Preparing for Interviews

In interviews, your job is to convince a recruiter that you have the skills, knowledge and experience for the job. Show motivation and convince a recruiter that you fit the organization’s culture and job description, and you get that much closer to an offer.

7-Step Interview Prep Plan

1. Research the organization.
   This will help you answer questions — and stand out from less-prepared candidates.
   
   - **Seek background information.**
     o Use tools like Vault, CareerSearch or The Riley Guide for an overview of the organization and its industry profile.
     o Visit the organization’s website to ensure that you understand the breadth of what they do.
     o Review the organization's background and mission statement.
     o Assess their products, services and client-base.
     o Read recent press releases for insight on projected growth and stability.
   - **Get perspective.** Review trade or business publications. Seek perspective and a glimpse into their industry standing.
   - **Develop a question list.** Prepare to ask about the organization or position based on your research.

2. Compare your skills and qualifications to the job requirements.
   
   - **Analyze the job description.** Outline the knowledge, skills and abilities required.
   - **Examine the hierarchy.** Determine where the position fits within the organization.
   - **Look side-by-side.** Compare what the employer is seeking to your qualifications.

3. Prepare responses.
Most interviews involve a combination of resume-based, behavioral and case questions. We encourage you to meet with us to practice telling your story in the best possible way.

4. Plan what to wear.

- **Go neutral.** Conservative business attire, such as a neutral-colored suit and professional shoes, is best.
- **Err formal.** If instructed to dress “business casual,” use good judgment.
- **Plug in that iron.** Make sure your clothes are neat and wrinkle-free.
- **Dress to impress.** Be sure that your overall appearance is neat and clean.

5. Plan what to bring.

- Extra copies of your resume on quality paper
- A notepad or professional binder and pen
- A list of references
- Information you might need to complete an application
- A portfolio with samples of your work, if relevant

6. Pay attention to non-verbal communication.

- **Be mindful.** Nonverbal communication speaks volumes.
- **Start ahead.** Remember that waiting room behaviors may be reported.
- **Project confidence.** Smile, establish eye contact and use a firm handshake.
- **Posture counts.** Sit up straight yet comfortably. Be aware of nervous gestures such as foot-tapping.
- **Be attentive.** Don't stare, but maintain good eye contact, while addressing all aspects of an interviewer’s questions.
- **Respect their space.** Do not place anything on their desk.
- **Manage reactions.** Facial expressions provide clues to your feelings. Manage how you react, and project a positive image.

7. Follow up.

Many interviews end with “Do you have any questions?”

- **Bring a list.** You may say, “In preparing for today’s meeting, I took some time to jot down a few questions. Please allow me to review my notes.”
- **Be strategic.** Cover information not discussed or clarify a previous topic — do not ask for information that can be found on the organization’s website.
  - In your opinion, what makes this organization a great place to work?
  - What do you consider the most important criteria for success in this job?
  - Tell me about the organization’s culture.
  - How will my performance be evaluated?
  - What are the opportunities for advancement?
  - What are the next steps in the hiring process