



# *Interview Prep Packet*

## Candidate Interview Preparation

A little preparation before the interview will help take the edge off the event. Here are some simple ways to get ready for your meeting.

1. **Research the company and learn more about your interviewer:** By knowing as much as possible about the organization you're interviewing with, you'll be able to speak about topics that are relevant to the job you're applying for. If you can learn a little about the person who will be interviewing you, you'll be miles ahead of the game. Try to research one or two things about their accomplishments, history with the organization, outside interests—anything that will help you break the ice.
2. **Know your Strengths:** Make a list of FIVE (5) strengths that are most relevant to the role you are interviewing for. Practice telling at least three stories that illustrate your strengths. Be prepared to speak to your strengths throughout the interview in response to relevant questions. Your stories make the difference between a mediocre and stellar answer. *SEE BELOW for the GIS Interview Preparation Worksheet.*
3. **Answering Interview Questions:** Most interviews last between 30 to 60 minutes. During that time, the interviewer will try to learn the following:
  - The level of your experience and skills
  - Your willingness and ability to learn
  - A sense of your personality, professionalism, and commitment
  - An indication of how you would fit into the organization
4. **Interview Styles:** There are two styles of interviewing: *traditional* and *behavior* based. Traditional questions are direct and tend to give the interviewee the sense that they are being tested, as if they are right and wrong answers.

*Traditional questions might be something like these:*

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to hold this position?
- Aside from money, what will you gain from having this job?
- What motivates you to excel?

*Behavior-based questions invite the job applicant to tell a story.* The theory behind behavior-based interviewing is that by hearing about a job seeker's past behavior, the employer can predict your future behavior. Here are some sample behavior-based questions.

- What accomplishment are you particularly proud of?
- When did you handle conflict with your boss, colleagues, or subordinates?
- Tell me about a situation that demonstrates your work habits.
- Describe a time when you and your superior were in conflict and how it was resolved?

#### **5. List the questions you want to ask.**

In the interview you too are trying to decide where you want to spend eight or more hours a day for the next few years. An important point to keep in mind, you are being evaluated on the quality of the questions that you ask.

### **Questions to Ask in an Interview**

You probably already know that an interview isn't just a chance for a hiring manager—it's your opportunity to sniff out whether a job is the right fit for you. Which means: It's important to go in with some questions. What do you want to know about the position? The company? The department? The team?

#### **The Job**

1. What keeps you up at night?
2. What are the most immediate projects that need to be addressed?
3. Can you show me examples of projects I'd be working on?
4. What attributes does someone need to have to be successful in this role?
5. What qualities is the team missing that you're looking for with a new hire?
6. What are the biggest challenges that someone in this position would face? Do you expect the main responsibilities for this position to change in the next six months to a year?

#### **Training and Professional Development**

7. What training programs are available to your employees?
8. How have individuals in this role been successful within the company?
9. What is the onboarding process?

#### **Your Performance**

10. What are the most important things you'd like to see someone accomplish in the first 30, 60, and 90 days on the job?
11. What can I do immediately in this role that will have the most positive impact for the team?
12. What are the performance expectations of this position over the first 12 months?
13. What is the performance review process like here? How often would I be formally reviewed?
14. What metrics or goals will my performance be evaluated against?
15. In a year from now, what would success look like in this position?

**Interviewer- do your own research first about the interviewer!**

16. Has your role changed since you've been here? How did you choose this firm?
17. What keeps you here?
18. What's your favorite part about working here?
19. What is the most valuable thing you have learned in your current role? How do you apply that knowledge?
20. If I asked the members of your team to describe your management style, what do you think they would say?

### **The Company**

21. I've read about the company's history, but can you tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_?
22. Where do you see this company in the next few years?
23. What can you tell me about your plans for growth?
24. What are the current goals that the company is focused on, and how does this team work to support hitting those goals?
25. What gets you most excited about the company's future?

### **The Team**

26. Can you tell me about the team I'll be working with?
27. Who will I work with most closely?
28. Who will I report to directly?
29. Can you tell me about my direct reports? What are their strengths and the team's biggest challenges?
30. Do you expect to hire more people in this department in the next six months?
31. What other departments work closest with your department?
32. What is the most common career path in this function?

### **The Culture**

33. What is the company and team culture like?
34. How would you describe the work environment here?
35. Can you tell me about what team building exercises the company does?
36. Is there a formal mission statement or company values?
37. What's your favorite office tradition?
38. What's unique about working here versus anywhere else you've worked?
39. How has the company changed since you joined?

### **Next Steps**

40. Do you have any hesitations about my experience that we can go over?
41. What are the next steps in the interview process?
42. Is there anything else I can provide you with that would be helpful?
43. Can I answer any final questions for you?

### **Questions to Prepare For**

To give you a little practice in answering both traditional and behavior-based questions, here are some interview questions that might be asked of an applicant going for a position at any level in an organization. After each question, you'll find an analysis of the question, which may help you frame your answers.

**"Tell me about yourself."**

Professional not personal. Start with your education if applicable. Then discuss your work experience from top, or the last 3 relevant jobs for the last ten-year period. Highlight major contributions/promotions, reasons for job transitions and why you are here today. This is an opportunity to quickly align yourself with the position specifications

**"What are you looking for?"**

Choose three (3) things from the job description that you would like to continue to develop.

**"Where do you see yourself in five years?"**

Similar answer as above. Keep it open ended. Note: This is a classic scenario that people can use as a limiting factor. Do not use a title. Reiterate your desire or your passion for the EA (Executive Assistant) role as it is, and your ability to learn and contribute more to the team over time.

**"Why did you leave your last position? / Why are you leaving your current position?"**

Keep it AIRTIGHT; do not say anything that can open a complex issue. Keep it positive. Move toward the new role.

**"Why would you be an asset to the firm? What are your most positive characteristics?"**

Reiterate your strengths and explain how these are relevant to the job responsibilities. Illustrate your strengths with a story to highlight your adjectives that describe yourself.

**"What is the most challenging aspect of your current position? How did/do you handle it?"**

How did you make a tricky situation positive? Use this opportunity to share how you have learned and developed in your current role.

**"Who was your most challenging executive and why? How did you handle them?"**

Again, be sure to keep it positive and focus on ways that you create solutions.

**"What would your current boss say about you? What would your relatives, friends, co-workers say about you?"**

List your qualities and how they apply to the role you are interviewing for.

**"What accomplishment are you particularly proud of?"**

Relevant to the position only. Choose three (3) things that are significant professional accomplishments. Example: implementing/building new processes

**"How do you organize your day?"**

Explain how you keep your executive and you organized. Use examples.

**"Give an example of a time that you had to a conflict in the office and how did you get through it."**

Make sure this was a learning experience and a positive outcome.

**"Tell me about a time you made a mistake, and how you dealt with it."**

Choose a mistake that happened early on in your role “In my first three months...”

**“What are your hobbies? What are some things you like to do outside of work?”**

Employers know that what an applicant does during their free time can say a lot about their character.

**“Why are you interested in this industry, and this firm in particular?”**

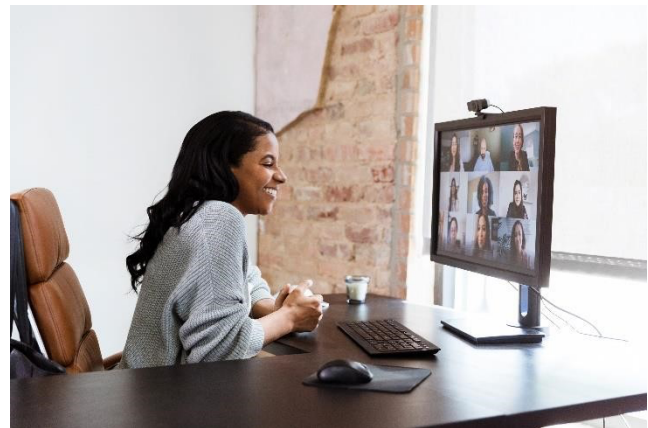
Do your research and let your enthusiasm show.

**THINGS TO REMEMBER:**

- Review the company website, in addition to Wikipedia, Crunchbase, etc.
- Do not be late! Arrive 7 minutes early.
- Dress for success! Is a suit appropriate? Ask what they are wearing!
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Bring five (5) copies of the resume.
- Firm handshake, smile and give great eye contact!
- Mirror the energy, body language and cadence of the interviewer to build rapport.
- If you decide you are not interested in the position/company, keep your “game face” on – do not let your disinterest show!
- Ask each interviewer for a business card.



# Best Practices for a Video Interview.



## How to Prepare for a Video Interview

### Things to Remember:

1. **Dressing for a video Interview** - For your video interview, you should dress professionally—the same way you would for an in-person interview. Research the company culture before your interview, so you have a good idea of what's appropriate.
2. **To look your best on camera** - avoid bright colors and patterns and opt for softer colors instead. If you are wearing a tie, wear a solid color rather than a patterned one. If you wear glasses, adjust the lighting in the room to reduce glare from the lenses. While it's likely that the interviewer will only see your upper half, it's still a good idea to wear professional pants or a skirt if you need to stand up for any reason.

3. Do your hair and makeup - Whether working from home or remotely, be sure to check your appearance before each video meeting. Check/double-check your



4. Lighting is the key to great video and will make you more precise on your video stream and allow “virtual backgrounds” to work better. Make sure there is MORE light in front of you than behind you. Bring in a desk lamp to light the side of your face. Open a window slightly to add more light to the other side of your face. You want to make sure to have more lighting on your face than on the background.

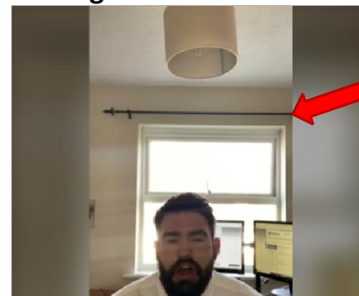


5. **Turn off things that go “ding”** - If you have instant messenger, Apple Messages, or other apps that “ding” open on your desktop, be sure to turn them off before your video calls. The “ding” notifications on your computer are broadcasted during a Zoom call. Just turn them off, or at least silence the notifications.
6. **Check your headroom** - In the T.V. world, the space above the top of your head to the top of the video frame is called “headroom.” Too much headroom can be distracting, so here is a simple way to set up: Once your video is on, put 2 to 3 finger-widths of space at the top of your head to the top of the frame. This improves your appearance and lines up your eyes to an appealing level (in design, we call it the rule of 3rds). Your eyes are on the top 3rd of the video screen.



behind you – you do not want them to

7. **Check your background** - Be mindful of what is



**NO!**



see something that influences their perception of you, try to find a white wall or use the blur feature on your video settings.



8. Try your best to find a private space where you will not be interrupted or have distractions going on behind you.
9. Lastly - Fill out the worksheet on the next page. This will help to refresh your memory about your past accomplishments before you get asked the questions. The more prepared you are the more eloquent you will sound!



# Interview Prep Worksheet Instructions

In the world of interviewing, there is one sad but inevitable truth – the person who is best for the job does not always get the job – the person who **questions the best for the job gets the job!**

The interview prep worksheet is designed to help you give the very best interview you can specifically. To do that, you must understand a bit of what you will experience during an interview because the number one reason why a candidate bombs an interview has nothing to do with their skills. It has to do with how they prepare. During an interview, you will begin to feel a certain amount of stress. When you become stressed, you will start to lose your ability to access your long-term memory (details about things that happened more than 1 and a half years ago). Right now, the most popular style of the interview being conducted is a “behavior-based” interview – give me examples of what you have done in the past, and it is a fairly good indicator of what you are going to do in the future. So, you are going to have an interviewer ask you for details about something on your resume from 3 years ago, and your brain quite simply will not let you access those memories, and the result is a long drawn out pause and a filler statement like – “Boy that’s a good question. Let me think about that a minute.” As you are thinking – the interviewer is equating each second that passes by with a lack of actual experience and ultimately a failed interview.

Start with the left-hand side of the document. First, go through your last 3 positions and write down every accomplishment you can remember from those 3 positions. Focus specifically on three areas – namely – where did you **MAKE** the company money? Where did you **SAVE** the company money? And finally, where did you **IMPROVE A PROCESS OR PROCEDURE**?

Once you have done that – focus on the right-hand side of the page. Look at each accomplishment and make some notes on what happened with that accomplishment. Specifically, address these issues –whose buy-in did you have to get for the achievement? What hurdles did you have to overcome? Were you on time and on budget? What were your actual results vs. expected results? What would you do differently next time?

Once you have written all this down, what you have successfully done is now moved all those details stored in your long-term memory and put them back in your short memory so users can give better examples faster now during your interview. The result will be you will provide a much better interview. If you are scheduled for a telephone interview, feel free to have this sheet lying in front of you to reference while you are talking on the phone.

## Interview Preparation Worksheet.

**REVIEWING YOUR PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS** – Start with your most recent Employer – focus on the issues related to this position.

**Company:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Position:**\_\_\_\_\_

List your Accomplishments/Achievements development while working at this position here:

List the strategy, implantation, and processes you used to bring about these results:

[illegible]

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

List your Accomplishments/Achievements development while working at this position here:

List the strategy, implantation, and processes you used to bring about these results:

[illegible]

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

List your Accomplishments/Achievements  
development while working at this position here:

List the strategy, implantation, and  
processes you used to bring  
about these results:


#### ANSWERING EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS, THE RIGHT WAY

- **FIRST RULE –Answers need to be between 1 – 3 minutes in length.** If it is too short, no one will believe you, and if you are too long, you will be considered insensitive and boring. This advice will only work if you have done something comparable. It will backfire if you try to fake it.
- **The SECOND RULE – Structure your answers using the S.T.A.R.C.H. principle.** S = situation  
– Explain the situation surrounding your example  
T = task – What task were you trying to accomplish  
A = action – What actions did you take to achieve the task  
R = results – What were the results of this action  
C.H. = change – What would you do differently this time because of you what you learned
- **\*\*Important –** When giving these answers, use both the words “I” and “we” in your examples. If you only use the word “I” during your response, you come across as arrogant and not a team player. If you overuse the word “we,” you appear as a follower who is incapable of functioning under their initiative.