



INTERVIEW PREP GUIDE

You've passed the first screening round and your resume made it through the ATS. Congratulations! That's a bigger deal than you might think. The employer has decided you're worth moving forward to the next phase: The Interview.

In order to help you prepare. You may be asked to explain your resume, give examples of the skills, and possibly answer behavioral interview questions. You'll need to be passionate about the position you are seeking. In other words, the interview is where you'll sell yourself by proving you're the best person to hire.

From the moment you receive the call or email to schedule the interview, everything you do must be strategic, well thought-out, and appropriate.

SCHEDULING THE INTERVIEW

If at all possible, *avoid* taking the last slot available. Whatever day of the week you're offered, know that earlier in the day is usually best. Scheduling your interview for the end of the day should be avoided, as the interview team—and there often is a team or panel—is generally tired later in the afternoon, and the same goes for later in the week. Move your commitments if needed and show your flexibility. Few things are more important than having the chance to give it your best shot in a job interview.

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Visit the website to research the company. Carefully scour it for information. What is their mission? Make sure you know and can speak with authority about it if asked. This is also a good time to check out the leadership team, the Board of Directors, and “google” any recent news stories. The more you know about the organization, the more savvy you'll sound in the interview.

This is a good time to thoroughly **review and study the job opening** one more time. Read it carefully and make a list of two to three questions about the position or the company. Nearly all **interviews end with “Do you have any questions for us?”** Answering *no* doesn't earn you points. If nothing else, ask how the interviewer likes working for the organization. Or, a more advanced question would be “what does success look like in this role?” or “After today's conversation, do you have any hesitation moving me forward as a candidate for this role?” This gives you a chance to clarify anything that's bothering the interviewer.

Consider a **strong closing statement** summarizing why you're the best candidate for the position and how you'd love to be moved to the next step, as you are excited and enthusiastic about the opportunity.



Prepare the Night Before. The night before, choose the clothes you plan to wear and if the meeting is Zoom/ Video consider looking at yourself on camera to see how you appear and what's showing in the background behind you.

Arrive on Time. Give yourself plenty of time to get there (or to log in to the Video call) so that you are early. Make sure you're familiar with the route or the video software. Do you have directions? Do you know how to log in? Being late, for

ANY reason, is an excuse that will be frowned upon unless the interview committee was also delayed for similar reasons.

Introductions. At the start of the meeting be sure to introduce yourself with first and last name, expressing your appreciation for the interview and enthusiasm for the open position. This is a good time to ask each person for his/her/ contact information. Write down the full first and last name for each person, you will need this later for the thank-you notes.

YOUR ATTITUDE

The job is *often* offered to the one who shows the most interest and excitement. Recruiters and hiring managers are human, after all. It's natural to be "sold" by the enthusiastic candidate who seems really ready to jump in and work hard/ make a difference. This may sound odd, but it happens more than you'd expect. Choose words that work for you and feel natural, something to the tune of "I'm really interested in this opportunity ..." (and then share your reason such as "I've always wanted to work for this company due to the strong brand reputation").



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

During the interview you'll be asked a variety of questions and it would be wonderful if you could study these questions ahead of time. But every company is different, so the questions are not easy to predict. Still, one thing you can do is search the internet for potential interview questions and answer them out loud as a practice run. Look in the mirror, while you do, to make sure your appearance is poised and professional. Chances are good that some of the questions you find on line may show up in some form in the actual interview. Here are a few typical questions:

Tell us about yourself: Your answer should start with college or career, not where you grew up. It's natural to want to start at the beginning but during an interview it's best to

focus on your career story. End that story on a strong note regarding why your next step is this role.

Why are you interested in this role?

Why did you leave your last position?

What do you know about our company?

Why are you interested in this role?



Behavioral interview questions sound like this:

Tell me about a time when you had to tell your boss he/she was wrong.

Or

Tell me about a difficult colleague you worked with and how you handled it.

A great way to answer these questions is in the **STAR** format. Keep these four words on a post-it on your monitor or on your notebook if interviewing in person to guide you. The purpose is to sound professional, succinct, and to cover the points they care about. It keeps you from going off-track, too, which is a common problem for candidates during the interview process.

S	T	A	R
Situation	Task	Action	Result
Introduce the situation to the employer and set the context	Describe the task you had to complete, including the expectations and challenges it would involve	Explain what you did, and how you did it	End with the results of your efforts, including accomplishments, rewards, and impact

Situation - I was working at XYZ company early in my career as an Account Executive

Task - A few of us were assigned a project working on xyz and I was the project manager.

Action - While working with a certain colleague I noticed he was not sharing status updates each week, which caused issues with duplicating work and wasted time. I decided to meet with him to understand his communication style and see if I could help us work better together.

Result - He was defensive at first, and I learned a lot from that interaction. Ultimately we found ways to improve the communication and worked well together for 5 years at that company.

MORE TO CONSIDER

Distractions during the Interview: Cell phones and other devices can signal your lack of planning during an interview. Be sure to turn your phone off before an interview. **Pets** can also be noisy during video or phone interviews. Do your best to find a quiet place for a call, even if it means going to extremes (like sitting in your car).



After the Interview: Send a thank-you note to each interviewer, locating email addresses off the business cards or from the recruiter who set up the interview. Be sure to keep your note brief, showing gratitude to your interviewer(s) and consider sharing why you'd be a great fit for the role, or reflecting on part of the conversation.

The offer: When you get that job offer, take time to consider all of the factors. Are you driving into an office, or working from home? How are the benefits compared to your last employer? Is there bonus potential, profit sharing, or stock options? If you need help understanding the pros and cons of an offer, you should review with someone you trust.

Thanks but no thanks: Sometimes the hardest part of any interview is learning that you didn't get the job. But don't be discouraged. Thank the person who got back to you (as it's unfortunately rare these days to have someone personally close that loop) and let them know you're still interested in the organization if something else comes up. A good sport is memorable to recruiters.



Look at the interview as an experience where you were able to practice telling your story, and use that knowledge to start planning for the next opportunity.

At Leo & Loy, career coaches can help you with interview preparation. You can go through a mock interview where you'll receive real-time feedback to help you improve your narrative and become more confident with the process.

Contact us at LeoandLoy.com or Email us at Info@LeoandLoy.com for more information.

