

THE ULTIMATE INTERVIEW GUIDE



Your Guide for a Successful Interview:

Great news, you have secured an interview. Awesome! Now what? While the interview process can feel intimidating, it does not have to be overwhelming if you set yourself up for success. The J. Morrissey team has put together this comprehensive interview guide so that you can feel confident about every step of the interview process. Here's everything you need to know for a successful job interview:

PREPARATION:

The best thing you can do to feel in control and confident in any interview is to prepare ahead of time. Preparation, both mentally and physically, is key to ensuring that you feel confident and composed for your interview. Doing so will make you feel more in control of the process so you can put your best foot forward. Here are some important preparation recommendations:

Research the company:

- View their website to learn about what they do, their mission statement and core values, their history, and all the details of their business.
- Do a google search of the company to research their financial information (if available) and to see if there is any newsworthy press coverage highlighting recent accomplishments or updates to the company.
- Find the people who will be interviewing you on LinkedIn (or the company website), to familiarize yourself with those who you will be meeting, their roles within the organization, and their interests so you can find common ground during the interview.

Review your experience:

- No one knows you better than yourself, so it's important to go over your experience and prepare examples of accomplishments that align with the job description.
- Practice your elevator pitch. There's nothing worse than starting an interview off rambling, so prepare and practice how you want to confidently and concisely open the interview.
- Be prepared to walk the interviewer(s) through your resume and be able to speak to it in a way that's tailored for the role you are interviewing for.
- If you are meeting in person, print several copies of your resume to hand out.

Practice questions they may ask you:

Prospective employers want to find out about you and your abilities (as reviewed in the prior section), so be prepared to answer the below questions. Below are some common interview questions to practice as well as some situation interview questions. Be ready with examples for all of these. Keep all your answers professional, objective, honest, and respond in a way this is appropriate to the company and the opportunity.

- Common Interview Questions:

- Why should I hire you? What makes you the best candidate?
- Why did you choose this particular role?
- What do you really hope to gain or learn in your next career move?
- Why would you like to work for our organization?
- What interests you about our products or services?
- What would your previous employer say about you? Would they recommend you for this position? Why?
- What style of management do you work best with?
- What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held? Which did you enjoy most? Why?
- What have you done that shows initiative in your career?
- What is your major weakness? What have you done about it?
- What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
- What does "teamwork" mean to you?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- The dreaded questions.... Where do you want to be in 5 years?
- Why are you leaving your current position? What are you looking for in your next role?
- Talk about your supervisory experience.

- Situational Interview Questions:

- Tell me about a time when you had a confrontation with a boss or co-worker.
- Tell me about a time when you were working under a serious time deadline.
- Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something that you didn't know how to do.
- Tell me about a recent project you worked on that was an independent project where you had to handle it on your own.
- Tell me about something you had to work on recently that you found difficult.
- Tell me about a recent event that you planned” (work/social).

For each situational question, answer with the **STAR** Approach:

S: SITUATION - Describe a specific situation that applies to the question -- do not generalize.

T: TASK - Describe the task at hand; again, do not generalize -- be specific.

A: ACTION - Describe the actions you took to resolve the situation and/or complete the task.

R: RESULT - Describe the final result of the situation – and MAKE SURE it is a POSITIVE result!

NOTE: If you are nervous about “recalling” your answers to each of these questions, think of a few stories that may be used to answer a range of questions they could ask. You will feel more comfortable going into the interview, and have good, well-thought-out illustrations of a variety of scenarios.

Practice questions you may want to ask:

Most employers are impressed when you question them intelligently during a job interview. It shows them you took the time to research their organization and can indicate your interest in the position. And remember, the interview is for you as well. Make sure you are comfortable with the company and the opportunity. Think about the reasons you are looking for a change in your career, and make sure this position addresses those issues.

-General questions to ask:

- How/why has this position become available?
- Who would be my direct supervisor? How would you describe their management style?
- What is the environment or culture like in this department?
- How large is the department? What growth is planned or expected?
- What do you see as strengths of the department? What do you see as the weaknesses?
- Can you tell me about the challenges other people have had in this role?
- How do you think this position should be performed in order for it to be successful?
- How will my work and productivity be evaluated?
- Who would my peers be? What are their backgrounds?
- Who would my superiors be? What are their backgrounds? And if applicable: Who would my subordinates be and their backgrounds?
- Can you tell me about the turnover rate for this department or organization?
- Why did you come here? What makes you stay?
- What are some key things I should know about this company? Any negatives?

Interview question for more corporate/executive level questions:

- In what ways does your company foster the growth, development, and learning of its employees?
- Where can I expect to be in 2 years when I come in and perform at or above levels expected of me?
- What has been the key to making this company successful?
- What is unique about the way the company operates?
- What does your company do to give it a competitive edge over the rest of the market?
- What is the company's current financial situation? (you should know about this, but if it is not strong, have them explain why and how they hope to turn it around)
- What economic conditions impact your organization? What is being done to handle these situations?
- What markets does the company anticipate developing?
- Does the company have plans for mergers or acquisitions?
- When was the last corporate re-organization? How did it affect the department? When will the next corporate re-organization occur? How will it affect this department?
- What does the department hope to achieve in the next 2-3 years? How will that help the company? How will the company recognize it?

Plan your journey for the in-person interview:

- There's nothing worse than showing up late for an interview. This can easily be avoided by looking up directions to the company ahead of time. Leverage a navigation app like Google Maps or Waze to help you navigate to the location.
- Aim to arrive 15 minutes early and plan on walking inside 5-10 minutes early. Give yourself extra time in case you encounter traffic delays, road closures, bus delays, etc.
- Make sure you also understand the parking situation prior to the interview. This may also require extra time.

Prepare for your virtual interview:

While in-person interviews require you to physically navigate to the interview location, virtual interviews require some preparation and navigation with your device.

- Set up your device. We always recommend a desktop or laptop however if you need to use a tablet or phone, that is fine.
- Download and register for the virtual application you will be utilizing such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google, etc.
- Find an appropriate location to conduct the interview. This location should have good lighting, a professional-looking background, and be free of possible interruptions.
- Test your connection with a spouse or friend prior to the interview. Make sure your video camera and microphone are working within the application.
- Close all other applications and browsers so that the only thing open is the interview application.
- Do a test connection the day of the interview and make sure you log on 5-10 minutes early so that you are not late. Always give yourself extra time in case you run into any technical difficulties and need to adjust computer settings at the last minute or need to restart your computer.
- When you first log on, they will see you before you see them so be cognizant of what you are doing.

Physically prepare yourself:

- Dress to impress - no exceptions—ditch the yoga pants and jeans and dress professionally for the role you are trying to get from head to toe.
- Make sure you are well-rested and in the right frame of mind at least one day before.
- Eat a healthy meal and hydrate before the interview to ensure you are mentally and physically feeling your best.
- Turn off your cell phone, and put it away before the interview starts

THE INTERVIEW:

Things to keep in mind throughout the interview:

How you look, act and conduct yourself during the interview says as much as the words you speak and the answers you give.

Interview Kickoff:

- The first 5 to 50 seconds are CRITICAL! Make an impactful first impression. You will be assessed from the moment you enter the room or log on your virtually. Be aware of what you are doing and how you present yourself
- Convey a friendly communication tone, and use positive words that show enthusiasm and energy. Also, speak clearly and avoid rushing your words so they do not sound mumbled.
- Acknowledge everyone in the interview.
- If it's virtual, be mindful to not yell into the screen.
- Bring a notepad, and ask if they don't mind you taking notes.

Body Language:

- Maintain good eye contact. If it's virtual, we recommend looking directly into the camera, not the screen or monitor, to ensure engaging eye contact.
- Pay attention to the interviewer at all times. It is easy to get distracted during a virtual interview. Be truly engaged in the conversation. That said, sometimes the sound during virtual interviews can be less than perfect so don't be afraid to ask for a question to be repeated if you could not hear it correctly due to technical issues.
- Do not interrupt: Many people have this habit, or are so excited and eager to please that they want to jump in and say the next thing! Be careful to listen fully, and respond accordingly. This is especially important for a virtual interview with a number of different people on the call. Always give an extra pause before you start speaking to be sure the interviewer has finished speaking.
- Body language speaks volumes during an interview. Show that you are engaged and want to be there with open body positions. Maintain a balance between relaxed and comfortable with a professional and confident posture. Lean forward on occasion to show interest and smile and nod at their comments. Don't pick or pull at your clothes or hair. Avoid closed-off body language like crossing your arms.

The discussion during the interview:

This is where your preparation comes into play. Remember, it's their job to assess if you are a fit for the position and their team, and it's your time to professionally express that you are the right choice for the job.

- Be prepared to answer all of their questions and discuss your pertinent skills, experience, educational training, and professional credentials.
- Focus on how to impress them with your work ethic and sense of responsibility.
- Find out their expectations: Focus on them, focus on their needs. Figure out their expectations (ask!) and explain exactly how you will meet or exceed their expectations based on your own experience.
- Stay professional at all times—keep it objective. Do not discuss personal issues, family issues, medical issues, politics, or problems you have had with co-workers or supervisors.
- NEVER complain about your former employer!
- Be prepared to discuss terminations in a positive manner.
- This is also where you can ask them your rehearsed set of questions and/or any additional follow-up questions you have from the interview. Even if they answered every question you had throughout the interview, make one up. Good questions to ask are those that prove you are interested. For example, prepare questions based on your research; “I noticed on your website....”, “I saw on your Linked In page...”

Closing out the interview:

- Ask each interviewer for their email addresses. You will need these to write thank you emails to every individual.
- Thank all of the interviewers for taking the time to speak with you.
- Reinforce your interest in the position.
- It is certainly okay to ask when you should expect to hear from them or what is the next step.
- After the interview, if it's virtual, check MULTIPLE times that the meeting is closed, the application is off, and even close down your computer!

POST-INTERVIEW:

Phew, you made it through the interview. Nice job! While the interview itself might be over, there are still some follow-up items to complete.

Thank you emails and notes:

Follow up with a thank-you email to everyone you met with within 24 hours of the interview:

- Use the subject line to attract attention.
- Include information or clarify points you didn't answer completely in the interview.
- Sell yourself to the company – use this as a sales letter.
- Keep your message clear and concise.
- Reference the next steps or decision timeline in the follow-up .
- Include a professional signature block.
- Send a handwritten thank-you note also, if you think this may be appropriate.
- Check your formatting and proofread for spelling and grammar before you send anything.

Follow up:

- This is where your J. Morrissey team comes into play.
- If appropriate, connect with the interviewers on LinkedIn.
- Call your J. Morrissey recruiter after the interview to debrief. We can walk through the interview and we'll be able to relay any clarifications you may deem appropriate.
- Let us know of your interest, follow-up questions, concerns, etc. We will be able to get you additional information when we debrief with the client.

The J. Morrissey team is always here to help! Call 860-925-6000.