

Job Interview

For more detailed articles on interviewing, please see the menu on the left.

Some General Job Interview Tips

- Do not smoke, chew gum, or eat garlic beforehand.
- [Wear suitable interview clothes.](#)
- Take copies of your CV with you.
- Arrive on time for your job interview.
- Any applications handed before the interview begins, are to be filled in as accurately as possible, make sure they match the information in your [Cv](#) and [Cover Letter](#).
- Always greet the interviewer by his/her last name and try to pronounce it correctly.
- Have a good firm [handshake](#).
- Look alert and interested. Scan the room once and then keep your eyes on the interviewer.
- Wait until you are offered a chair before you sit down.
- Stress your [achievements](#).
- Always conduct yourself professionally and if something beyond your control occurs, show a sense of humor.
- Be enthusiastic and show it in your replies and body language.
- Answer the [interview question](#) by more than a simple yes or no but try not to go over the 60 second limit.
- Avoid at all cost complaining about your current or former employer in your job interview.
- Do not answer questions about politics or religion if the job is completely unrelated.
- Do not raise [salary discussions](#) on your first interview - this is usually done on the [second interview](#). Make sure you do your [wage research](#) before hand.

Your answer to the initial opening statements in the job interview are important, these are called "ice breakers".

Some times the interviewer will ask whether you had difficulty finding the company premises. Your answer should be brief and polite. The interviewer is merely being polite - if you had problems in finding the premises he/she doesn't need to know that.

Use replies such as

- I'm fine thank you, and you?
- I'm very well, thank you.

These replies express a careless attitude

- So, so
- OK
- Not so well

There are various kinds of interviews:

- [One to One Job Interview](#)
- [Panel Job Interview](#)
- [Group Job Interview](#)
- [Phone Job Interview](#)
- [Lunch Job interview](#)

Each job interview has it's own strategies and particular points one should be aware of.

Job Interview Preparation

Tips on how to prepare yourself with information and skills prior to a job interview.

- Allocate time to for the job interview preparation.
- Make a list of the basic things you would like to know.

Where and how to do your job interview preparation:

- Public Library
- Local Bookstore
- Access Books
- Journals
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Reference Materials

Tip: A lot of investor packs contain a lot of information for job seekers. Such information is excellent for preparing for job interviews.

Competitor's websites are also a good source of information for your job preparation. Try the following related search "related:[Web site Address]" in Google to see other related sites that might be competing with your interviewer. BizJournals.com is also a good tool in your job interview preparation.

Your network of contacts is an extremely useful resource to tap during your job interview preparation

- Alumni network
- Family members
- Friends
- Workers Unions

OnLine Resource:

- [ValueLine](#)
- [LexisNexis](#)

Websites for major business publications:

- [Forbes](#)
- [Money](#)
- [Kiplinger's](#)
- [The Wall St. Journal](#)
- [Investors Business Daily](#)

Your research for the job interview preparation should give you a better insight on

- The Job Description.
- What business the organisation is in.
- Hiring process procedures.
- Early experiences on the job.
- Corporate culture
- General Organisational Structure.
- History.
- Career paths.
- [What to wear for a job interview.](#)
- General knowledge about current state of industry.

- Protocols before and after the interview.
- The location of the interview.
- Size of organisation
- Number of employees
- How long has the company been operating
- Are there any subsidiary companies involved in this company.
- Who are the major competitors of this company
- Who is the direct supervisor
- Information on your direct supervisor

Wage Research

What You Should Know!

To improve career salary negotiations you have to [research](#), plan, communicate and act.

What is your bargaining position? Your strengths, [weaknesses](#) and [achievements](#). Learn about your competition.

Negotiate your career salary after you are convinced that you have mentioned all your positives. You have to negotiate when your interviewer is interested in hiring you.

From your research you should know more about :

- General economy situation.
- Situation of the industry in which this company works.
- Unemployment rate in this industry.
- What qualifications and experience are the norm for this career.
- Profitability of the company.
 - Maturity of the company (startup, developing, constant).
 - Pay scales within the company and organisational structure.

Your bargaining points on the career salary:

- Other similar vacancies.
- Your unique experience and qualifications.
- How long can you stay out of a job.
- How many people are trying to pursue this career.

Know the interviewer:

- How important is this position for the company?
- How urgently do they need it filled?
- Who decided on the career salary you will be getting?

Knowledge is power. With the above information in your hands you can better negotiate your **career salary**. This information will also help in answering [interview questions](#).

What to wear for a job interview

More than fifty percent of another person's perception of you is based on how you look and therefore your appearance is crucial to making a good impression. Pay particular attention to

your shoes. Managers, especially those who have been in the military, can determine a lot by looking at your shoes.

What to wear for a job interview has to be researched by doing a good job interview preparation. These tips can guide you but are not applicable in all situations.

General tips on what to wear for a job interview for both men and women:

- Be conservative. Conservative is best for the interview regardless of the dress code at the organization.
- If you're unsure, call them and ask! Do not ask the HR manager. Asking the receptionist or an HR assistant is easier. If you are still unsure, go for a conservative look.
- Well-groomed hair style.
- Clean, trimmed finger nails.
- Minimal cologne or perfume.
- No visible body piercing.
- No gum, candy or cigarettes.
- Wear one ring and limited jewellery.

What men should wear for a job interview:

- Conservative suit - two piece suit & tie, conservative & solid color.
- Long sleeve shirt.
- Avoid bow ties. Wear a conservative tie.
- Dark shoes & dark socks.
- Avoid beards & mustaches. (if you cannot help the moustache, make sure it is well trimmed).
- Get a hair cut. A short and conservative style is best.
- Do not wear any earrings.

What women should wear for a job interview:

- Avoid dresses.
- Shoes should have conservative heels.
- Use a briefcase rather than a purse.
- Conservative nail polish.
- Minimal use of make up.
- Limit jewellery to one wedding ring and one set of earrings.

Interview Question

Your [job interview preparation](#) can give you a lot of insights on how to answer interview questions. The job description can also give you an insight into what the employer expects of you.

An interview is a test. Each interview question is going to test you on a particular area. The key to pass this test is to practice. Family members, friends, career counsellors and teachers can all help to get the answer to each interview question correct. To improve on the delivery of the answer to your interview question, try using a video camera or a tape recorder. Observe yourself and identify the possible areas of improvement. This is also a good opportunity to observe your own [interview body language](#)

Be prepared to answer interview questions related to your [CV](#) and [cover letter](#). Make sure you read them before the interview and know what information they contain.

General points to think about before answering an interview question

- Think about the job and the employer's needs first.
- Employer's needs come before your own.
- Emphasise how you will help to achieve the company's goals.
- Describe your accomplishments in quantifiable words.
- Explain how your skills and attributes will benefit the organisation.
- Be specific and to the point.
- Explain why you approached projects in a certain ways.
- Explain how the skills you bring will benefit the organisation.
- Don't downplay your accomplishments or attribute them to luck.
- Be specific in your answers. Avoid rambling or going off on a tangent.
- Ask for clarification if you are unsure of the question.

Identify [Weaknesses in your CV](#) and be prepared to discuss them. Possible weaknesses in you CV can be:

- Low GPA.
- Lack of related experience.
- Short employment periods.
- Lack of management experiences.

Interview Questions

Why are you interested in this field?

Why are you interested in this company?

Why are you interested in this position?

Why do you want this job?

What qualities do you think this job requires?

Why do you want to work for this organisation?

What have you got to contribute?

What can we offer you that your present employer cannot offer?

How long have you been looking for a new job?

What do you know about this organisation?

What interests you about this organisation?

What are you looking for in a new job?

What would be your ideal job?

What sort of jobs are you considering at the moment?

What did you do on a day to day basis?

What do you not like about the job?

How did you make a difference to your last organisation?

How successful are you?

What was your greatest success and how did you achieve it?

What has been your biggest failure?

How could you improve yourself?

How did you progress in your last job?

How do you handle criticism?

How do you work with others?

Are you a self-starter, able to work without constant supervision?

Can you be depended upon in critical situations and follow work through to completion?

Are you objective in evaluating yourself and others?

What motivates you?

Are you competitive?

What problems did you encounter and how did you overcome them?

Do you feel you are ready to take on greater responsibilities?

Are you enthusiastic and easy to work with?

Can you work under pressure?

Recruiters need to know what drives you to want the job and why you want to work for the organisation in particular.

Can you manage your time effectively?

How do you structure your day's work?

How do you plan your day and week?

How did you handle sudden unplanned work or crisis? Can you handle constructive criticism in a productive manner?

What are you like under pressure?

How many hours are you prepared to work?

What are your career goals?

How did you get on with your last manager/colleagues?

How do you express yourself in situations where you have to be tactful?

What initiatives do you take to make the work place more efficient?

How do you deal with different people at work?

How do you handle work in high pressure situations?

These Interview questions are a guide. You will also be asked specific questions related to the industry and the particular job area you are applying for.

Questions to ask during an interview

Usually you will be given the opportunity to ask questions at the end of your interview. You should at least have a few prepared questions or, if you are not sure of any information give during the job interview, now is the time to ask. If you do not ask any questions the interviewer can think you are not as enthusiastic as other candidates who asked 3 or more questions.

By asking plenty of questions, you can also take this opportunity to show your awareness of the current industry situation and that you are interested in a long career. Do not ask more questions than you were asked.

Do you know which questions you can ask at the interview?

It depends on your situation, the position you are applying for, and your relationship with the interviewer(s) and the organization.

Below are some common questions:

Asking questions during an interview will show that you are interested.

- Can you tell me more about the structure of the organisation?
- What kind of management style does your company promote?
- What are the skills that you consider important for this job?
- Do you reimburse travel expenses?
- Do you have a complete job description for this post?
- What kind of software do you use?
- How will my performance be measured?
- Do you have an induction course/notebook?

When you ask questions you will start forming a relationship with your employer. It will also increase interactivity and make you look interested in the company and job your are applying for.

Unconventional Getting the Interview Techniques

Most [job hunters](#) use conventional methods for obtaining interviews. Unless you use unconventional getting the [interview techniques](#), you will have to stand in line for a chance to meet the hiring manager. You can distinguish your [CV](#) and [application](#) from other candidates by following these unconventional getting the interview techniques.

Expressive method

This is a targeted method and not meant for those who are shy. You contact the hiring manager and ask whether he would rather meet on Wednesday or earlier in the week for an interview. Another method to follow is to give a time frame, for instance, telling the interviewer that you will be in the vicinity during the next week and would like to make use of the opportunity to hand deliver your CV.

If you indicate how you can benefit the company and that a trusted source referred you, you stand an even better chance for getting the interview. If you fail to impress the person, you may fall back on enquiring if he knows about another department in the enterprise that may have a need for an employee with your [qualifications](#), [experience](#) and [skills](#).

Less expressive method

If you feel direct unconventional getting the interview techniques are a bit too aggressive, you may consider a similar but more subtle approach. With this technique you still enquire about possible openings without directly asking for an interview.

You contact the recruiting manager and ask whether he be may interested in a discussion on how you can benefit his department or perhaps have knowledge of another manager at the company who has a need for an employee with your skills. If the person shows interest, you casually state that it is a coincidence. The odds are now in your favor. Instead of you being on the requesting side, you now find that you are in demand.

Now is the time to state your main skills and benefits to the employer. Your skills, experience and qualifications must match the company's particular needs. The drawback with this method is that the manager can get of the hook fairly easily. If there is no person within his company who may need your skills, ask if he perhaps knows about other companies that can benefit from your services. Don't hang up without offering to deliver or fax your CV. Once you have done that, you can call to [follow up](#).

Take the lead

Don't give the person the opportunity to say no. Once you have stated your background and purpose in short with a clear indication of how you can benefit the company, move on to the next step of getting a set date for an interview. If you ask if you can perhaps meet for an interview, you may get a no, but if you ask when would suit you best for an interview and give the person a choice of for instance Monday or Thursday morning, the person is more likely to respond with a positive answer.

If the person still refuses, you can indicate that you know that his time is valuable, but you will only take up ten minutes and show how it will be benefit the company. Indicate that you are willing to compromise on time and a place to fit in with the person's schedule. End your request

with a statement such as 'Reasonable for you?' or 'That is reasonable, do you agree?' Since nobody likes to be called unreasonable or sound unreasonable, you are likely to get the interview.

Show respect for the manager's time

Most managers are busy, but if you state that you will not even take more than fifteen minutes of the hiring manager's time, it shows that you care about his work schedule. Mention that you will explain how you will be able to increase the sales, production, or motivate his staff, within ten minutes. When an interview is granted, show that you regard his time as valuable by staying within the time frame that you promised. Focus on the specific issues and outcomes. By doing this, you prove that you keep your word, are able to get straight to the point and make a good impression in a short time span.

Hand your CV and contact card to the person, should he want more information. You should make use of the opportunity to expand on your ideas and possible benefits to the company if he asks you for more information during your visit. Make the most of it by following up within two days.

Should the manager still be too busy to grant an interview, you can suggest a discussion over lunch or breakfast, as a token of your appreciation for his busy schedule. He will listen to you during lunch since you are paying.

Use knowledge about the company

One of the best unconventional getting the interview techniques is to use suggestions for improvement to get a meeting. Do your research. Find a list of the company's products and services from their website, annual report and marketing materials. The annual report is the ideal source for finding information of their short and long term plans. Use the knowledge to come up with a solution to their problems or to show how you can help them reach their goals. You don't have to call the hiring manager for this. You can pass your suggestion on to one of their key employees and call to set up a meeting for the discussion of the solution or suggestion. Once you get the meeting, you can indicate your availability for employment or mention that you would love to participate in the project or process for improvement.

Areas that you can target for improvement include suggestions on how to improve the advertising, sales, increase customer satisfaction or enhance their image, product changes, and suggestions for a new product or service line etc. This approach not only demonstrates that you have initiative and that you care about the specific company, but also gets you in a position for an informal interview.

Even though these unconventional getting the interview techniques may sound aggressive, they are sure fire methods for getting the hiring manager's positive attention.

How to get the interview: more unconventional methods

When you find it difficult to get the interview, you can revert to one of the following unconventional methods:

Limit the offer period

Call the hiring manager and state that you will be in town during the next week and would like to schedule a meeting. To make sure you get the interview, you can end your request with two alternative dates for the meeting.

Schedule several interviews

Schedule more than one interview in the same area over a certain period. If the hiring manager is still reluctant to schedule a meeting, you can mention that you have an interview with their competition on for example, Tuesday, and will have Wednesday open for an interview. Name the competition. Since the manager wouldn't want to lose a potential beneficial employee to his competition, he may grant the meeting. Apart from this, employers want people who are in demand. It will sound like you are the flavour of the month and he wouldn't let the opportunity pass to hire you.

Combine time limit and demand

Once the manager knows that you will only be available for the next week and it is clear that you may get hired by the competition, you can mention that you would rather see him now, since your trip has already been paid. Companies try to keep their costs down and would prefer not to have to pay for another trip.

When you get the interview, you should also set up other interviews. This way you cut down on costs, time spent on interviewing, and at the same time broadens your job prospects.

What happens when the manager says that you should just send your [CV](#) to him?

You can bypass this response by stating that since you will be in the area, you will gladly hand deliver the CV or even fax it. Point out that you appreciate his time and understand his tremendous workload. You are therefore willing to make it easier by making sure that he receives it in person. You have then changed an obstacle to an opportunity for a quick personal meeting with the hiring manager.

When distance is an issue

You may not always be in a position to hand deliver your CV, but then you can make use of modern day technology such as fax and emailing. Most faxes are seen as priority mail and normally reach the right person. Call the hiring manager to say that you will be faxing your CV and will call to hear if he received it. He will keep it close by since he wouldn't want to be caught off guard. Other applications may all still be in one pile, but yours will get priority. Do follow up and use the moment to provide your background and possible contribution to the company.

Three more unconventional methods to help you get the interview

Since so many applicants make use of templates and general CV's, your CV will stand out if you [customize or write it specifically for a particular industry or company](#). With this method you focus on their requirements, style, and [culture](#). You can add the enterprise logo as a watermark to your CV. It will definitely impress them and show that you are willing to go the extra mile for their enterprise.

If you are particularly interested in working for a certain company, you can also indicate it by mentioning their name in the objective part of the CV, for example: 'Marketing Manager Opening at Siemens'.

By using slightly unconventional methods to get the interview, you set your [application](#) apart from the hundreds of other more traditional methods to get the interview. You will be noticed and get the opportunity to meet with the relevant person.