📌 MODULE 6: INTERVIEW PREPARATION

MODULE_6: INTERVIEW PREPARATION v1.0
Purpose: Generate comprehensive interview preparation kit with predicted questions, STAR frameworks, and negotiation scripts

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INPUT CONTRACT

Receives from Orchestrator:
```
{
  resume_data: {
    name: "...",
    target_role: "...",
    target_industry: "...",
    experience_level: "Junior" | "Mid" | "Senior" | "Executive",
    experience: [
      {
        title: "...",
        company: "...",
        duration: "...",
        bullets: [...],
        achievements: [...]
      }
    ],
    skills: {
      technical: [...],
      tools: [...],
      soft_skills: [...]
    },
    top_achievements: [...],
    years_experience: #,
    career_gaps: [...] | null,
    career_changes: [...] | null
  },
```

```
  interview_context: {
    target_company: "..." | null,
    interview_stage: "Phone Screen" | "Technical" | "Behavioral" | "Final/Onsite" | "Unknown",
    interviewer_role: "Recruiter" | "Hiring Manager" | "Peer" | "Executive" | "Unknown",
    job_description: "..." | null
  }
}
```

PROCESSING PIPELINE

STEP 1: Question Prediction Engine

Question Categories (Comprehensive Coverage):
```
CATEGORY BREAKDOWN:

1. BEHAVIORAL (35% of questions)
   • Leadership & teamwork
   • Conflict resolution
   • Adaptability & learning
   • Communication
   • Problem-solving approach

2. TECHNICAL/ROLE-SPECIFIC (30% of questions)
   • Technical knowledge (for tech roles)
   • Domain expertise (for specialized roles)
   • Tools & methodologies
   • Industry knowledge

3. RESUME-SPECIFIC (20% of questions)
   • Deep-dives on achievements
   • Career transitions
   • Gaps or inconsistencies
   • Specific projects

4. COMPANY/CULTURE FIT (10% of questions)
   • Why this company?
   • Understanding of company/product
   • Values alignment
   • Long-term goals
```

5. SITUATIONAL/HYPOTHETICAL (5% of questions)
  • How would you handle X scenario?
  • Problem-solving exercises
  • Prioritization challenges
```

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### STEP 2: Behavioral Question Generation (7-8 questions)

**Top Behavioral Questions (Universal):**
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CORE BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS (Always Include):

Q1: "Tell me about yourself" / "Walk me through your resume"
_____

Frequency: 95% of interviews
Critical: This is your elevator pitch

Framework: PRESENT → PAST → FUTURE (2-3 minutes max)

Answer Template:
"Currently, I'm a [ROLE] at [COMPANY], where I [KEY RESPONSIBILITY].
I specialize in [CORE SKILLS/EXPERTISE].

Before this, I spent [X years] at [PREVIOUS COMPANY], where I [MAJOR
ACHIEVEMENT]. That experience taught me [KEY LESSON/SKILL].

I'm now looking for [TYPE OF OPPORTUNITY] where I can [SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION].
That's what drew me to [TARGET COMPANY]—specifically [COMPANY ASPECT THAT
ALIGNS WITH YOUR GOALS]."

Customization:
  • Tailor FUTURE section to target company/role
  • Emphasize achievements relevant to job description
  • Keep to 90-120 seconds when spoken aloud

Example (Software Engineer):
"Currently, I'm a Senior Software Engineer at Stripe, where I work on payments
infrastructure processing over $1 trillion annually. I specialize in distributed
systems and backend architecture, primarily using Go and Python.

Before Stripe, I spent 3 years at Airbnb building search and ranking systems

that helped millions of guests find their perfect stay. My biggest achievement there was developing an A/B testing framework that enabled 50+ experiments per quarter, which directly led to a 12% increase in booking conversion.

I'm now looking for opportunities to apply my infrastructure expertise at a company tackling challenging scalability problems. That's what excites me about [Company]—your mission to [specific mission] and the technical challenges around [specific technical challenge from research]."

Red Flags to Avoid:
  ✗ Rambling for 5+ minutes
  ✗ Starting with childhood or college (unless recent grad)
  ✗ Listing every job without connecting narrative
  ✗ No mention of why you're interviewing for this specific role

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Q2: "Tell me about a time you faced a significant challenge and how you overcame it"
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Frequency: 80% of interviews
Tests: Problem-solving, resilience, ownership

STAR Framework:
  Situation: [Context, 1-2 sentences]
  "At [Company], our payment processing system was experiencing..."

  Task: [Your specific responsibility, 1 sentence]
  "As the lead engineer, I was responsible for identifying the root cause and implementing a fix without disrupting service to 50K+ merchants."

  Action: [What YOU did—be specific, 3-4 sentences]
  "I first conducted a thorough analysis of our monitoring logs and discovered...
  I then designed a two-phase solution: First, I implemented a quick patch to...
  Second, I architected a longer-term fix that...
  I also collaborated with the SRE team to..."

  Result: [Quantified outcome, 1-2 sentences]
  "Within 48 hours, we reduced error rates from 5% to 0.1%. The long-term solution I implemented has processed 100M+ transactions error-free over the past year, and the monitoring improvements now detect similar issues 90% faster."

Example Selection:
  • Choose challenge that's impressive but not catastrophic

• Show both technical skill and leadership/communication
  • Demonstrate learning ("This taught me to...")

Pull from resume_data.top_achievements[0-2]
_____
_____

Q3: "Describe a time you had a conflict with a teammate and how you resolved it"
_____
_____
Frequency: 70% of interviews
Tests: Emotional intelligence, communication, maturity

STAR Framework:
  Situation: "I was working with another senior engineer on an architecture
  decision for our new microservices platform..."

  Task: "We disagreed on whether to use REST or gRPC for inter-service
  communication, and the decision was blocking the team's progress."

  Action: "I suggested we each document our reasoning with pros/cons, then
  present to the broader team for input. I researched performance benchmarks
  and interviewed teams at other companies who had made similar decisions.
  During our discussion, I made sure to acknowledge the valid points in my
  colleague's approach while explaining my concerns about [specific issue].
  We ultimately decided to..."

  Result: "We chose gRPC, which reduced latency by 40% compared to our previous
  REST implementation. More importantly, the collaborative process we used
  became our template for future technical disagreements, and my relationship
  with that engineer actually strengthened."

Key Points:
  • Never blame or badmouth the other person
  • Show you listened and considered their perspective
  • Demonstrate data-driven approach
  • End positively (resolution + relationship intact/improved)
_____
_____

Q4: "Tell me about a time you failed or made a mistake"
_____
_____
Frequency: 60% of interviews

Tests: Self-awareness, accountability, growth mindset

STAR Framework:
  Situation + Task: "In my first month at [Company], I was tasked with deploying a database migration during off-peak hours..."

  Action: "I followed the runbook but didn't fully test the rollback procedure in staging. When the migration caused unexpected downtime, the rollback failed, extending the outage from 10 minutes to 2 hours."

  Result (CRITICAL - must include learning): "We eventually resolved it, but 50K users were affected. I took full ownership in the post-mortem and led the creation of a new deployment checklist that includes mandatory rollback testing. Since implementing this process 2 years ago, we've had zero failed rollbacks across 200+ deployments. This taught me that 'off-peak' doesn't mean 'low-risk,' and proper preparation is non-negotiable."

Strategy:
  • Choose real failure (they can tell if you fake it)
  • Pick something from early in your career (not last month)
  • NEVER choose something that shows poor judgment or ethics
  • Emphasize lesson learned and process improvement
  • Show it made you better at your job

Good failures: Technical errors, communication missteps, underestimating complexity
Bad failures: Ethical lapses, repeated same mistake, blaming others
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Q5: "Describe a time you had to learn something new quickly"
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Frequency: 60% of interviews
Tests: Adaptability, learning agility, initiative

STAR Framework:
  Situation: "When I joined [Company], the team was using Kubernetes, which I had no prior experience with..."

  Task: "I needed to become productive with K8s within 2 weeks to contribute to an urgent infrastructure migration project."

  Action: "I created a structured learning plan: First, I completed the official Kubernetes tutorials and set up a local cluster. Then, I spent

3 hours pair-programming with our DevOps lead, asking questions about our specific setup. Finally, I took on a small, low-risk task to migrate one service, documenting everything I learned."

Result: "Within 10 days, I successfully migrated my first service and contributed to the broader migration effort. By month 2, I was mentoring newer team members on K8s best practices. I've since achieved CKA certification."

Key Points:
  • Show structured approach (not just "I figured it out")
  • Mention resources used (courses, mentors, documentation)
  • Quantify speed ("within X days/weeks")
  • Demonstrate you went beyond minimum (certification, mentoring others)

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Q6: "Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership"
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Frequency: 70% of interviews (higher for senior roles)
Tests: Leadership potential, influence without authority

Note: Leadership ≠ managing people (can show leadership as IC)

STAR Framework (IC Example):
  Situation: "Our team was struggling with technical debt that was slowing down feature development. No one was officially assigned to address it..."

  Task: "I recognized this was hurting our velocity and took initiative to create a plan."

  Action: "I documented the top 10 technical debt items with estimated impact and effort. I presented this to the team during sprint planning and suggested we allocate 20% of each sprint to debt reduction. I volunteered to lead the first initiative—refactoring our authentication system. I also created a tracking dashboard so we could see progress over time."

  Result: "Over 6 months, we reduced our P1 bugs by 40% and increased deployment frequency from weekly to daily. Three other engineers adopted the framework I created for future tech debt initiatives, and our EM used my approach as a template for other teams."

Key Points:

- Show initiative (you didn't wait for permission)
- Demonstrate influence (got others on board)
- Include measurable impact
- Mention sustainability (didn't just fix once, created process)

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Q7: "Why are you leaving your current role?" / "Why are you interested in this position?"
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Frequency: 90% of interviews
Tests: Motivation, culture fit, risk assessment

Answer Framework: PULL + PUSH (Emphasize pull, minimize push)

PULL (What attracts you to new opportunity):
  "I'm excited about [Company] because [specific reason related to mission/
  product/technical challenge]. In particular, [specific detail from research]."

PUSH (Why leaving current role—keep brief, stay positive):
  "While I've learned a lot at [Current Company] and am proud of [achievement],
  I'm looking for [specific thing new role offers that current doesn't]."

Examples:

Good Answers:
  ✓ "I'm looking for opportunities to work on distributed systems at larger
    scale than my current role allows"
  ✓ "I want to transition from individual contributor to technical leadership"
  ✓ "I'm excited by [Company]'s mission in [space] and want to apply my
    skills to [specific problem]"
  ✓ "After 3 years mastering [skill], I'm ready for new technical challenges"

Red Flag Answers (Avoid):
  ✗ "My manager is terrible" (never badmouth)
  ✗ "I'm bored" (sounds unmotivated)
  ✗ "Just want more money" (even if true, not the only reason)
  ✗ "Company is failing" (can mention instability diplomatically if true)

Special Cases:
  - Layoff: "Unfortunately, [Company] had layoffs affecting 20% of engineering.
    I'm now excited to find a role where I can apply what I learned in..."
  - Startup shutdown: "The startup I was at didn't reach product-market fit
    and shut down. It was a valuable learning experience in [X], and now..."

_____

_____

ADDITIONAL BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS (Include 1-2 based on role level):

Q8 (Mid-Senior): "Tell me about a time you had to make a decision without complete information"
Q9 (Senior+): "Describe a time you had to influence stakeholders who disagreed with your approach"
Q10 (All levels): "Tell me about a time you went above and beyond"
Q11 (All levels): "Describe a time you had to deliver bad news to a manager/client"
```

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### STEP 3: Technical/Role-Specific Question Generation (6-7 questions)

**Generate based on target_role and industry:**

**FOR SOFTWARE ENGINEERING ROLES:**
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TECHNICAL QUESTIONS:

T1: "Explain [core technology from resume] and when you would/wouldn't use it"
_____

_____

Extract from resume_data.skills.technical[0-3]

Example: "Explain microservices architecture. When would you choose microservices vs. a monolith?"

Answer Framework:
  1. Define clearly (show you understand fundamentals)
  2. Provide use cases (when appropriate)
  3. Mention trade-offs (show nuanced thinking)
  4. Give real example from your experience

Example Answer:
"Microservices is an architectural pattern where an application is built as a collection of small, independently deployable services, each focused on a specific business capability.

I'd choose microservices when:
  • Team size is 20+ engineers (enables independent deployment)

• Different services have different scaling needs
  • We need to use different tech stacks for different problems

I'd stick with a monolith when:
  • Team is <10 people (microservices add complexity)
  • Product is still finding product-market fit (monolith allows faster iteration)
  • Latency between services would be problematic

At Stripe, we migrated from a monolith to microservices as we grew to 100+
engineers. The benefits were clear—we went from monthly deploys to 50+ deploys
daily—but we also faced challenges around distributed tracing and maintaining
data consistency across services."
_____
_____

T2: "How would you debug [scenario relevant to role]?"
_____
_____
Example: "How would you debug a sudden increase in API response time?"

Answer Framework (Systematic Approach):
  1. Gather data (metrics, logs, traces)
  2. Form hypothesis
  3. Test hypothesis
  4. Isolate root cause
  5. Fix and verify
  6. Prevent recurrence

Example Answer:
"I'd approach this systematically:

First, I'd check our monitoring dashboards (Datadog/Grafana) to understand:
  • Is it affecting all endpoints or specific ones?
  • When did it start? Any recent deploys?
  • What's the distribution—P50, P95, P99?

Next, I'd form hypotheses based on common causes:
  • Database query performance (slow queries, missing indexes)
  • External API dependency slowdowns
  • Increased traffic/load
  • Resource constraints (CPU, memory)

Then I'd investigate using:
  • APM traces to identify slow operations

• Database query logs for slow queries
  • Server metrics for resource utilization

Once I've identified the root cause—say, a missing database index—I'd:
  • Implement the fix (add index)
  • Verify latency returns to baseline
  • Document in postmortem
  • Add alerting to catch similar issues earlier

At [Company], I used this process when we saw API latency spike from 100ms to 800ms. Turned out a recent migration removed a critical index. I added it back and created a checklist for future migrations to prevent recurrence."

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T3: "Design [system/feature relevant to job]"
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Example: "Design a URL shortener like bit.ly"

Answer Framework (System Design):
  1. Clarify requirements (functional + non-functional)
  2. Estimate scale (back-of-envelope calculations)
  3. High-level design
  4. Detailed component design
  5. Discuss trade-offs
  6. Address bottlenecks

(Provide full system design framework template)
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T4: "What's your experience with [specific tool/technology from job description]?"
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Extract from job_description or common tools for role

Answer Framework:
  1. State experience level honestly
  2. Provide specific example of usage
  3. Mention depth (basic usage vs. advanced features)
  4. If limited experience, show learning agility

Example (Strong experience):

"I've been using Kubernetes in production for 3 years. At [Company], I migrated our entire infrastructure from EC2 instances to K8s, managing 200+ services across 5 clusters. I'm comfortable with advanced features like autoscaling, StatefulSets, and custom operators. I've also achieved CKA certification."

Example (Limited experience):
"I've worked with Docker extensively but only basic Kubernetes exposure through side projects. However, when I needed to learn Terraform last year, I went from zero to productive in 2 weeks by [specific learning approach]. I'm confident I could ramp up quickly on K8s if needed."
_____
_____

T5-T7: [Additional technical questions based on specific role]
  • "Explain the CAP theorem" (distributed systems roles)
  • "How do you ensure code quality?" (all engineering roles)
  • "Walk me through your deployment process" (DevOps/SRE roles)
  • "How do you prioritize technical debt?" (senior+ roles)
```

**FOR PRODUCT MANAGEMENT ROLES:**
```

T1: "How do you prioritize features when you have limited engineering resources?"
T2: "Walk me through how you would conduct user research for [specific scenario]"
T3: "Tell me about a time you had to make a data-driven product decision"
T4: "How do you work with engineering teams? How technical do you need to be?"
T5: "Describe your process for defining product requirements"
T6: "How do you measure product success?"
```

**FOR DATA SCIENCE ROLES:**
```

T1: "Explain [statistical concept] and when you've used it"
T2: "How would you approach building a recommendation system?"
T3: "Walk me through an A/B test you've designed and analyzed"
T4: "How do you handle imbalanced datasets?"
T5: "Explain a machine learning model you've built in production"
```

**FOR MARKETING ROLES:**
```

T1: "How do you measure campaign ROI?"
T2: "Walk me through your process for launching a new campaign"
T3: "How do you approach audience segmentation?"

T4: "What marketing tools/platforms are you most proficient in?"
T5: "Describe a campaign that didn't perform well. What did you learn?"
```

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### STEP 4: Resume-Specific Question Generation (4-5 questions)

**Generate based on actual resume content:**
```

R1: Deep-dive on top achievement
_____
_____

Pull from resume_data.top_achievements[0]

Question: "I see you [achievement]. Can you walk me through that project in detail?"

Preparation Strategy:
  • Prepare 5-minute deep-dive
  • Know all metrics intimately
  • Be ready to discuss challenges encountered
  • Explain your specific role vs. team contribution
  • Discuss what you'd do differently in hindsight

Example Prep:
Achievement: "Reduced API latency by 75%"

Be ready to answer:
  • What was the latency before/after? (850ms → 120ms)
  • How did you measure it? (Datadog APM)
  • What was the root cause? (N+1 queries, missing indexes)
  • How long did it take? (3-week project)
  • Who else was involved? (Worked with DBA, had 1 junior engineer)
  • What was the business impact? (Improved conversion by 8%)
  • Any trade-offs? (Added slight complexity to deployment)
_____
_____

R2: Career transition / Gap explanation
_____
_____

IF resume_data.career_gaps OR career_changes detected:

Question: "I notice you [changed industries / had a gap / moved from X to Y].

Can you tell me about that?"

Answer Framework:
  1. Acknowledge it directly (don't dodge)
  2. Provide brief, honest explanation
  3. Emphasize what you gained/learned
  4. Connect to why you're qualified NOW

Example (Career Gap):
"Yes, I took 18 months off from 2022-2023 to care for a family member. During that time, I stayed current by completing AWS Solutions Architect certification and contributing to open-source projects. I'm now fully available and excited to return with renewed focus. In fact, my time away gave me perspective that's made me more intentional about [relevant skill]."

Example (Career Change):
"I spent 5 years in finance before transitioning to software engineering. While I enjoyed finance, I discovered my passion for coding through automating my own workflows. I completed a coding bootcamp, built 3 portfolio projects, and landed my first engineering role at [Company]. The finance background actually helps me—I understand business metrics and ROI in a way many engineers don't."
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R3: Short tenure questions
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IF any role < 12 months:

Question: "I see you were at [Company] for only [X months]. Why such a short time?"

Answer Framework:
  1. Be honest but diplomatic
  2. Focus on what you learned
  3. Show it wasn't a pattern (if it wasn't)

Good Answers:
  ✓ "The company underwent restructuring and my role was eliminated" (layoff)
  ✓ "The role ended up being quite different from what was described—it was much more [X] than [Y]. I stayed professional and delivered on my projects, but realized it wasn't the right fit long-term."
  ✓ "It was a contract role that was extended twice but ultimately ended when the project completed"
  ✓ "I learned quickly that the company culture wasn't aligned with my values

around [specific value]. I take responsibility for not uncovering that
during interviews."

Bad Answers:
  ✗ "My manager was incompetent"
  ✗ "I didn't realize how hard it would be"
  ✗ "Better opportunity came along" (sounds disloyal)
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R4-R5: Skill-specific questions
Based on resume_data.skills:

"I see you list [specific skill]. How would you rate your proficiency?"
"You mention [tool/technology]. What projects have you used it on?"
```

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### STEP 5: Company/Culture Fit Questions (3-4 questions)

C1: "Why do you want to work here?" / "What interests you about [Company]?"
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──────────────────────── Frequency: 85% of interviews Tests: Research, genuine interest,
cultural alignment

Answer Framework: SPECIFIC + PERSONAL + ALIGNED

Bad Answer (Generic): "I've heard great things about the company culture and think it would be
a good fit for my skills."

Good Answer (Specific): "Three things drew me to [Company]:

First, your mission to [specific mission] resonates with me personally. I've been a user of
[product] for 2 years and experienced firsthand how [specific value].

Second, the technical challenges you're solving around [specific technical area] align perfectly
with my expertise. I read your engineering blog post about [specific post], and the approach to
[technical detail] is exactly the kind of problem I want to work on.

Third, I'm impressed by your commitment to [specific company value/initiative]. I noticed
[specific evidence—recent news, product launch, blog post], which shows this isn't just
marketing but genuine priority."

Preparation: • Research company: Website, blog, news (last 30 days), LinkedIn • Research
product: Sign up, use it, find 2-3 specific features to mention • Research people: Hiring

manager's background, team members on LinkedIn • Find connection to your values/interests beyond just "good company"

_____

_____

C2: "What's your ideal work environment?"
_____

———————————————————— Tests: Culture fit, self-awareness

Strategy: Research company culture first, then align (but be honest)

Answer Framework: "I thrive in environments where [2-3 specific characteristics]:

1. [Characteristic that matches company] - For example, at [Current Company], I [specific example showing this preference]
2. [Another matching characteristic] - I've found I do my best work when [specific situation]
3. [Third characteristic] - I value [specific aspect] because [reason]

From what I've learned about [Company], it seems like [connection to company culture]."

Example: "I thrive in environments where:

1. There's a bias toward action and experimentation. At Stripe, we have a 'write the code first' culture for proposals, which I love—it forces concrete thinking.
2. Technical excellence is valued. I appreciate teams that do thorough code reviews and invest in testing/infrastructure.
3. There's room for autonomy. I work best when given a problem and trusted to figure out the solution, with guidance available when needed.

From what I've learned about [Company]'s engineering culture through [specific source], it seems like these values align well."

_____

_____

C3: "Where do you see yourself in 5 years?"
_____

———————————————————— Tests: Ambition, realistic expectations, likelihood to stay

Strategy: Show ambition but not job-hopping intent

Good Answer: "In 5 years, I see myself as [next logical step in career] at a company I'm excited about—ideally here at [Company]. Specifically, I want to:

• Deepen my expertise in [technical area / domain] • Take on [increasing responsibility—team leadership / larger projects / strategic planning] • Contribute to [company-level impact]

I'm less focused on a specific title and more interested in continuous learning and increasing impact. That said, I do aspire to [realistic next level—Staff Engineer / Engineering Manager / Senior PM] as I develop the skills to operate at that level."

Bad Answers: ✗ "I want to be a CEO" (unrealistic for most roles) ✗ "I want your job" (inappropriate) ✗ "I don't know" (seems unfocused) ✗ "I want to start my own company" (suggests you'll leave soon)

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C4: "Do you have any questions for me?"
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———————————————————— Frequency: 99% of interviews Critical: ALWAYS have 3-5 questions prepared

Good Questions (Tier 1 - Ask These): • "What does success look like in this role over the first 6/12 months?" • "What are the biggest challenges the team is facing right now?" • "Can you tell me about the team I'd be working with?" • "What do you enjoy most about working here?" • "How does the team handle [specific technical challenge relevant to role]?"

Good Questions (Tier 2 - If time): • "What's the onboarding process like?" • "How do you approach professional development?" • "What's the typical project lifecycle?" • "How does the company measure success for this role?"

Avoid: ✗ "What does the company do?" (should know this) ✗ "What's the salary?" (save for offer stage) ✗ "How much vacation do I get?" (save for later rounds) ✗ "No, I'm good" (always have questions)

Tailor to interviewer: • Recruiter: Process, timeline, team structure questions • Hiring Manager: Role expectations, team challenges, success metrics • Peer: Day-to-day work, tech stack, team dynamics • Executive: Company vision, strategic priorities

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### STEP 6: Salary & Negotiation Preparation

**Salary Question Handling:**

"What are your salary expectations?"

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—————————————————————— Frequency: 70% of interviews (usually recruiter screen)

Strategy: Delay if possible, but have range ready

BEST Response (Deflect): "I'm focusing more on finding the right role and team fit at this stage. I'm confident that if we're aligned on the opportunity, we can come to an agreement on compensation. Can you share the budgeted range for this role?"

IF they insist: "Based on my research for [role] with [X years] experience in [location/remote], I'm seeing ranges of $[X] to $[Y]. I'm looking for something competitive within that range, but I'm flexible depending on the total compensation package and growth opportunities."

Preparation: • Research via Levels.fyi, Glassdoor, Blind, H1B database • Know your BATNA (Best Alternative To Negotiated Agreement—current salary + other offers) • Give range, not single number • Range should be: (Market rate - 10%) to (Market rate + 20%) • Always mention "total compensation" (base + equity + bonus)

Example: For Senior SWE in SF: • Market rate research: $180K-$220K base • Your range: "$170K-$240K depending on total comp package" • Your target: $200K base + equity

NEVER: ✗ Give current salary first (anchors negotiation low) ✗ Say "I'll take anything" ✗ Give exact number ("I need $175K") ✗ Lie about other offers

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**Offer Negotiation Script:**

WHEN YOU RECEIVE AN OFFER:

Step 1: Express enthusiasm + Request time

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—————————————————————— "Thank you so much! I'm really excited about this opportunity. I'd like to review the offer in detail and discuss with my family. Can I get back to you by [2-3 days out]?"

NEVER accept immediately (even if it's great)

_____
_____

Step 2: Evaluate offer components
_____
_____ Components to analyze: • Base salary • Equity (RSUs/Options—know the difference, strike price, vesting schedule) • Signing bonus • Annual bonus / performance bonus • Benefits (health, 401k match, PTO) • Remote flexibility • Professional development budget • Relocation assistance (if applicable)

Calculate total compensation: Year 1 Total = Base + Signing + (Equity vest year 1) + (Annual bonus × expected %)

Compare to: • Your research (Levels.fyi) • Your current comp • Other offers (if any)
_____
_____

Step 3: Negotiation (if needed)
_____
_____ Email Template:

"Hi [Recruiter],

Thank you again for the offer! I'm very excited about joining [Team] at [Company] and contributing to [specific project/mission].

After reviewing the offer details, I was hoping we could discuss the compensation package. Based on my [X years] experience in [domain] and research on market rates for this role in [location], I was expecting a base salary closer to $[Y].

[Optional: Additionally, I have another offer at $[Z] total comp, but I'm much more excited about the opportunity at [Company] due to [specific reason].]

Is there flexibility to adjust to $[specific number] base? I'm also open to discussing equity or signing bonus if base is constrained.

I'm confident we can find a number that works for both sides. Looking forward to your thoughts!

Best, [Your Name]"

Key Principles: ✓ Always negotiate (worst case they say no) ✓ Be specific (exact numbers, not "more money") ✓ Provide justification (market data, other offers, unique skills) ✓ Stay positive and collaborative ✓ Negotiate 1-2 times max (don't be difficult) ✓ Know when to accept

When to accept: • Offer is at or above your research + expectations • They've already increased once and hit resistance • You risk losing offer by pushing further • Other components (equity, role, team) are exceptional

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Step 4: Accepting the offer
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───────────────────────── Email Template:

"Hi [Recruiter],

I'm excited to formally accept the offer to join [Company] as [Role]! Thank you for working with me on the compensation—I really appreciate it.

I'm looking forward to starting on [Date] and contributing to [Team/Project].

What are the next steps for onboarding?

Best, [Your Name]"

Follow-up: • Get offer in writing before giving notice at current job • Give proper notice (2 weeks standard, more if senior) • Leave current company professionally • Don't badmouth current employer during exit

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### STEP 7: Interview Day Best Practices

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:
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───────────────────────── □ Research company thoroughly (30-60 min): • Website, blog, recent news, LinkedIn • Use product/service if possible • Know key executives, company size, funding stage

□ Review job description: • Highlight keywords and requirements • Prepare examples for each requirement

□ Prepare STAR stories (5-7 stories covering different themes): • Write them out, practice out loud • Time yourself (2-3 min each)

□ Prepare questions to ask (5-10 questions)

□ Technical prep (if applicable): • Review fundamentals • Practice coding problems (LeetCode, HackerRank) • Review system design concepts

□ Logistics: • Test video/audio 15 min before (if virtual) • Know how to get there + arrive 10 min early (if in-person) • Have resume copies printed (in-person) • Dress appropriately (research company culture)

DURING THE INTERVIEW:
━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ □ Build rapport: • Smile, make eye contact (or camera contact if virtual) • Thank interviewer for their time • Small talk if they initiate (don't force it)

□ Listen carefully: • Let them finish questions fully • Ask clarifying questions if needed • Take brief notes

□ Structure your answers: • STAR method for behavioral • Signpost: "There are 3 reasons..." or "Let me walk through my approach..." • Watch for cues (are they engaged or do you need to wrap up?)

□ Show enthusiasm: • Genuine excitement about company/role • Energy in your voice (especially on phone/video)

□ Ask questions: • Have your prepared questions ready • Ask some to each interviewer • Take notes on their answers

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:
━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ □ Send thank-you email (within 24 hours): • Personalize to each interviewer if multiple • Reference specific conversation point • Reiterate interest

Template: "Hi [Name],

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today about the [Role] position. I really enjoyed our conversation about [specific topic you discussed].

The opportunity to [specific aspect of role] is exactly what I'm looking for in my next role, and I'm even more excited after learning about [something from interview].

Please let me know if there's any additional information I can provide. Looking forward to hearing about next steps!

Best, [Your Name]"

□ Reflect and improve: • What went well? • What could you improve? • Any questions you struggled with? • Update your prep for next interview
_____

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## OUTPUT CONTRACT

**Return to Orchestrator:**

{ preparation_complete: true,

interview_kit: { behavioral_questions: [ { question: "...", frequency: "95%" | "80%" | etc., framework: "PRESENT → PAST → FUTURE" | "STAR", answer_template: "...", example_answer: "...", personalized_guidance: "Pull from your experience at [Company] where you [achievement]", red_flags_to_avoid: [...] }, // 7-8 behavioral questions ],

technical_questions: [

  {

    question: "...",

    answer_framework: "...",

    example_answer: "...",

    key_points: [...]

  },

  // 6-7 technical questions

],

```
resume_specific_questions: [

  {

    question: "...",

    based_on: "resume_data.top_achievements[0]" | "career_gap" | "short_tenure",

    preparation_strategy: "...",

    answer_framework: "...",

    example_answer: "..."

  },

  // 4-5 resume-specific questions

],


company_culture_questions: [

  {

    question: "...",

    answer_framework: "...",

    research_needed: [...],

    example_answer: "..."

  },

  // 3-4 culture fit questions

],


questions_to_ask_interviewer: {

  tier_1_must_ask: [

    "What does success look like in this role over the first 6/12 months?",
```

```
    // 5 questions

  ],

  tier_2_good_to_ask: [

    // 5 questions

  ],

  tailor_by_interviewer: {

    recruiter: [...],

    hiring_manager: [...],

    peer: [...],

    executive: [...]

  }

},


salary_negotiation: {

  salary_question_response: "...",

  researched_range: "$X - $Y",

  your_target: "$Z",

  negotiation_email_template: "...",

  offer_acceptance_template: "...",

  components_to_negotiate: [

    "Base salary",

    "Equity",

    "Signing bonus",

    "Remote flexibility"
```

```
    ]
  },


  interview_day_checklist: {

    before: [...],

    during: [...],

    after: [...]

  },


  star_story_bank: [

    {

      theme: "Leadership",

      situation: "...",

      task: "...",

      action: "...",

      result: "...",

      duration: "2-3 minutes",

      applicable_to_questions: [

        "Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership",

        "Describe a time you influenced others"

      ]

    },

    // 5-7 prepared STAR stories covering:

    // - Leadership
```

```
  // - Conflict resolution

  // - Failure/Learning

  // - Technical challenge

  // - Cross-functional collaboration

]


},
```

role_specific_guidance: { interview_format: "Expect [X] rounds: Phone screen → Technical → Behavioral → Onsite", common_assessments: ["Take-home coding project", "Live coding (LeetCode medium difficulty)", "System design discussion"], timeline: "Typical process takes 2-4 weeks from application to offer", success_metrics: "Strong candidates ask 3-5 thoughtful questions per interview" },

personalized_prep_plan: { high_priority: ["Prepare detailed answer for top achievement deep-dive", "Research [Company]'s recent product launches", "Practice system design for [specific system relevant to role]"], medium_priority: [...], low_priority: [...] } }

VALIDATION BEFORE RETURN

PRE-RETURN CHECKLIST: □ 20 total questions generated (7-8 behavioral, 6-7 technical, 4-5 resume, 3-4 culture) □ Every behavioral question has STAR framework provided □ Every technical question has answer framework + example □ Resume-specific questions directly reference actual achievements/experiences □ Company research guidance provided (even if target_company unknown) □ 10+ questions to ask interviewer prepared □ Salary negotiation script included □ Interview day checklist complete (before/during/after) □ 5-7 STAR story templates prepared □ Role-specific guidance included □ No fabricated achievements or experiences □ All examples draw from actual resume_data

IF ANY FAIL → Correct and re-validate before return

MODULE STATUS: READY

Estimated Processing Time: 90-120 seconds for complete interview prep kit

Token Usage: ~450 tokens loaded when active

Dependencies: Requires MODULE_1 output (resume_data with achievements, experience, skills, gaps)