



TIPS & TOOLS

## Job interview preparation

# FAILING TO PREPARE = PREPARING TO FAIL!

Ben Franklin knew what he was talking about when he said , “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” This holds true throughout life, including Interviewing!

Preparing for an interview primarily means taking time to consider your goals and qualifications relative to the position and to ERT. Not only that, but fully preparing for an interview will help you remain calm so that you can be at your best.

These easy-to-follow steps should help you prepare to do your best. Please do not hesitate to contact your Talent Acquisition Partner who will gladly assist your further in your preparations.



### 1. Carefully examine the job description

During your prep work you should use the posted job description as a guide. The job description is a list of the qualifications, qualities and background we are looking for in an ideal candidate.

The more you can align yourself with these details, the more the interviewer will be able to see that you are qualified. The job description may also give you ideas about questions the hiring manager may ask throughout the interview.



## 2. Consider why you are interviewing and your qualifications

Before your interview, you should have a good understanding of why you want the job, why you're qualified and what you can offer. You should be prepared to explain your interest in the opportunity and why you're the best person for the role.



## 3. Perform research on ERT and the role you're interviewing for

Research is an important part of preparing for an interview and could give you an edge over the competition.

Here are a few things to research before you walk into your interview:

- **Products, services and markets served**



Even if the role isn't directly related to the company's product or service, you're still looking to be part of the team. It's important to learn all you can about the products, services and markets ERT produces and promotes. You don't necessarily need to understand each and every detail, especially if it's a technical product, and you're interviewing for a non-technical position, but you should have a basic understanding of the main products or services we offer.

The more you can tell a hiring manager about the product from both a company and customer standpoint, the better you'll perform in your interview.



- **Role**

It's important to read the job description carefully and make sure that you understand all the requirements and responsibilities that go along with it. This will not only prepare you with thoughtful, targeted questions about the position during

the interview, but it will ensure that you're truly qualified and prepared to tackle the responsibilities when you get the job.

If possible, research similar positions and read reviews from individuals in those positions, so you can get an idea of what the day-to-day activities will be. During the interview, ask for clarification or details about the role, so you can be sure you're ready should you receive a job offer. Researching the role before an interview will also help you to decide whether or not the position is right for you.



- **Research the company culture**

We have many social media accounts that portray our company culture and industry. This information can give you an impression of the tone and personality of the company, as well as our values. No matter how good a job seems, it's important that you fit within the company culture and share a similar personality and values.

If you have questions about the workplace environment, culture, personality or values, be sure to ask during the interview. These questions can range from the software and tools used, to policies on vacation and sick time.

Remember that the interview is just as much about you finding a good fit for your career goals as it is about the company finding a good fit for the role. Knowing that your values align with the company ensures a happy professional life. This is also the perfect opportunity to find out more about the company and show the interviewer how you'll fit.



#### 4. Consider your answers to common interview questions

While you won't be able to predict every question you'll be asked in an interview, there are a few common questions you can plan answers for. You might also consider developing an elevator pitch that quickly describes who you are, what you do and what you want.

There are some jobs that may involve a test or evaluation during the interview process. For example, if you are interviewing for a computer programming, development or analytics role, you might also be asked to write or evaluate lines of code. It might be helpful to consult with colleagues in the industry for examples of tests they've been given to prepare.

Here are a few examples of common interview questions:



- **Why do you want to work here?**

The best way to prepare for this question is to learn about our products, services, mission, history and culture of the company. In your answer, mention the aspects of the company that appeal to you and align with your career goals.

**Example:** *“I’d love the opportunity to work with a company that’s making a difference. Finding a company with a positive work environment and values that align with my own has remained a priority throughout my job search, and this company ranks at the top of the list.”*



- **What interests you about this role?**

Hiring Managers will often ask this question to make sure you understand the role, and to give you the opportunity to highlight your relevant skills. It can be helpful to compare the role requirements against your skills and experience. Choose a few things you particularly enjoy or excel at, and focus on those in your answer.

**Example:** *“I’ve been passionate about user experience design for most of my professional career. I was excited to see this company uses Adobe products because I’m well-versed in the entire suite. Also, I’m a huge advocate for applying agile workflows to design. I think it’s the most effective way to tackle large projects. I was able to successfully build and launch an agile process in my previous role as UX manager, and we saw considerable improvements in project speed.”*



- **What are your greatest strengths?**

This question gives you an opportunity to talk about both your technical and soft skills. When an interviewer asks you to describe your strengths, share qualities and personal attributes and then relate them back to the role for which you’re interviewing.

**Example:** *“I’m a natural problem-solver. I find it rewarding to dig deep and uncover solutions to challenges—it’s like solving a puzzle. It’s something I’ve always excelled at, and something I enjoy. Much of product development is about finding innovative solutions to challenging issues, which is what drew me to this career path in the first place.”*

- **Behavioral Questions** - these are questions designed to probe into your experience with key aspects of the job. They typically start with, "Tell me about a time..."

Since the interview is looking for a specific example of your experience, we recommend you follow the **STAR** approach to describe your skills and experience:

- STAR is a story-telling technique that helps you answer interview questions thoroughly, yet concisely
- Start with a specific **S**ituation or **T**ask that directly relates to the question you are asked, the **A**ctions you took, and the **R**esult of your actions
- Your answer should take between 30 and 90 seconds, with enough details to paint a complete picture - but not so much detail that you risk losing your interviewer's attention!
- Your interviewers may ask follow-up questions - this is not necessarily a bad thing; just know that some interviewers may like a little extra detail
- Every so often (not for every question), you may want to consider adding a 2nd **R** to your answer; the 2nd R is for **R**eflection and is your opportunity to show your willingness to think about how to do something even better next time!



## 6. Practice your speaking voice and body language

It's important to make a positive and lasting impression during the interview process. You can do this by practicing a confident, strong speaking voice and friendly, open body language. While these might come naturally to you, you might also want to spend time performing them with trusted friends or family or in front of a mirror. Pay special attention to your smile, handshake and stride.



## 6. Write down several thoughtful questions for the interviewer(s)

Hiring Managers feel confident about candidates who ask thoughtful questions about the company and the position. You should take time before the interview to prepare several questions for your interviewer(s) that show you've researched the company and are well-versed about the position. Some examples of questions you could ask include:

- *What does a typical day look like for a person in this position?*
- *Why do you enjoy working here?*
- *What qualities do your most successful employees have?*
- *I've really enjoyed learning more about this opportunity. What are the next steps in the hiring process?*



## 7. Conduct mock interviews

Just like public speaking, practicing interviews is the best way to relieve anxiety and improve your confidence. Practice may be tedious, but repeatedly experiencing the interview process will make you more comfortable and help you give the right impression.

If you have friends or family to help, conduct mock interviews as much as you can. If you don't have another person, practice your questions and answers out loud. You may find that an answer sounds awkward or doesn't convey what you wish when it's spoken, so this gives you an opportunity to refine your answers and commit them to memory. The more you repeat your interview, the more confident you'll be during the real thing.



## 8. Be sure to have hard copies of your resume and your photo ID

Having copies to present to multiple interviewers shows that you're prepared and organized. You should have at least three copies to provide for multiple interviewers, plus one for yourself to follow along.

During your preparation, read over **your resume** and rehearse explanations for any gaps that may appear or other oddities. For example, you may have taken time off work to care for a child or family member, switched careers or had other legitimate reasons **for employment gaps**. These can be a concern for employers, so it's best to prepare your explanation to show them that you're not a risk.

You may also encounter questions about your resume that are awkward. It's important to be honest but diplomatic in addressing them. For example, you may have left a job because of your supervisor or manager, or policies that you didn't agree with, but you don't want to speak negatively about a former employer. Consider these possible questions and prepare your answers in advance, so you don't accidentally say something you'll regret.

Like the rest of the interview, it's best to prepare for these questions by writing notes and rehearsing your answers out loud multiple times prior to the interview.

You will need a photo ID to prove your identity and gain access to our buildings – No ID means No Entry and No Interview



## 9. Prepare your travel arrangements

Job interviews can be stressful for most people for many reasons, but getting to the interview can be a challenge in itself. If your interview is in an unfamiliar area or even an entirely new city, it can be a source of anxiety to find your way around and make sure that you show up on time.

To avoid becoming too anxious for your commute, prepare yourself to ensure everything goes smoothly on the day of the meeting. Here's how:

- **Leave early:** This may seem obvious, but it's better to leave with plenty of time to get to your interview, even if it means arriving way too early. Even if you leave yourself a few extra minutes to get there, small obstacles can be enough to make you late, such as heavy traffic, accidents, parking or trouble finding the building. If you arrive too early, just use the time to go over your notes and mentally prepare for your interview.
- **Save the interview contact information:** Even with plenty of time for your commute, sometimes situations out of your control can still cause you to be late. If something happens and you know you'll be a little late, call your interview coordinator and make them aware of the situation. Most people are empathetic to these situations and understand that some things just can't be helped, especially if you're letting them know in advance and have a reasonable explanation. In this situation, the worst thing you could do is show up late without any notice and try to explain yourself.
- **Search the location in advance:** Most interviews are scheduled days or weeks in advance, so you have time to research the location. If your interview is close enough, you can take a day to go to the location and check out the parking, take note of the traffic and find the suite or office where your interview will be. If you're anxious about parking or any other aspect of the location, contact your interviewer to ask them for more information.



## 10. Sell yourself

One of the biggest challenges in an interview is selling yourself. Most people are uncomfortable with this idea, but presenting yourself accurately and positively doesn't have to feel like a sale. The truth is that you do **have professional skills** and experiences that may set you apart from other applicants, so it's acceptable and expected for you to acknowledge them.

When you prepare for a job interview, make note of your skills that relate to the role and think of how your experiences and abilities can contribute to the overall goals of the department and company. Your answers will be somewhat short, so you want to choose the most positive and relevant information to share during the interview.

If you have metrics or stats to show your accomplishments or growth during your previous roles, they're a great help in selling yourself during the interview. For example, you may have increased sales by a certain percentage or increased social media engagement in your last position.

Whatever accomplishments you have, don't be modest about sharing them during your interview. Your potential employer wants to know that you'll be the right fit and that you can deliver value to the company, so they need to know all the reasons that you can provide that for them.

#### 11. Get ready to follow up after the interview



After your interview, you should prepare to follow up. Doing so reminds the hiring manager of your conversation, shows them you are genuinely interested in the position and gives you the opportunity to bring up points you forgot to mention.

Here are a few steps you can follow when crafting a follow-up note:

- **In the first paragraph**, mention the specific job title and thank your interviewer.
- **In the second paragraph**, note the company's name as well as a conversation point and/or goal that seemed especially important to the person you spoke with. Connect that point to your experience and interests.
- **In the final paragraph**, invite them to ask you any additional questions and close by saying you're looking forward to hearing back.

**Final tip:** If you don't know the answer to a certain question, it is perfectly acceptable to pause for a moment and simply state, "Let me think about that for a moment." Our Hiring Managers will appreciate you taking the time to give them a thoughtful answer. Be sure to provide specific examples wherever possible. Taking time to prepare for an interview will ultimately help you feel more relaxed and confident during the process.