

The Interview

Preparation & research

Preparation is critical to a successful interview.

You should have detailed knowledge of the content of the position for which you are being interviewed, the competencies required and all existing information that you have researched on the company. Take the time to learn as much as possible about the company's services and products, as well as its customers and competitors, as this will give you an edge during the interview. This knowledge is the foundation on which you will construct answers that demonstrate your ability to perform in the role.

Grooming

Make sure that you are "suited and booted" and look the part. This will ensure you make a good first impression and if you know you look good you will feel more confident.

Know your CV

Often an interview will be based around the experience you have outlined in your CV. Ensure that you are familiar with the contents of your CV as submitted to the position, including any gaps in employment. You will come across badly if you are unable to refer accurately to the CV submitted.

Interview: arrive five minutes early

Plan your journey and bring relevant maps and directions, allow plenty of extra time for your journey. Aim to arrive at the office 5-10 minutes early and if you think you are going to be late, ensure you call to let your GA Global consultant know as soon as possible.

Soft Skills – First Impressions

Small Talk

Build rapport in less than 60 seconds

Handshake

Dry and firm but not too firm

Eye contact

Keep continual eye contact, especially when answering a question

Pace of response

Speak with an even pace and clear diction

Body position

Be attentive and interested and not too laid back

Enthusiasm

Be enthusiastic when answering all of your questions

Listen

Listening is essential to enable you to answer questions accurately

Start of the interview: Ice-breaker

An interviewer will generally open up with a nonthreatening “small talk” question aimed at easing initial tensions and requiring some elaboration. This ice-breaking stage will seamlessly progress into the business part of the interview, wherein you should continue to speak freely and comfortably.

During the interview

One of the important keys to a successful interview is the establishment of rapport, as the interviewer might try to put you at ease and encourage you to “open up” and respond more spontaneously than you might otherwise in a rigid question/answer interview.

It is important to remain relaxed throughout the interview. It is crucial that you are able to communicate all your answers in a clear and concise manner. As you take your time to answer, also take your time to listen. Ensure that communication has happened, and seek clarifications if needed. It is also important to make good eye contact with the interviewer during the meeting.

Interview Questions

The interviewer may ask both open-ended and close-ended questions. You will also be expected to have questions of your own. The quality of your answers and insight of your questions are critical elements of your final evaluation, so we advise you to practice both your answers and questions.

Open-ended questions: For example “tell me about yourself.” To answer, be brief, about three or four minutes. For such questions spend half the time on the early days and the rest on the more recent and relevant years.

Closed-ended questions: For example “tell me about a significant career achievement.” To answer, remember STAR. ST=describe the situation, A=action taken and R=results, punctuated with facts and figures. Be precise and clear in your communication.

“Shoot yourself in the foot” questions

(ensure that your answers all have a positive angle)

- **Why are you thinking of leaving your current position / organisation?**
- **What do you enjoy about your current position?**
- **What are you looking for in the short-term?**
- **What are your long-term motivations?**
- **Why do you want to work in this industry?**
- **Why do you want to work for this organisation?**
- **What can you bring to this role?**
- **Why are you looking for a new role at present?**
- **Why are you interested in this role?**
- **Why do you feel you are suited for this role?**
- **What aspects of your previous positions have you liked/disliked?**
- **What are the core areas of your skillset that you would like to improve?**
- **Can you give an example of how you have influenced others.**
- **How do you justify changes that need to be made to others?**
- **Can you give an example showing your relationship building skills?**
- **Which is more important — completing a job on time or doing it right?**
- **What results have you delivered in previous and present roles?**
- **What are the obstacles to results in this new role? And how would you overcome them?**

Standard HR style questions

(ensure that your answers all have a positive angle)

- **What are your strengths?**
- **What are your weaknesses?**
- **What is your biggest disappointment or achievement?**
- **What differentiates you from other candidates with similar experience?**

- Where are you now in your career and where will you be in three years?
- What are your short- and long-term objectives?
- Where have you experienced working with/for somebody you did not like and how did you handle it?
- Where have you experienced working with/for somebody you disagreed with and how did you handle it?
- Where have you experienced frustration and how did you handle it?
- When you are in a discussion, do you consider yourself a good listener? Why?
- How would you improve your communications skills?
- How do you motivate yourself?
- What does success mean to you?
- What might your closest personal friend say they disliked about you?
- What would your colleagues say about you?
- What can you do for us that another candidate could not do?
- How would you describe your personality?
- Tell me what you consider your greatest abilities and how they will help you in this job.

Organisation knowledge questions

- What do you think you can bring to this role?
- What do you think you can bring to this organisation?
- What do you know about our organisation?
- Who are the client's / team's main competitors?

Problem solving questions

- Can you give an example of a difficult situation that you have encountered and explain how you overcame this situation.
- What was the most difficult problem you have faced?
- Describe typical problems you are likely to face during the day and ways in which you reach solutions.
- What was your most serious problem in the last year?
- Describe changes you have recommended.
- Describe situations where your judgment proved valuable.
- Who has sought your opinion in the last month and what was the nature of the inquiry?
- When you are making a decision, how do you go about acquiring the right information?
- In what situation has your work been criticized?

Your Questions

When a potential employer asks if you have any questions, they don't want inquiries about parking validation; they want to see if you're prepared, educated and inquisitive. This is a key opportunity for you to demonstrate your preparation and knowledge of the company and your interest in the role. Do your research, visit the company website, review the company year-end report, google for industry news, etc.

Ask questions first about the company, its performance, growth, strategy, plans and any specific questions relating to the assignment. At this point it is appropriate to ask specific questions about the role, your growth prospects, etc. You can also ask questions relating to the interviewers background, thoughts / experiences since joining the organisation etc.

Listed below are six example questions to ask at the end of your interview?

1. If I were to start tomorrow, what would be the top priority on my to-do list?

The answer to this question will give you more insight into the current state of the position, while the question shows that you're invested and interested in learning how you can start things off with a bang. The added bonus lies in the fact that now you've already got your interviewer picturing you as the position holder.

2. What would you say are the top two personality traits someone needs to do this job well?

The answer to this will be very telling. "Creative" and "intuitive" can be translated to mean you will be on your own, while "patient" and "collaborative" could mean the opposite. Not only will this question allow you to feel out whether you're going to be a good fit; it will also get your interviewer to look past the paper resume and see you as an individual.

3. What improvements or changes do you hope the new candidate will bring to this position?

This answer can shed light on what might have made the last person lose (or leave) the job, and it also tips you off on the path to success. Asking this shows an employer you are eager to be the best candidate to ever fill this position.

4. I know this company prides itself on X and Y, so what would you say is the most important aspect of your culture?

This type of question is sure to impress, as it shows that you've done your research on the company and gives you a chance to gain insight into what values are held to the highest ideal.

5. Do you like working here?

Employers appreciate getting a chance to reflect on their own opinions, and this turns the interview process into more of a conversation.

6. Is there anything that stands out to you that makes you think I might *not* be the right fit for this job?

Yes, asking this question can be scary, but it can also be beneficial. Not only does it give you a chance to redeem any hesitations the employer might have about you; it also demonstrates that you can take constructive criticism and are eager to improve—valuable qualities in any candidate.

Closing

As the interview comes to an end, summarise what makes you unique as a candidate for this role (utilise information gathered throughout the interview). Inquire about next steps. Most important, thank them for the opportunity to meet.

Feedback

Don't forget to call your GA Global consultant to discuss your interview feedback when you have finished.