said it was the best presentation he had ever seen"* than to say *"I was fantastic."*

**Overview of Behavioral Interviews**



**What exactly is a behavioral interview?** It's a job interview that focuses on questions about how the candidate has behaved in the past in specific work situations.

**Most job interviews include at least some behavioral interview questions.** By asking you about your past behavior, hiring managers try to get a sense of how you might respond in similar circumstances in the future.

**Behavioral interview questions are probing questions** about your background. How and when have you used the skills that they have deemed most important for the job in question? How have you responded to challenges similar to those you would likely face in the new role? Behavioral questions often ask you to get into very specific detail.

**Behavioral Interview Questions: Examples**

* *Tell me about a time you took responsibility for a task outside of your job description.*
* *How have you previously used your analytic skills to determine a solution to a problem?*
* *Describe a challenging goal that you set and explain how it was achieved.*
* *Tell me about a time that you had to sell an idea to senior management.*
* *Describe a situation in which you had to work under pressure. How did you handle the stress?*
* *Have you ever had to work with a difficult manager or coworker? How did you respond?*
* *Tell me about a mistake that you made. How did you address it?*

**Getting Prepared for a Behavioral Interview**

**Before any job interview, you should take the time to practice responses** to behavioral interview questions tied to the top themes in the job description. If a job description stresses qualities such as *"organized"* and *"detail-oriented,"* you can bet that you will be asked about past experiences managing time, projects, and details.

Likewise, if the job description is all about *"people skills,"* you're sure to be quizzed about your approaches to managing people, handling conflicts, and working on a team.

To prepare for a behavioral interview, read the job description carefully and make a list of the **top 5-8 qualifications** and/or skills required. For each of these, brainstorm to come up with stories and examples that illustrate your strengths and accomplishments.

**The STAR (or PAR) Approach to Behavioral Questions**

**Use the STAR approach in constructing these stories.** *ST is for Situation/Task. A is for Approach/Action. R is for Resolution/Results.* Briefly describe the problem or situation, then talk about your approach to solving/addressing it, and end with a description of the positive resolution.

Take the time to practice these stories with a friend or in the mirror. Get comfortable talking about your past behavior in a way that highlights your abilities. This is no time to be modest. If you're shy, practice is even more important. With enough repetition, you'll be able to sing your own praises in a natural way that won't come across as bragging.

**During the Behavioral Interview**

**If you do your homework, you'll be ready** when faced with a behavioral question during the interview. If you get a question that stumps you, it's okay to pause and collect your thoughts. Ask for clarification if you're not sure what the interviewer is looking for -- or if you need another moment to think.

**There is no one "right" answer to a behavioral interview question.** The interviewer wants to learn more about you, your experience, and how you approach work. This will allow her to see if you're a good match for the job opportunity.

A winning behavioral interview is one in which you are able to show a history of performance and results in the key responsibility areas for the job that you want. Just don't forget to show a little of your personality, too. Employers want to hire the best person for the job, but they also want to hire someone that will be pleasant to work with. Your behavioral interview answers can help you give the interviewer a sense of what it would be like to work with you.

**Salary Expectations**

***You’ve worked hard to perfect your resume and land that all-important big interview. This means, though, that the battle is only just beginning.***

**Answering the salary expectations question the wrong way** can cost you a job offer. It can also put you in an untenable situation by forcing you to consider a job at a less-than-desirable salary.

After all, in some circumstances, the only thing worse than failing to get a job offer after an interview is failing to get an offer that’s sufficient to support you and/or your family.

**How to Answer the Salary Question**

**Why it’s Important… and Tricky**

You may be wondering what the big deal about the money question is; yet it’s one question that often stumps job candidates. Not only that, but it can change the climate of an interview from red hot to ice cold as a result of a few digits of difference in thinking.

Why do companies ask job candidates the salary question? Ultimately, company leaders and HR professionals **want to know if they can afford you** *before* **they invest time and resources courting you** to come to work for them.

Some employers are **bargain hunting.** Despite a general market value for certain positions, some companies place a bigger premium on certain positions than other companies. This means that the salary they expect to pay for a certain position may be lower or higher than the going rate.

Another possible reason is that they’re trying to see **how you value your work**. Are you confident enough to ask for what you deserve or will you meekly accept whatever they offer?

***► Your mission: S*ell them on you, and convince them of your worth to their organization *before you reach the point of salary negotiations*.**

**When/How the Salary Question is Asked**

Usually, "the salary question" is one or both of the following:

***1) What are you looking to make?***

***2) What are you making now?***

Each of these comes with different challenges. The question(s) can come up early on as part of the screening process or can pop up later after you’ve answered a few of the behavioral, skill, or background questions.

In some respects, it’s a good thing when the salary topic comes into the interview conversation. It indicates that there is some interest in having you come to work for the company.

The other side of the coin, though, is that when you’re not prepared, it’s easy to make a misstep on this question that could prove costly.

► **Your mission:** **Expect the salary interview question and have plans in place to address it before going into the interview.**

**Answering *“What are Your Salary Requirements?”***

It seems like an innocent enough question. It makes sense that potential employers would want to know a ballpark figure for your expectations, right? Not so fast. Be aware that candidly stating your salary expectations too early in the interview process can lead to problems.

***Problem 1.*** Early on, the company in question isn’t sold on you just yet. They’re still feeling you out and doing comparison shopping between you and the other candidates. You'll have better leverage to negotiate later, so it serves you best to avoid naming a specific number too early.

***Problem 2*.** You may be tempted to sell yourself short to move forward in the process. While some businesses will jump at the lowest offer, there are plenty of others out there that understand the marketplace and will shy away from candidates that seem too eager to lower their standards to get the job. It may make them worry that you’ll lower your standards elsewhere as well.

Furthermore, do you really want a company that makes you feel as though they’re only after the cheapest possible deal? Or do you want to work for a company that’s after the most qualified candidate for the job?

***Problem 3.*** A high number can price you out of contention before you’ve even had a chance to make a good impression. Low or high, if you name a price that’s outside of their expectations, it can remove you from the running for the position.

***Problem 4.*** Going too low can also put you in a position where you can’t afford to take the job, yet can’t afford to turn the job down. This is especially true for job candidates who offer low-end figures out of desperation and in hopes of getting the job. This rarely leads to a happy work situation.

► **Your mission:** **Before you consider answering the question, it’s important to know the going rate for jobs in your field and in your job market (location). These can be found at websites like:**

[Payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com/) [Glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com/) [Salary.com](http://www.salary.com/)

**Do some research on these sites** to understand the market salary range for the position, size of the company you’re interviewing with, location, and your experience level. You will probably find some conflicting information and wide ranges in some places, but at least you'll get a general sense if you look at a few sources.

**Your goal is to arrive at a reasonable salary range** that seems fair based on market value and your current or most recent salary. This way, if pressed, you can name a number that's based on real data and position it as the market range and not just what you want.

You will also want to think a bit about best-case scenarios *(what salary offer would make you say yes on the spot)* and worst-case scenarios *(what salary offer would you walk away from)*

**Tactics to Delay Answering**

**Experts recommend to put off answering the salary question as long as possible.** Here are a few suggestions to strategically delay answering the salary questions with a specific number.

***When asked: “What are your salary expectations for the job?”***

This is a great opportunity to sell yourself while putting the pressure on the organization to make a fair offer by saying something along the lines of:

***“I’m more interested in finding a position that’s a good fit for my skills and interests. I’m confident that you’re offering a salary that’s competitive in the current market.”***

You’re letting them know that you’re confident of your abilities and respect yourself too much to sell yourself short.

At the same time, you’re giving them an opportunity to earn your respect by making a fair offer. By doing this, you’re tactfully letting them know you’re not desperate and expect to be compensated appropriately for your time and talent.

By playing hardball on the salary issue and not giving in and answering right away, you’re also letting the hiring company know that they’re getting a savvy and tough negotiator if they hire you. This may be the perfect incentive for a better salary offer.

Naturally, some interviewers will press further for a specific number. At this point, you can say something like:

***"Well, according to my research and past experience, my understanding is that 75-90K per year is typical based on the role and requirements."***

This frames the number as *"here's my understanding of what's competitive"* as opposed to *"here's what I want."*

If you've done your research *(see above)*, you'll be able to quote a reasonable range and then they can respond.

***When asked: “What are You Making Now?”***

**For the most part, interviewers ask this question** believing that offering a salary 10 to 15 percent higher than your current salary will be sufficient to lure you away from your current position.

There are a number of reasons why this question may not be so straightforward for many candidates. Most typically, many candidates are either underpaid or overpaid in their current roles. They fear an overly high or low number could lead to an unattractive offer or knock them out of contention. Others may be making a career change or moving from commission-based to salary work or otherwise in a situation in which the comparison isn't valid.

If you're making *"too much,"* the interviewer may feel they can't afford you or you are overqualified. This can be a problem if you are okay with taking a lower salary -- perhaps because you know you are/were overpaid, you are making a career change, or you are prioritizing work-life-balance or other aspects of the job.

**It's far more common for someone to be underpaid and worried about the perception that there's something "wrong" with them for that reason.**

If you’re not making the market rate, or close to it, potential employers may begin scratching their heads and asking why. The problem is that many people choose jobs with lower salaries for reasons that have nothing to do with work ethic or job performance including the following:

• *Bonus/commission incentives*

• *Flexible working options or reduced hours*

• *Better benefits -- health, retirement, tuition reimbursement, etc.*

• *Fewer work hours*

• *Location (cost of living, local job market, etc.)*

• *Opportunity to take on new responsibilities and gain experience even if your salary didn't increase accordingly*

**You don’t want to let the decision** to work for a less than stellar salary in the past derail your opportunity for a competitive salary in the future.

In any of these cases, deflection, on this particular question, can be your best bet. Eventually, you will have to address this question. However, you will be in a much better position if you can deflect until they already love you and you have more leverage to negotiate.

**When pressed to give your current salary** when you know it would sabotage your chances, consider the following tactic to delay the question a little longer, if not put it off altogether:

***“Since this position is not exactly the same as my current job, let’s discuss what my responsibilities at this company will be and work together to determine a fair salary for this position.”***

If you feel you must reveal your lower salary earlier than you would like, don’t forget to mention the contributing factors too. Employers will understand that a job in Iowa paid less than a job in New York City, for example.

**4 Tips on Negotiating for What You’re Worth**

**Congratulations, we want to hire you!** Great news until you see the low-ball offer. But remember that the offer is simply that. An offer. A starting point. Sometimes, it’s even a test.

**The way you respond to the offer can change everything.**

**1) When negotiating a job offer, keep things positive** – even if the offer is one you’re having a great deal of difficulty drumming up enthusiasm about. Show gratitude for the offer and enthusiasm about the potential of the position before you dive into negotiating mode.

**2) Make your counteroffer one that is fair, well-reasoned, and thoughtfully presented.** CBS Money recommends [providing a salary range](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/new-job-and-money-how-to-negotiate-effectively/) as part of your counteroffer – indicating that companies will often avoid offering the lowest range in an effort to avoid seeming impolite. Though if you do provide a range, make sure the bottom number is one you can live (and work) with. Providing a salary range also gives the employer the impression that you’re flexible – a trait they often prefer in employees.

**3) The third tip,** and perhaps the most important when it comes to your long-term career goals, is this: be willing to walk away if the offer isn’t right for you. It’s hard to do, especially in a competitive job market. If you’re not desperate to put food on the table or a roof over your head, though, it may be better in the long run to wait for the right offer, rather than simply taking the opportunity that’s available right now.

**4) Finally,** keep in mind that some companies may have a limit on salaries they can offer, but that doesn’t mean they can’t offer compensation in other ways. If you get pushback on a higher salary, try negotiating for other benefits that could sweeten the offer for you:

• *Performance bonuses*

• *Signing bonuses*

• *Future pay raises*

• *Additional vacation days*

• *Company stock*

• *Retirement contributions*

• *Health benefits*

• *Flexible work hours*

Some people even negotiate for gym memberships. Only you can determine your priorities. If you’re reasonable with your requests, don't be afraid to open up the discussion.

**The bottom line:** You don’t have to live in fear of interview questions about money or even a salary offer that’s on the low side of what you want or need. Following these tips will help you navigate the tricky waters of salary negotiations while keeping your head above water.

**Targeting Companies**

**Your Guide to Company Research**

***How can you get an edge over the millions of other job seekers out there?***

*Research.* *Research can help you uncover hidden job opportunities and greatly improve your odds of acing the interview and landing the job. The key is to understand how to conduct company research and how to use the information that you find.*

**There are many good reasons** why it's worth doing your due diligence in the company research department.

***Here are just a few of them:***

**#1)** Research can help you find the right contacts to land more interviews.

**#2)** You’ll understand which of the top companies are in your industries and fields of interest, which companies are hiring, and what types of job openings they have. Research can open up a world of opportunities beyond the standard job boards that everybody's checking.

**#3)** Once it's interview time, knowing the facts about the company and the industry will reduce your job interview anxiety and make you seem more confident to your interviewer.

**#4)** You'll know how to answer that infamous interview question: “Why Do You Want to Work Here?” in a way that makes you sound smart, interested, and well-informed.

**#5)** You'll be prepared to make the right decision about whether or not a specific company is a good match for your career goals and personal expectations.

*"By thoroughly researching the employer you increase your chances of making a positive and memorable first impression. I would recommend digging deeper than just general knowledge about an employer",* **says Nicole, Hiring Expert at the ManpowerGroup.**

With those benefits in mind, here’s how to get the dirt on the top companies that are hiring in your field.

**1. Before You Apply (How to Get in the Door)**

**You don't have to settle for a reactive job search.** With a bit of research, you can identify a target list of companies and network your way in *(maybe even before a new job is posted and competing candidates start calling)*. These are just a few ways that company research can help *YOU* get that all-important *INTERVIEW*.

**Identifies contacts within the company.**

You may find people that you know or can be introduced to -- perhaps a fellow alum or a friend of a friend. From there, you can try reaching out to arrange an informational interview or respectfully ask for career advice. If there's a current opening *(or one likely to come up)*, your new internal contact can forward your resume directly to the hiring decision-maker and bypass all of those online applications. You are much more likely to get called in for an interview this way.

**Educates you on the company's needs.**

Your research on the target companies will help you get a better sense of the company culture, current hiring needs, the qualities valued in employees, and much more. This information will help you customize your cover letter and resume and increase your odds of getting the company's attention.

At this stage of the game, you’re looking for basic information about the business in order to go about *GETTING the interview.*

**Step One: Visit the Company Website**

**The best place to begin** your research and information gathering is the business website. Visit the company’s **“*About Us*”** page where you can learn about the business, its products and/or services, origins, key company leaders, and mission statement.

There’s more to this step though. Don’t forget to look around for information relevant to “*Job Seekers*.” Some businesses will have a dedicated page for this, while others bury the lead to some degree. Many have created a portal to their human resources department through the website. **This portal generally includes names and, quite often, email addresses** to the people who are most actively involved in the hiring process for the organization.

**Step Two: Check Out the Company's Facebook and LinkedIn Pages**

**Facebook is used by businesses frequently** as a location to post job openings, information about future products, and even links to financial reports and other industry information. When you’re trying to get the basics about a business, it’s a great place to gather information from the business itself, as well as followers who post messages and queries to the web page.

**Most companies have a LinkedIn presence** as well as a Facebook page. Some are quite robust and include interactions, discussions, and comments made by key executive personnel. Peruse the company’s LinkedIn page to see what information you can dig up, include key company players' names *(and possibly contact information).*

**To bypass the standard application process**, consider looking for shared contacts via LinkedIn. If you’re lucky enough to have a contact that works for your target company *(or has in the past)*, you might be able to get the inside scoop on the position and even a good contact to send your resume and/or cover letter to.

**By now you should have the basic information** you need to apply to the company you’ve researched.

Submit your stellar resume and engaging cover letter properly in order to get one step closer to the much-coveted interview. Next, find out how to research the company to prepare for the interview itself.

**2. Researching to Prepare for An Interview**

**The minute you get the news that you’ve been invited for an interview,** it’s time to begin a thorough investigation of the business. You need more than the basics this time around.

These tips will help you get the information you need in order to dazzle the interviewer(s) with your thorough understanding of the organization and the industry it operates in.

**Step One: Identify and Research Interviewers**

**Most large companies have more than one person conducting interviews**, though smaller businesses may only have one interviewer for various positions. The key is to learn about each of the people slated to conduct your interview before it begins.

There are **four fast and effective methods** you can use to learn more about the people who will be interviewing you.

**1) LinkedIn Profiles.** Here you can find information about educational histories, professional organization affiliations and memberships, and companies they’ve worked for in the past.

**2) Company Website.** In many companies, the company website is a great place to get information about employees, management, and their roles within the organization.

**3) Industry Publications.** While this is not a guaranteed find for you, it will help you strike common ground with the interviewer if you’ve read articles he or she has published in industry magazines and newsletters.

**4) Social Media.** Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and even Pinterest allow unique glimpses into the person on the other side of the interview table. You can learn a great deal by following them and reading past posts or checking out previous Pins and Tweets *(just be careful about creeping them out by seeming TOO interested in their personal details).*

*“If you know the names of the people you will be interviewing with, look them up on Linkedin and search for information about their professional background (not private life) that might be available on the internet. I like when a job candidate has done his or her homework. It will prepare you to ask questions of the interviewer that are relevant to their background and it will help you be more engaged during the interview,”* **says Sue, a hiring expert at the Gap Inc.**

**Step Two: Boost Your Industry Knowledge**

**It’s important to take the time to get up-to-date on industry trends** and developments, especially if you're new to the field. Knowing about the industry and its ins and outs prior to the interview will make you much more appealing to hiring managers. With little time investment, this research can go a long way toward presenting you in a good light -- showing you have initiative, research skills, and a sincere interest in the business and the position.

How do you go about *researching industries* that are foreign to you? **Start with easy access from sources like the following.**

*- Read recent trade publications.*

*- Join industry-related groups on LinkedIn.*

*- Follow industry leaders in social media.*

*- Search local newspaper archives online.*

Trade publications vary widely from one industry to the next, though most industries have them. In the accounting industry, for instance, the following are among the top trade publications: *Accounting Today, The CPA Journal, Journal of Accountancy, International Journal of Accounting, CPA Zone, and Accounting Web*.

Every industry offers some kind of industry news magazines, journals, websites, and blogs you can turn to for industry specific research. Google can help you find the publications that are influential in your target industry.

**Step Three: Get Social**

Social media platforms *(LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest)* can offer valuable insights about the company culture, customer service, and how they interact with others. **You can also get an idea of how forward thinking the business is from social media entries.** Businesses that are looking forward to the future are engaging their audiences, interacting with them, teasing them, and keeping them on the hook – eagerly awaiting the next big reveal.

**Step Four: Include the News**

**See what’s going on not only with the company you’re interviewing with, but in the industry as well.** Search popular news and business sites like Fox Business and CNBC to determine if there are any hot stories or major trends that you should know about. Information you specifically want to gain by exploring the news about the business and the industry includes:

*- Financial news about the company (Step six below provides additional information about gathering company-specific financial news.)*

*- Economic outlooks for the industry*

*- Labor market news and outlooks*

*- Competitor information and activities*

**The more knowledge about the business, industry, and competition that you arm yourself with, the better poised you are** to show the interviewer(s) what kind of employee or leader you can be within the organization.

**Step Five: Explore the Company’s Culture**

“*Company culture is key to placing yourself in a positive, successful environment,”* **reveals hiring expert Jonathan from Avery Dennison.**

**Company culture plays a critical role** in how happy you are in any job you take. Glassdoor is an excellent resource to use to learn about a company’s culture. It offers you the opportunity to see what other employees, past and present, have to say about the business and their experience working for the company.

For instance, if you research the company EMC on Glassdoor, you’ll learn that one employee feels that EMC understands work/life balance.

**Other pieces of information you can find** about companies on Glassdoor, include salary information, company-specific interview hints and tips, explanation of benefits, and photographs of the business.

The anonymous nature of Glassdoor allows people to give honest, unvarnished opinions and insights about the business – making it an incredible resource when conducting personal company culture investigations.

**Step Six: Investigate Company Finances**

Understanding the financial reality of companies you’re considering working for gives you a real advantage at the salary negotiating table, and as you decide whether this industry or business is a good match for your future goals.

**Public Companies**

**Public companies are required to file annual report information.** This is a great place to begin your research into company financials.

You should be able to find this valuable information on public companies at these sources:

[*Hoovers*](http://www.hoovers.com/) [*Dun & Bradstreet*](http://www.dnb.com/)

[*EDGAR - U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission*](http://www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml)

It’s not only important to know where to find information about company finances. You also need to know what information may be relevant to know.

**These are a few good areas to begin with:**

*- How long has the company been in business?*

*- Has it been profitable over the past several years?*

*- Is the company hiring lately or has it been going through a period of layoffs instead?*

*- Has the company recently merged with another company – or does it seem poised to do so? This could signal a period of upheaval where layoffs are not only possible, but likely during the restructuring process.*

Conduct an Internet search for recent news articles about company financials too. This is often the first place to go to learn information about layoffs, recent hiring, and the outlook as it relates to your local economy.

**Private Companies**

**With private companies, it's a little trickier** to find company financial information since they have no legal obligation to file public reports about their financial status.

However, PrivCo provides company financial intelligence for non-publicly traded companies, and is a good option to conduct fast financial research about private businesses.

**Step Seven: Hone in on Your Bottom Line**

**Once you’ve found concrete information** on the company you’re about to interview with, it’s time to reflect upon what you’ve found out and compare it to your career goals.

**For example, what does the company seem to value most? What do you value most?**

*Leadership?* *Teamwork?* *Youth?* *Experience?*

*Forward-thinking?* *Social Ideals?* *Environmental I*ssues?

**This information can help you prepare** an intelligent and truthful answer to the inevitable interview question, *"Why are you interested in working for us?"* (or one of its many variations). Read more about how to answer this question in your job interview.

Even more importantly, you'll have a **better understanding of whether it really is the right company for you.** Beyond the questions above, you'll also need to consider questions like the following:

*What is the atmosphere in the workplace like? What type of work atmosphere do you prefer?*

*Dress code?* *Promotion from within?*

*Is innovation encouraged?* *Is professional development available?*

These are just some of the questions that may impact your initial happiness in the workplace, as well as the potential for long-term career satisfaction and growth.

**Final Step: Pulling All the Information Together**

**When it comes to making a decision about what company to work for**, it's important to have the facts.

After all, this decision will impact your life every day (and for 8+ hours per day) for the foreseeable future.

It’s a prudent strategy to take stock of your financial goals and ambitions and measure them by what this business has to offer you.

**Do you feel confident that this business is the right place to help you accomplish those goals?**

Is this the industry you want to work in? How will this role and company position you for future opportunities?

What about the business? Does the company culture appeal to you? Can you live with the climate?

How about social issues? Does the business atmosphere conflict with your personal views and ideals?

**While you’re not necessarily entering into a lifelong commitment** to work with one company for the remainder of your professional life, this job will be a career stepping stone.

Are you comfortable and confident with the impact this business will have on your resume from this day forward?

**One way to answer some of these insightful questions is to thoroughly research the business ahead of the interview process.** Then you can feel confident in your decision whatever it happens to be.

Que. What you do in Spare Time. **Que : What are your Strengths.**

Communication Attention to Detail Fast Learner Calm under pressure

Time Management