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HOW TO WIN YOUR NEXT INTERVIEW

A practical preparation guide and interview workbook

The goal is not to sound perfect.

The goal is to make your value easy to understand, prove it with relevant examples, and help the employer picture you succeeding in the role.

PREPARE

with strategy

COMMUNICATE

with confidence

CLOSE

with intention

GET CLEAR. GET POSITIONED. GET HIRED.

Interview preparation built from real hiring-side insight.

00

BEFORE YOU BEGIN*Use this guide before every meaningful interview.*

The Interview Is Not Just a Conversation

An interview is the moment when your written experience has to become clear, spoken value. The strongest candidate is not always the person with the most experience. It is often the person who can explain how their experience connects to the employer's needs.

Your interview objective

Help the employer understand what you have done, how you solve problems, what results you create, and why this opportunity makes sense for you.

How to Use This Guide

1. Complete the company and role research before practicing answers.
2. Build a clear interview message and identify the three things you want remembered.
3. Prepare at least five STAR + Value stories using real examples.
4. Practice out loud. Do not only review answers silently.
5. Select thoughtful questions and prepare your follow-up before the interview.

Your Interview Details

Company	
Position	
Interview date and time	
Interviewer(s)	
Format	

01

UNDERSTAND THE ROLE

Interview preparation begins with the employer's needs.

Break Down the Job Description

Do not read the job description once and assume you understand it. Study the language, repeated priorities, qualifications, and outcomes. The posting gives you clues about what the employer will listen for during the interview.

Top Responsibilities

Repeated Skills, Qualifications, or Keywords

What Problem Is This Employer Hiring Someone to Solve?

Examples: improve a process, increase revenue, organize workflows, support customers, lead a team, reduce risk, improve quality, or create stronger communication.

Hiring-side insight

Your answers should not only describe your history. They should show how your history prepares you to solve the problems attached to this position.

02

RESEARCH THE COMPANY

Preparation creates stronger, more specific answers.

Company Research Worksheet

What does the company do?

Who are its customers?

What products or services does it provide?

What recent news, growth, changes, or priorities did you find?

What stood out to you about the company?

Why are you interested in this company?

Why does this position make sense for you now?

03

BUILD YOUR INTERVIEW MESSAGE

Decide what you want the interviewer to remember.

Your Three Interview Themes

Before the interview, identify three clear themes that describe the value you bring. Your answers, examples, and questions should reinforce these themes throughout the conversation.

1. I want the interviewer to remember that I...

2. I want the interviewer to remember that I...

3. I want the interviewer to remember that I...

Examples of Strong Themes

- I improve inefficient processes and create structure.
- I communicate clearly across teams and build trust.
- I take ownership, follow through, and solve problems calmly.
- I use data and insight to support stronger decisions.
- I develop people and create accountability.
- I strengthen customer relationships and protect the business.

Proof Points

For each theme, identify at least one example that proves it.

Theme	Example or accomplishment	Result or value created

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04

TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

Create a focused 60-90 second professional introduction.

Use Present + Proof + Direction

Present

Who are you professionally right now?

Proof

What experience, strengths, or accomplishments support your fit?

Direction

What are you ready to do next, and why does this opportunity make sense?

Build Your Answer

My professional identity is:

My most relevant experience includes:

My strongest skills for this role are:

One accomplishment I may mention is:

This opportunity interests me because:

The value I can bring is:

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PRACTICE YOUR INTRODUCTION

Sound prepared, not memorized.

60-90 Second Formula

“I am a _____ professional with experience in _____. Throughout my career, I have developed strengths in _____ and _____. In my current or most recent role, I have been responsible for _____. One accomplishment I am especially proud of is _____. I am now looking for an opportunity where I can _____. This position stood out to me because _____, and I believe my background in _____ would allow me to contribute to the team.”

My Full Draft

Practice Check

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ It is under 90 seconds. | ☐ It sounds natural when spoken. |
| ☐ It connects to the position. | ☐ It ends with a clear reason for interest. |
| ☐ It includes proof, not only claims. | |
-

06

BUILD YOUR STAR STORY BANK

Prepare proof before you are asked for it.

Use STAR + Value

S	Situation	What was happening?
T	Task	What were you responsible for?
A	Action	What specific steps did you take?
R	Result	What happened because of your actions?
+	Value	What does this example prove about you?

Prepare Stories That Show

☐ Problem-solving☐ Ownership☐ Leadership☐ Process improvement☐ Conflict resolution☐ Customer service☐ Communication☐ Learning from a mistake☐ Adaptability☐ Handling pressure☐ Teamwork☐ Achieving a result

Do not memorize every word.

Know the story, the actions you took, the result, and the value you want the interviewer to understand.

06

STAR + VALUE STORY 1

Use a real example and keep the focus on your actions.

Skill, competency, or quality this story demonstrates:

Situation - What was happening?

Task - What were you responsible for?

Action - What specific steps did you take?

Result - What happened?

Value - This example shows that I...

06

STAR + VALUE STORY 2

Use a real example and keep the focus on your actions.

Skill, competency, or quality this story demonstrates:

Situation - What was happening?

Task - What were you responsible for?

Action - What specific steps did you take?

Result - What happened?

Value - This example shows that I...

06

STAR + VALUE STORY 3

Use a real example and keep the focus on your actions.

Skill, competency, or quality this story demonstrates:

Situation - What was happening?

Task - What were you responsible for?

Action - What specific steps did you take?

Result - What happened?

Value - This example shows that I...

06

STAR + VALUE STORY 4

Use a real example and keep the focus on your actions.

Skill, competency, or quality this story demonstrates:

Situation - What was happening?

Task - What were you responsible for?

Action - What specific steps did you take?

Result - What happened?

Value - This example shows that I...

06

STAR + VALUE STORY 5

Use a real example and keep the focus on your actions.

Skill, competency, or quality this story demonstrates:

Situation - What was happening?

Task - What were you responsible for?

Action - What specific steps did you take?

Result - What happened?

Value - This example shows that I...

07

PREPARE FOR COMMON QUESTIONS

Know the message and example you want to communicate.

Career Story and Fit

Tell me about yourself.

What they are really asking: Can you explain who you are, what you bring, and why you are here?

My key message or example:

Why are you interested in this role?

What they are really asking: Did you make an intentional decision, or are you applying randomly?

My key message or example:

Why are you interested in this company?

What they are really asking: Did you research us and understand what we do?

My key message or example:

What are your strengths?

What they are really asking: Do you understand your own value and have proof?

My key message or example:

What is one area you are working to improve?

What they are really asking: Are you self-aware and coachable?

My key message or example:

07

PREPARE FOR COMMON QUESTIONS

Experience, impact, communication, and accountability.

Question	Story or proof	Value to communicate
Tell me about a time you solved a difficult problem.		
Tell me about a time you improved a process.		
Give me an example of when you learned something quickly.		
Tell me about a project or accomplishment you are proud of.		
Tell me about a time you managed competing priorities.		
Tell me about a time you handled conflict or a difficult conversation.		
Tell me about a time you influenced someone without direct authority.		
Tell me about a mistake you made and what you learned.		
Why are you leaving your current position?		
Why should we hire you?		

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ADDRESS CONCERNS CONFIDENTLY

Acknowledge, explain, redirect, and reinforce.

Think Like the Interviewer

What might cause the employer to hesitate? Identifying potential concerns ahead of time helps you respond without becoming defensive.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Employment gap | ☐ Missing technical skill |
| ☐ Career change | ☐ Overqualified |
| ☐ Industry change | ☐ Underqualified |
| ☐ Short tenure | ☐ Compensation expectations |
| ☐ Limited leadership experience | ☐ Location, schedule, or travel needs |

My Possible Concern

My Response

6. Acknowledge the concern honestly.
7. Give relevant context without overexplaining.
8. Redirect attention to preparation, transferable experience, or results.
9. Reinforce your interest and ability to contribute.

09

ASK BETTER QUESTIONS

Your questions show preparation, judgment, and strategic thinking.

Questions About the Role

- What are the most important priorities for this role in the first 90 days?
- What problems are you hoping this person will help solve?
- What does success look like after six months?
- What are the biggest challenges someone in this role will need to navigate?
- How does this role support the broader goals of the department?

Questions About the Team and Leadership

- How does the team typically communicate and collaborate?
- What strengths does the team already have, and where is more support needed?
- How would you describe the manager's leadership style?
- How is feedback typically provided?
- What type of person tends to perform well on this team?

Strong Closing Questions

- Is there anything about my background you would like me to clarify?
- Are there any concerns about my fit that I can address?
- What are the next steps in the process?
- What timeline are you working toward?
- Is there anything else I can provide that would be helpful?

09

MY INTERVIEW QUESTION BANK

Choose questions that match the interviewer and interview stage.

Question I want to ask	Why I am asking it	Best interview stage

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INTERVIEW DAY

Protect the preparation you have already completed.

Before the Interview

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Review the job description. | ☐ Know your salary range. |
| ☐ Review company research. | ☐ Prepare copies of your resume. |
| ☐ Review the interviewer's background. | ☐ Confirm time, location, and format. |
| ☐ Practice your introduction out loud. | ☐ Test camera, microphone, and internet. |
| ☐ Review at least five STAR stories. | ☐ Prepare professional attire. |
| ☐ Choose five to seven questions. | ☐ Arrive or join 10-15 minutes early. |

During the Interview

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Listen carefully. | ☐ Connect experience to the role. |
| ☐ Pause before answering. | ☐ Avoid interrupting. |
| ☐ Ask for clarification when needed. | ☐ Take brief notes. |
| ☐ Give specific examples. | ☐ Show genuine interest. |
| ☐ Keep answers focused. | ☐ Confirm next steps. |

After the Interview

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Write down important details. | ☐ Complete requested assessments promptly. |
| ☐ Record questions you were asked. | ☐ Follow up based on the timeline provided. |
| ☐ Note answers to improve. | ☐ Continue your job search until an offer is accepted. |
| ☐ Send a thank-you within 24 hours. | |

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COMMUNICATE WITH CONFIDENCE

Your delivery should support your message.

In Person

- Sit upright without appearing stiff.
- Maintain natural eye contact.
- Keep your hands relaxed and visible.
- Speak clearly at a steady pace.
- Show energy and genuine interest.
- Avoid excessive movement or fidgeting.

Video Interview

- Position the camera at eye level.
- Use front-facing light and a clean background.
- Look toward the camera when speaking.
- Keep notes nearby, but do not read from a script.
- Close unnecessary programs and silence notifications.
- Test the link and technology in advance.

Phone Interview

- Find a quiet location.
- Keep the job description and resume in front of you.
- Stand if it improves your energy.
- Smile while speaking to support a warmer tone.
- Avoid multitasking.
- Speak slowly and clearly.

Confidence is not speed.

A thoughtful pause is stronger than a rushed, unfocused answer.

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PREPARE FOR SALARY CONVERSATIONS

Know your numbers before compensation comes up.

My Compensation Range

Minimum acceptable compensation:

Target compensation:

Ideal compensation:

Range I am prepared to communicate:

Benefits or trade-offs that matter to me:

Salary Scripts

If asked about expectations

“Based on my research and the scope of the role, I am targeting a range of ____ to _____. I am also open to learning more about the overall compensation package and expectations for the position.”

If the range is lower than expected

“Thank you for sharing that. Based on my experience and the market research I have completed, I was targeting closer to _____. Is there flexibility based on experience and overall fit?”

If you need time to review an offer

“Thank you. I appreciate the offer and I am excited about the opportunity. I would like to review the complete details carefully. When would you need my response?”

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FOLLOW UP WITH INTENTION

Reinforce interest and connect your experience to the conversation.

Interview Follow-Up Template

Subject: Thank You - [Position Title] Interview

Hi [Name],

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about the [position title] opportunity.

I appreciated learning more about [specific topic discussed], especially [specific detail]. Our conversation reinforced my interest in the position and the opportunity to contribute my experience in [relevant area].

Based on what we discussed, I believe my background in [specific skill or experience] would allow me to support the team's goals around [priority or problem].

Please let me know if I can provide any additional information. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Best,
[Your Name]

Personalize Your Follow-Up

Specific topic I will mention:

Relevant experience I will reinforce:

Priority or problem I can help solve:

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AVOID COMMON INTERVIEW MISTAKES

Strong preparation can be undone by poor execution.

- ☐ Arriving without researching the company
- ☐ Giving long, unfocused answers
- ☐ Reciting your resume from beginning to end
- ☐ Speaking negatively about a former employer
- ☐ Giving vague answers without examples
- ☐ Claiming you have no weaknesses
- ☐ Trying to guess the “perfect” answer instead of being honest
- ☐ Failing to explain why you want the position
- ☐ Asking only about pay, benefits, or time off in the first interview
- ☐ Not preparing questions
- ☐ Interrupting the interviewer
- ☐ Appearing distracted during a virtual interview
- ☐ Exaggerating your experience
- ☐ Forgetting to follow up
- ☐ Stopping your job search because one interview went well

Remember

You do not win by pretending to be perfect. You win by communicating your value clearly, supporting it with evidence, and showing thoughtful interest in the opportunity.

15**INTERVIEW READINESS SCORE**

Rate your preparation honestly before interview day.

Rate each area from 1 to 5. A score of 1 means not prepared. A score of 5 means fully prepared.

Interview area	Score
I understand the position.	___ / 5
I researched the company.	___ / 5
I can explain why I want the role.	___ / 5
I have a strong “Tell me about yourself” answer.	___ / 5
I prepared at least five STAR stories.	___ / 5
I can clearly explain my value.	___ / 5
I prepared thoughtful questions.	___ / 5
I know my compensation range.	___ / 5
I am prepared to address possible concerns.	___ / 5
I have a follow-up message ready.	___ / 5

TOTAL SCORE: _____ / 50**41-50 | Interview Ready**

Review your examples and focus on speaking naturally.

31-40 | Almost Ready

Strengthen the areas where your message or examples still feel unclear.

30 or Below | Do Not Wing It

Pause and prepare. Your experience deserves a stronger presentation.

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FINAL PREPARATION PAGE

Bring your strategy together before the interview.

The three things I want the interviewer to remember:

The strongest example I plan to share:

The biggest concern I am prepared to address:

The question I most want to ask:

The reason I am genuinely interested in this opportunity:

The value I can bring to this team:

Final reminder

Preparation does not make you sound rehearsed. Preparation gives you the confidence to be clear.

GET CLEAR. GET POSITIONED. GET HIRED.

Melinda Janeiro