

# Interview tips

## Introduction

In this reading, you will learn how to prepare for an interview and get some essential tips about presenting yourself in person and at virtual interviews.

Before successfully starting a job at a company, you must demonstrate that you are a suitable candidate for the role. Getting a job can be challenging and may require attending several interviews before finding a position suited to your skill set. Ideally, you are looking for one where you are the strongest candidate for the role. It is essential to realize that even if you are well-suited to a position, there is always the possibility that a more experienced candidate is also being interviewed. So, even though you did not get a role, you could still have had a good interview.

It may help to think about interviews as a stepping stone on your journey to a rewarding full-time career. Regardless of the outcome, always ask yourself, did I present myself to the best of my ability? And, can I learn things from this interview that can help me in subsequent interviews?

## Prepare

Here are some of the standard questions that you may encounter in any given interview:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you feel that they should hire you?
- What are your major strengths?
- Or, what are your major weaknesses?
- What pay are you expecting?
- How do your previous experiences make you suitable for this role?
- What do your friends say about you?
- Why do you want this role?
- How have you dealt with conflict in the past?

Knowing these questions are coming is advantageous because you can prepare for them. After reading this list, can you write a concise answer for each? You will find the answers to many of these questions in your resumé. A good tactic is to review your resumé before an interview to see which aspects are related to the company and role.

Additional answers worth preparing for may relate to the company itself. Where is the company based, and what do they do? How does your previous employment overlap with their current needs? Research the same role in other companies. Know the market salary for the position if you are asked about a pay rate. The interviewer will know the answer, so being able to answer this successfully demonstrates your preparedness. Learning about a company displays an eagerness to work there. Finally, consider that a weakness may also be a strength. "I focus excessively on details" can be damaging if there are tight deadlines; however, it is a strength if the job requires meticulous attention to detail.

## Soft skills

Conflict resolution is an essential soft skill to possess. Invariably in your working life, you will encounter a situation

where your approach or goals do not align with those of a colleague, employer, or customer. Managing these situations helps create a harmonious working environment. Be cognizant of when you have clashed with people and how you resolved it. Did you find this approach to be successful? If not, then do some research on how to deal with conflict in the workplace.

## **Presentation**

It's frequently said, "dress for the job you want, not the job you have." How you present yourself can subconsciously convey much information about you. Be neat and respectable. Your future work colleagues may be on the panel, and you want to make a good impression. The attire you wear should be suitable for the role. Pride in appearance can be equated with pride in a role.

## **Demeanor**

Display readiness for the role. Colleagues will want to see someone interested in being there. Be calm and relaxed when answering questions. It is never a good policy to interrupt a question. Listen until the question is finished, and take a breath. Competency questions require a STAR answer (Situation, Task, Action, Result). Display pride in previous work-related experiences you've had. And have some questions prepared. In an interview, the interviewer should always allow you to ask them a question. Take this time to learn something about what is being sought. What conditions might be more favorable for you? Are the company's goals aligned with yours, and can you convey that?

Be authentic in your actions. It is better to be truthful and honest when applying for a post. Exaggeration may lead to a follow-up interview, but it is better to be capable of any position you intend to work in.

## **Virtual interviews**

Many interviews are conducted virtually. Virtual interviews are challenging as it can be more difficult to read body language over video. Due to sound quality, it is essential to refrain from speaking over someone. Ensure that all your tech is working. Have your computer plugged in and a working set of earphones in case of sound issues. Ensure that your video is working and compatible with the platform. Sometimes, a computer needs to change permissions before you can use a camera. And remember to test the connection speed.

As with an in-person interview, appearance is essential. Take some time to make sure you are suitably attired. Even though you have not gone into the office, dress as though you have. As with an in-person interview, be aware of your body language. Sit up straight and be attentive. Though you may be in your home, it is still essential to conduct yourself with work decorum.

Find a quiet location that is free from distraction. It can be helpful to have a dedicated space to work in. This is necessary to ensure that during the interview, there will be no surprise guests doing housework in the background.

## **Conclusion**

In this reading, you learned how to prepare for an interview and got some essential tips on presentation and how to conduct yourself in virtual interviews. Despite your best efforts, you may not be successful if there is a more suitable candidate. You may also find that the role isn't as aligned with your skillset as you first thought. It is good to remember that regardless of the outcome, an interview is a learning experience. If treated as such, it is a stepping stone to a career that aligns with your goals and abilities. Being prepared and ready to pounce when the opportunity arises is the key to success.