

SUCCESS+

INTERVIEW PREP FOR BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

How to Nail Your Next Job Interview



Welcome to your SUCCESS+™ exclusive copy of Interview Prep for Business Professionals.

Inside this guide, you will find clear steps, helpful worksheets, and insider tips to make your interview preparation simple and effective.

From reflecting on your strengths to brainstorming thoughtful answers and questions, every section is designed to set you up to stand out.

Remember, interviews aren't just about answering questions. They're opportunities to showcase your unique skills.

With the right preparation, you'll walk in (or Zoom in) feeling calm, confident, and ready to make a great, lasting impression.

As you work through this guide, take a moment to breathe and trust in your abilities. You've got this!

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

—Peter Drucker



STEP 1: KNOW YOURSELF

This may sound a bit silly, but knowing yourself is one of the most important steps for preparing (and acing) an interview.

The people hiring managers remember candidates who know how to share their strengths, skills, values, and experiences that have shaped them.

When you're in the pressure cooker of an interview, it's easy to forget the amazing things you bring to the table. A curveball question or a moment of self-doubt can make even the most confident professional stumble.

By taking the time to reflect before your interview, you'll be equipped with a clear picture of your professional story. Knowing yourself helps you speak authentically about your value and how you can contribute to the role and the company. This clarity not only boosts your confidence but also leaves a lasting impression.



REFLECT AND RECORD

Take a few moments to jot down your answers. You'll use these reflections to share meaningful responses during your interview.

 **Key Strengths:** What are you really good at? Think about skills you've consistently been recognized for.

 **Challenges You've Overcome:** What obstacles have you navigated in your career? How did you grow from those experiences?

 **Achievements:** What milestones or projects stand out in your professional life? Why are they meaningful?

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 **Core Values:** Your core values define the foundation of your professional life and decision-making. They reflect what you prioritize and how you approach challenges, relationships, and opportunities.

Can you think of examples where your core values have directly influenced your work?

Examples:

Collaboration: During a project, I facilitated cross-departmental meetings to ensure alignment and collective ownership of outcomes.

Innovation: I proposed and implemented a new workflow that reduced processing time by 30%.

Attention to Detail: I reviewed a report that prevented critical errors before it was presented to clients.



Take time to review these notes as part of your interview preparation. It's your foundation for every answer you give. When you know yourself, you can share your story with confidence.

STEP 2: RESEARCH

Interviewers can tell when someone has done their homework and when they haven't.

But researching the company isn't just about impressing your interviewer; it's also for you. You need to know if the role and organization are a good fit for you personally. By understanding what the company stands for, its goals, and its culture, you'll feel more connected to the conversation and better equipped to highlight why you're the right choice.

This step might sound like extra work, especially when you're busy, but it can have a great impact on your standing for a role because knowing the company's values, current priorities, and industry position gives you a foundation for tailored answers. It also enables you to ask meaningful questions that spark deeper dialogue, showing the interviewer you're truly invested in the opportunity.



WHERE TO FOCUS YOUR RESEARCH

Use these key areas to structure your company research:

Company Mission and Values: What drives the organization? Visit their website's "About Us" page or review press releases to find their mission statement and guiding principles.

Current News and Achievements: Have they launched new products, announced partnerships, or received awards? Mentioning these shows you're engaged with their recent work.

Industry Position: Who are their competitors? What challenges or trends is the industry facing? This can help you understand the company's priorities.

The Team: Who are the key leaders or your potential colleagues? Look at their LinkedIn profiles to get a sense of their background and areas of focus.



Practice Application

Write down two ways your skills or experiences align with the company's mission, values, or recent achievements. Use these notes to shape your responses in the interview.

Example: I noticed your company is focused on sustainability, which aligns with my experience leading eco-friendly initiatives at [Previous Company].

Example: Your recent launch of [Project/Product] really stood out to me; it mirrors a project I worked on where we tackled similar challenges.



The more you know about the company, the more prepared and confident you'll feel to connect your story to its vision.

STEP 3: ANSWER PREP

When the pressure is on, even seasoned professionals can find themselves rambling, losing focus, or struggling to come up with examples on the spot.

Preparation helps you avoid these pitfalls and nearly guarantees your answers are thoughtful and aligned with what the interviewer is looking for.



START WITH COMMON QUESTIONS

Many interviews include predictable questions that you can prepare for in advance. Here are a few examples you can use to practice:



"Tell me about yourself."

To answer this question, focus on your professional background, key accomplishments, and what brings you to this role. Avoid reciting your entire resume; highlight the parts that matter most.



"What are your strengths?"

With this question, focus on sharing specific strengths from the job description itself, but be prepared to back them up with examples!



"Why do you want to work here?"

Reference your company research and connect it to your career goals or values.



"What's a project you're proud of?"

Pick something relevant to the role and focus on measurable outcomes or specific results.

"Tell me about a challenge you faced and how you handled it."

This is an infamous question in the hiring world. The best way to tackle it is by using the STAR method: situation, task, action, result.

Example Question/Answer:

"Can you share an example of when you improved a process at work?"

Situation: At my previous job, our client onboarding process was taking too long, which caused frustration for both the team and our clients.

Task: I was tasked with finding ways to streamline the process.

Action: I analyzed the workflow, identified bottlenecks, and implemented a new software tool to automate repetitive tasks.

Result: This reduced onboarding time by 30% and improved client satisfaction scores significantly.

The STAR method is a tool hiring managers use to structure responses to behavioral questions.

STAR stands for:

Situation: Set the scene. What was the context?

Task: What was your responsibility or goal?

Action: What steps did you take to address the situation?

Result: What was the outcome, and what did you learn?



"Can you share an example of when you improved a process at work?"

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:



"Can you give an example of a time when you resolved a conflict at work?"

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:



Pro Tip: Before the interview, write out your responses and practice them aloud. This will help you refine your phrasing, identify areas to improve, and feel more natural when answering questions in the moment.

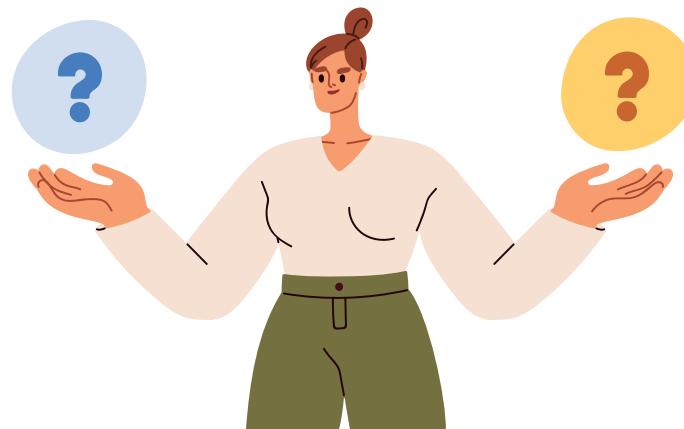
By preparing thoroughly, you'll walk into the interview ready to show the interviewer why you're the perfect fit!

STEP 4: QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Remember, an interview isn't just about the company evaluating you.

It's also your opportunity to evaluate them. Thoughtful questions show that you're curious, prepared, and engaged. They also create a dialogue rather than a one-sided interrogation, making the interview feel more conversational and collaborative.

When you ask insightful questions, you show the interviewer that you've done your research and are serious about understanding how you can contribute to the organization. Plus, these questions can help you uncover valuable information about the role, team dynamics, and company culture to ensure it's the right fit for you.



Questions to Consider

ROLE:

What does success look like in this role during the first 90 days?

What are the biggest challenges someone in this position might face?

Can you describe the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?

What does training or onboarding for this role look like?

TEAM:

Can you tell me more about the team I'd be working with?

How does the team typically collaborate on projects?

What's the team leader's management style?

COMPANY:

How would you describe the company culture?

What are the company's current goals, and how does this role contribute to them?

How has the company grown or changed in recent years?

How would you describe the team in three words?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Are there opportunities for growth and advancement within the company?

Does the company support professional development through training or mentorship programs?

WRAP-UP QUESTIONS:

What are the next steps in the hiring process?

What does success look like in this role over the next six months to a year?

What do you enjoy most about working here, and what has kept you with the company?

Tips for Asking Great Questions

Be Specific: Avoid overly general questions like, "What does your company do?" Instead, focus on details you've discovered in your research.

Tailor Your Questions: Use what you've learned about the company or role to ask personalized questions. For example, "I noticed your team recently launched [Project]. How will this role contribute to its ongoing success?"

Limit to 3-5 Questions: Time is limited, so choose questions that matter most to you and leave a lasting impression.

Notes

Use this section to jot down the questions you want to ask based on the role or company:



By preparing thoughtful questions, you'll not only impress your interviewer, but also leave the conversation with a better understanding of whether this opportunity is right for you.

STEP 5: HOW TO MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION

First impressions are powerful, whether in person or online.

The way you present yourself (both in attire and demeanor) sets the tone for your interview, showcasing your professionalism and respect for the opportunity.



Dressing for Success

No matter where the interview takes place, aligning your appearance with the company's culture and expectations is key.

Research the Company Dress Code: Look for clues on their website and social media, or ask the recruiter directly about appropriate attire.

For Remote Interviews: Dress professionally from head to toe, even if only your upper half is visible. This helps you mentally switch into "professional mode" and avoids any awkward moments if you need to stand up unexpectedly.

Stick to Professional Basics: For both in-person and virtual settings, a classic suit, professional blouse, or neutral-colored top with a blazer is a safe choice.

★ Pro Tips:

- Ensure your clothing is clean, wrinkle-free, and fits well.
- Avoid patterns that may appear distorted or busy on camera during a remote interview.
- Keep accessories simple and understated

Body Language and Setting the Scene

Nonverbal communication matters just as much in a virtual environment as it does in person.

Tips for In-Person Interviews:

- Make Eye Contact: It shows confidence and helps build a connection with the interviewer.
- Practice a Firm Handshake: A good handshake leaves a strong, professional first impression.
- Posture: Sit upright and lean slightly forward to convey engagement and interest.

Tips for Remote Interviews:

- Camera Placement: Ensure your webcam is at eye level for natural, direct engagement.
- Lighting and Background: Choose a well-lit area with a clean, neutral background to keep the focus on you. Avoid distractions like clutter or noisy environments.
- On-Screen Presence: Look at the camera when speaking to simulate eye contact and avoid fidgeting.

★ Pro Tip:

Use the blur background tool in Zoom if you do not have a plain background.

Interview Day Checklist

- Outfit: Check for cleanliness, fit, and appropriateness.
- Materials: Have extra copies of your resume (or email a backup to yourself for remote interviews), a pen, and a notepad.
- Notes/Questions: Review your talking points and questions for the interviewer.

For Remote Interviews:

- Test Technology: Make sure your internet connection, camera, and microphone are working. Test on the platform you'll use (e.g., Zoom, Teams, etc.).
- Quiet Environment: Let others in your space know you'll need quiet time. Use headphones if necessary.
- Backup Plan: Have a phone or secondary device ready in case of technical issues.

For In-Person Interviews:

- Directions: Plan your route to the location and aim to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early.
- Portfolio or Documents: Bring copies of your resume and any work samples or certifications, if relevant.

★ Pro Tip:

Whether in person or online, take a moment before the interview to pause, breathe, and remind yourself of your strengths. A calm and collected demeanor will help you feel confident and make a lasting impression.

Your Confidence-Boosting Mantra

To ground yourself and build confidence, speak these affirmations aloud before your interview:

- "I've got this."
- "I am confident."
- "I am worthy of this position."
- "I have the right background and attitude for this role."
- "I am here because I bring value."

By repeating these statements, you'll cultivate a positive mindset that empowers you to present your best self during the interview.

Remember, confidence comes from within, and you have every reason to believe in yourself!

STEP 6: POST-INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

**The interview may be over, but
your chance to leave a lasting
impression isn't!**

A thoughtful follow-up shows professionalism, gratitude, and continued enthusiasm for the role, all of which can set you apart from other candidates!

Step 1: Reflect on the Interview

Before a follow-up, take a few moments to reflect on the experience. Use your answers to improve your preparation for future interviews and tailor your follow-up message to the interviewer.

What stood out in the interview?

What questions do you want to clarify or revisit?

What were the key takeaways about the company and/or role?

Step 2: Send a Thank You Note

A personalized thank you note is an essential part of post-interview etiquette. It reinforces your interest in the role, allows you to highlight key points from the interview, and builds rapport with the interviewer.

Pro Tips:

- Be Prompt: Send your note within 24 hours of the interview.
- Keep It Personal: Mention specific topics or moments from the interview.
- Express Gratitude: Thank the interviewer for their time.
- Reaffirm Your Interest: Briefly restate why you're excited about the role and how your skills align.

Sample Thank You Email:

Subject Line: Thank You for the Interview Opportunity

Dear [Interviewer's Name],

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me [yesterday/today]. I truly enjoyed learning more about [Company Name] and the [specific role]. Our conversation about [specific topic discussed] resonated with me, and it further solidified my excitement about the opportunity to contribute to your team.

I am particularly enthusiastic about [specific aspect of the role or company discussed], as it aligns closely with my background in [your relevant experience].

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need any additional information from me. I look forward to the next steps in the process and hope to have the opportunity to work together soon.

Thank you again for your time and insights.

Best regards,
[Your Name]

Step 3: Follow Up on Next Steps

If you don't hear back within the time frame the interviewer provided, it's perfectly acceptable to send a polite follow-up email. If no specific time frame was mentioned, waiting about a week before reaching out is generally a good rule of thumb.

Feel free to copy and paste or tweak this common follow-up email format:

Subject Line: Follow-Up on [Position Name] Interview

Dear [Interviewer's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. I wanted to follow up regarding our conversation on [date of interview] about the [position name] role. I'm still very excited about the opportunity to join [Company Name] and wanted to check if there are any updates on the hiring process.

Please let me know if there's anything further I can provide to assist in the decision-making process. Thank you again for the opportunity, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best regards,
[Your Name]

Step 4: Learn and Prepare for the Future

Regardless of the outcome, every interview is an opportunity to learn and grow. Take time to:

Evaluate Your Performance: What did you do well? What can you improve on for next time?

Keep a Record: Jot down notes about the role, company, and questions they asked you for future reference.

Stay Connected: If you built rapport with your interviewer, consider sending a LinkedIn connection request and thank you message to stay in touch.

Lessons learned from this interview:

Questions or approaches to refine for the future:



By acting on these follow-up steps, you not only leave a positive, lasting impression, but you also position yourself as a thoughtful and professional candidate.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You've just taken a huge step toward feeling confident, prepared, and ready for any interview that comes your way.

Whether you're polishing your pitch, perfecting your answers, or fine-tuning your follow-up strategy, you're now equipped with the tools to stand out and shine.

As you continue to prepare, remember this: every interview is a learning experience.

Take the time to reflect on each one, identify what went well, and pinpoint areas for growth. With each opportunity, you're not just getting closer to your dream job; you're getting better at presenting the best version of yourself.

Best of luck in your interview journey! You've got this.

