



## Candidate Interview Preparation

A little preparation before the interview will help take the edge off the event. Here are some simple ways to get ready for your meeting.

**1. Research the company and learn more about your interviewer:** By knowing as much as possible about the organization you're interviewing with, you'll be able to speak about topics that are relevant to the job you're applying for. If you can learn a little about the person who will be interviewing you, you'll be miles ahead of the game. Try to research one or two things about their accomplishments, history with the organization, outside interests—anything that will help you break the ice.

### **2. Know your Strengths:**

Make a list of FIVE (5) strengths that are most relevant to the role you are interviewing for. Practice telling at least three stories that illustrate your strengths. Be prepared to speak to your strengths throughout the interview in response to relevant questions. Your stories make the difference between a mediocre and stellar answer. *SEE PAGE 5 for the GIS Interview Preparation Worksheet.*

### **3. Answering Interview Questions**

Most interviews last between 30 to 60 minutes. During that time, the interviewer will try to learn the following:

- The level of your experience and skills
- Your willingness and ability to learn
- A sense of your personality, professionalism, and commitment
- An indication of how you would fit into the organization

### **4. Interview Styles**

There are two styles of interviewing: traditional and behavior-based. Traditional questions are direct and tend to give the interviewee the sense that they are being tested, as if they are right and wrong answers. Traditional questions might be something like these:

- Tell me about yourself?
- Why do you want to hold this position?
- Aside from money, what will you gain from having this job?
- What motivates you to excel?

Behavior-based questions invite the job applicant to tell a story. The theory behind behavior-based interviewing is that by hearing about a job seeker's past behavior, the employer can predict your future behavior. Here are some sample behavior-based questions.

- What accomplishment are you particularly proud of?
- When did you handle conflict with your boss, colleagues, or subordinates?
- Tell me about a situation that demonstrates your work habits.
- Describe a time when you and your superior were in conflict and how it was resolved.

### **5. List the questions you want to ask.**

In the interview you too are trying to decide where you want to spend eight or more hours a day for the next few years. An important point to keep in mind, you are being evaluated on the quality of the questions that you ask.



## Questions to Prepare For

To give you a little practice in answering both traditional and behavior-based questions, here are some interview questions that might be asked of an applicant going for a position at any level in an organization. After each question, you'll find an analysis of the question, which may help you frame your answers.

### **1. Tell me about yourself:**

Although this question is broad, keep your answer focused and relevant to the job you're applying for. Mention the top three or four aspects of your experience, skills, interests, and personality that make you a qualified candidate for the job. Occasionally, answer a question by saying what somebody else has said about you. Something like: "My supervisor always used to say, "Katie's the one you want around when it's time to launch a product.'"

### **2. What are your long- and short-term career goals?**

Good question! The interviewer is trying to get a feel for why you want this job and how long you're going to stick with it. The ideal answer will assure the employer that you're worth their investment—that is, training you, introducing you to clients, entrusting you with responsibility. Your answer should assure them that you are interested and in it for a long time.

### **3. Outside of work, what are some of the things you do?**

Employers know that what an applicant does for free can speak louder about their character. Tell the interviewer about something in your nonprofessional life that demonstrates you are a good person.

### **4. How would your boss describe you?**

There's no hidden message here. The employer's giving you the floor to sell yourself for the job. Prepare well for this answer and deliver it with confidence. After all, who knows more about why you're suited for the job than you? And make your presentation using brief achievement stories.

### **5. Tell me about a professional challenge that you have had in your last role and how you overcame it.**

How did you make a difficult situation positive? Use this opportunity to share how you have learned and developed in your current role.

### **6. What project required you to work under pressure? What were the results?**

How you respond to this question will tell the interviewer whether you like working under pressure. Be honest and positive. Tell a story about thriving in an intense situation.

## Legal Answers to Illegal Questions

Even though it may be illegal for an interviewer to ask a certain question, it's not illegal for you to answer it. So, if you're asked one of those hot button issues, think carefully before answering. Figure out whether it's to your advantage to respond honestly or to hedge the issue. **Think about it:** Answering honestly might be to your advantage. Let's say you want to work at an elementary school and the interviewer wants to know if you have children. If you tell them you have two kids, they might see it as a plus. If you don't want to answer the question, whatever you do, don't accuse the interviewer of having broken the law. Instead, take a minute to understand what's behind the question. If they asked if you have kids, maybe they are concerned that you'll be pulled away from work a lot. In that case, you could



answer, “I believe you're concerned about my attendance on the job. Let me assure you that my personal life won't interfere with my work.”

\*As of January 2018, employers are no longer allowed to ask about current compensation.

### Questions to Ask in an Interview

You probably already know that an interview isn't just a chance for a hiring manager—it's your opportunity to sniff out whether a job is the right fit for you. Which means: It's important to go in with some questions. What do you want to know about the position? The company? The department? The team?

#### **The Job**

1. What does a typical day look like?
2. What are the most immediate projects that need to be addressed?
3. Can you show me examples of projects I'd be working on?
4. What are the skills you're looking for in an ideal candidate?
5. What attributes does someone need to have to be successful in this role?
6. What types of skills is the team missing that you're looking to fill with a new hire?
7. What are the biggest challenges that someone in this position would face?
8. Do you expect the main responsibilities for this position to change in the next six months to a year?

#### **Training and Professional Development**

9. How will I be trained?
10. What training programs are available to your employees?
11. Where have successful employees previously in this position progressed to?

#### **Your Performance**

12. What are the most important things you'd like to see someone accomplish in the first 30, 60, and 90 days on the job?
13. What are the performance expectations of this position over the first 12 months?
14. What is the performance review process like here? How often would I be formally reviewed?
15. What metrics or goals will my performance be evaluated against?

#### **Interviewer- do your own research first about the interviewer!**

16. Has your role changed since you've been here?
17. Why did you come to this company?
18. What's your favorite part about working here?

#### **The Company**

19. I've read about the company's founding, but can you tell me more about \_\_\_?
20. Where do you see this company in the next few years?
21. What can you tell me about your new products or plans for growth?
22. What are the current goals that the company is focused on, and how does this team work to support hitting those goals?
23. What gets you most excited about the company's future?

**The Team**

24. Can you tell me about the team I'll be working with?
25. Who will I work with most closely?
26. Who will I report to directly?
27. Can you tell me about my direct reports? What are their strengths and the team's biggest challenges?
28. Do you expect to hire more people in this department in the next six months?
29. What other departments work closest with this one?
30. What is the most common career path in this function?

**The Culture**

31. What is the company and team culture like?
32. How would you describe the work environment here?
33. Can you tell me about the last team event you did together?
34. Is there a formal mission statement or company values?
35. What's your favorite office tradition?
36. What do you and the team usually do for lunch?
37. What's different about working here than anywhere else you've worked?
38. How has the company changed since you joined?

**Next Steps**

39. Do you have any hesitations about my experience that we can go over?
40. What are the next steps in the interview process?
41. Is there anything else I can provide you with that would be helpful?
42. Can I answer any final questions for you?

**Interview Prep. Worksheet**

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

List your Accomplishments/Achievements

While working at this company here:

---

---

---

---

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

List the strategy, implementation, and development processes used to bring about these results:

---

---

---

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

List your Accomplishments/Achievements

While working at this company here:

---

---

---

---

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

List the strategy, implementation, and development processes used to bring about these results:

---

---

---

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

List your Accomplishments/Achievements

While working at this company here:

---

---

---

---

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

List the strategy, implementation, and development processes used to bring about these results:

---

---

---

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

List your Accomplishments/Achievements

While working at this company here:

---

---

---

---

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

List the strategy, implementation, and development processes used to bring about these results:

---

---

---

**Think Through**

- Did you help to increase sales, productivity, or efficiency? What was the percentage or dollar contribution? How did you do this? Did you have a unique approach or different results than others?
- Did you institute any new systems or changes? What was the situation that led to the change? Who approved that system? Why was this system selected over others? What happened as a result?
- Did you train anyone? Did you develop training technique? Compare your results to others. Is your technique being used by others? Why is that?



- Did you help to establish any new goals or objectives for your company? Did you convince management that they should adopt these goals or objectives? Why were they adopted?
- Did you change the nature or scope of your job? Why or how did you redefine your position? Have others with similar positions had their positions redefined because of you? Were there responsibility changes because of this?

### Defining Your Strengths

List your top five (5) strengths in the left column. In the right column, list the examples of how you have utilized those strengths in your current and previous roles.

<b>Strength (Example):</b>	<b>Scenario (Example):</b>
1. <i>Communication</i>	1. <i>While at XXX, I noticed we had a challenge communicating across multiple departments as some of our teams worked in other offices or remotely. I suggested we implement Slack as an easier way to communicate. It improved communication across our organization as it allowed for us to connect in real-time, create group messages so multiple individuals could work collaboratively, and allowed for teammates to send quick notes instead of picking up the phone to call or text.</i>
2.	1. 2. 3.
3.	4. 5. 6.
4.	7. 8. 9.
5.	10. 11. 12.
6.	13. 14. 15.