

The Ultimate

Interview Guide



Expert Interview Tips and Techniques

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Introduction

An open job receives an average of 118 applicants. If you land the interview, you've beaten the odds. Time to celebrate, right?! Not exactly. Now comes the hardest part — the interview.

A job interview is your only chance at a first impression. It's your time to show off the skills, experience and knowledge you've gained thus far. It can push your career in exciting new directions, or send you back to the drawing board.

At Morgan Hunter, **we interview an average of 257 people a month.** We've seen it all — the good, the bad, and the just okay. We want to share our experience with you, because **we know what it takes to have a successful interview.**

In this eBook, we will walk you through the steps you need to take to nail your next interview.



Part 1

Before the Interview



Research the Company

Visit the company's website

Review key pages on the company's website — Homepage, About Us, Services, and their Blog.

Check out their social media pages

This will give you a great sense of their culture. Not only will you gain insight as to who the company is, you'll learn what their customers think about them — information that can prove invaluable during your interview and impact your decision about whether or not to accept a job offer.

Google the company

Look for any relevant news articles or information from third party sources to help you develop thoughtful questions for your interview.

36%
of Candidates say
they apply without
first doing research
— **don't be one of
these people.**

10 Most Common Interview Questions

Tell me about yourself

Give the interviewer a brief overview of your professional history. Take this opportunity to focus on notable achievements throughout your career. Practice summarizing your career in one to two minutes.

What interests you about this job?

Many job seekers make the mistake of focusing on what's in it for them — salary, benefits, etc. Instead, use your answer to tell the interviewer what you will bring to the table. Whether it's the challenges of the position, the day-to-day responsibilities, or the chance to work for a thriving company, figure out what genuinely excites you about the opportunity.

Why did you leave your last job?

\ Why are you looking to leave your current job?

Even if you left your last job on bad terms, keep your answer to this question positive. Bad mouthing your last employer will only raise red flags. Maybe you're looking for an organization with more growth opportunities or a position with greater challenges. Whatever your reasons, keep it positive.

What do you know about our company?

Not knowing anything about the company will almost surely disqualify you from the candidate pool. Visit their website, search for any relevant news on the organization, and check out their social media pages to get a complete overview of the company. Be prepared to tell them everything you learned.



Tell me about a time when ...

Interviewers ask this question to see how you handle certain situations. Whether it's a difficult coworker, or a mistake at work, they want to hear that you handled the situation with tact, have the ability to think on your feet, and solved the problem successfully. Prepare for this question with an example of how you dealt with a problem at work.

What is your greatest weakness?

The interviewer asks this question to see if you're honest and self-aware. Everyone has weaknesses, so saying you don't have any won't work. The best way to answer this question is to think of a weakness you've already taken steps to remedy, giving concrete examples of what you're doing to improve.

What is your greatest professional achievement?

The employer wants to learn what you can bring to their organization. Prepare by determining what strengths you have related to the position. Avoid cliché answers like "I'm a people person" or vague answers like "I'm a great communicator." Give them an example of how your greatest strength has helped you find success in your previous roles.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

The interviewer wants to know if you have realistic expectations for your career and if those expectations align with the job opportunity. Be honest. Where do you want your career to be in five years? If your goals don't match the role, you might not get the job, but at least you won't accept a position that doesn't fit your aspirations.

What questions do you have for me?

Nothing will eliminate you from the candidate pool quicker than not having questions to ask at the end of your interview. The interviewer wants to see if you are actually interested in the job, or if it's just a placeholder until you find something else. If you're truly attracted to the opportunity, then these questions should come naturally. You might want to know what the culture is like, more details about the day-to-day responsibilities, or what the expectations are for the role. Think about the position and decide what questions you need answered before you can take the job. Always end by asking about the next step in the interview process.



Part 2

The Interview

Most Common Interview Mistakes

CareerBuilder surveyed more than 2,400 hiring managers to find out the most common mistakes candidates make in interviews:

79%

Answering cell phone or texting during interview

69%

Dressing inappropriately

69%

Appearing disinterested

66%

Appearing arrogant

63%

Speaking negatively about a current or previous employer

59%

Chewing gum

35%

Not providing specific answers

32%

Not asking good questions



What Not to Say in an Interview

We've prepared answers to common interview questions. But knowing what not to say is just as important. Here are 6 common gaffes to avoid in interviews:

“What does your company do?”

Never go into an interview without knowing what the company does. You should always do as much research as you can on your potential employer. This shows the interviewer that you are passionate about the opportunity. Plus, in the course of your research, you might find something about the company that will make you want the job even more — or send you running for the hills.

“My last boss was terrible”

Badmouthing your former boss or company is a bad idea. It's a small world, and you never know if your former boss or coworker has a relationship with the person interviewing you. Additionally, you could come off as a complainer, and companies want to hire people with positive attitudes. First impressions are everything, and speaking ill of a former employer will reflect poorly on you.

“I’ll do anything”

When you say “I’ll do anything,” you’re basically telling the interviewer that you will take any job you can get. To the interviewer, it shows that you lack passion for the position. It also tells the employer that you will just be there until something better comes along.

“How much vacation time do I get?”

Vacation time is important to everyone. But if you start asking about vacation time right off the bat, it raises a serious red flag. To an employer, you haven’t even started yet and you are already asking about time off. Employers may take this as an unwillingness to work hard. They don’t want to hire someone who is just in it for the paid vacation — they need someone who is ready to help the company reach its goals.

“I want to work here because it will give me ...”

Employers want to know what you bring to the table. They want to know how you will help them sell more products, improve the company, and grow the business. If you’re asked why you want to work there, focus on what you can do for them, not what you will get out of it.

“I don’t know”

You’ve prepared for your interview, confident that you can handle anything they throw at you. Then suddenly, they ask you a question and you draw a blank. We’ve all been there before. Rather than saying “I don’t know,” you’re better off winging it. Try repeating the question to give yourself more time to think, or take a cue from politicians and side-step the question while segueing to something else. Anything is better than saying “I don’t know.”

Don’t forget to **bring multiple copies of your resume** to your interview

What to Wear to Your Interview

A first impression is a lot harder to overcome than to create. Studies show that first impressions are solidified within seconds of seeing someone. You don't even have to interact with another person for them to make snap judgments about you. That's why it's always best to wear business professional attire for a job interview.

Business Professional for Men



Business Professional for Women



Exception to the Rule!

For professionals in creative fields — advertising, marketing and the like — interview attire can be flexible. Many advertising agencies, for example, have a culture that allows for casual attire. These companies don't expect you to show up in a suit. When in doubt, you can always ask the hiring manager or employee that set up your interview.

What to Focus on in Your Interview

Review the Job Description

Before your interview, review the job description to identify both hard skills and soft skills the employer is looking for.

Match Your Skills to the Job

Determine how your skills match what the employer is looking for. For example, if they're looking for someone to meet sales quotas, one of your interview answers should include how you successfully met and exceeded sales quotas at your last job by X percent.

Ultimately, you need to figure out their ideal candidate by using the job description. Then determine how your skills and experience match up with their ideal candidate.

Repeat Your Strengths

As your interview progresses, continually focus on what you can do for them. Each answer you give should focus on your strengths as related to the job. Continue to bring your answers back to your strengths. By repeating your strong suits throughout the interview, the interviewer will be more likely to remember what you can bring to the table.

Be Yourself

It may sound cliché, but the best thing you can do in an interview is be yourself. The employer wants to get to know the real you in order to find out if you would fit their culture. You can have the skills to perform the job successfully, but it's also important that your personality fits as well.



Questions to Ask at the End of Your Interview

As we learned earlier, **32 percent of hiring managers said one of the most common mistakes job seekers make is not asking good questions** in an interview. Asking questions shows the interviewer that you're interested in the position and not just looking to work anywhere that will have you.

While we recommend you tailor your questions for each interview, here are some basic questions you can ask:

How would you describe the company culture?

You need to learn if you want to work there in the first place. Discovering more about the company culture will help you decide if it will be a good fit.

Can you describe the ideal candidate for this position?

Learn who their ideal candidate is to see how you compare. In your follow-up after the interview, reiterate how your strengths align with their ideal candidate.

Can you tell me about the day-to-day responsibilities of the role?

You want to learn as much as you can about the position to decide if it's a job you really want. This should also give you an idea of how qualified you are for the role.

What do you like most about working for this company?

Asking this question tells the interviewer that you're not just looking for any job — you care about finding the right job for you.

What is the next step in the interview process?

This question demonstrates that you're interested in the position and excited to move forward in the process. It will also give you an idea of when they are planning to make a hiring decision. Don't forget to ask for contact info (business cards) from each person you meet with in order to follow-up after the interview.





Part 3

Interview Follow-Up



How to Follow Up After Your Interview



Following-up after an interview may sound old-fashioned or unnecessary, but in a CareerBuilder survey, **86 percent of hiring managers think not sending a follow-up shows a lack of follow-through** by the candidate. The survey also found that **56 percent of hiring managers think a candidate isn't really serious about the opportunity if they don't follow-up.**

To put yourself in the best position to get the job, it's important that you follow-up after your interview. Here's how:

Consider the culture

Should you write a hand-written note or email your follow-up?

Eighty-nine percent of hiring managers say it's okay to send a thank you note in an email. But if the company has a more traditional culture, a hand-written thank you note might be best. Plus, because most candidates follow-up with an email, a hand-written thank you note could help you stand out.

Cover the Basics

A follow-up letter needs to include a few basic essentials:

1. Thank the interviewer for their time
2. Reiterate why you're the best fit for the position
3. State that you're looking forward to the next step



Also, be specific. For instance, if the interviewer told you they'd be making a decision in a week, then write something like "I look forward to hearing from you next week" at the end of your letter.

Likewise, when reiterating why you're the top candidate for the job, don't offer vague statements like "I'm a team player." Instead, give a detailed example of why your background is a good fit for their needs: "As we discussed at the interview, I increased sales by 10 percent at XYZ company last year alone. I'd welcome the opportunity to do the same at your company, helping you attain your sales goals in the process."

86%

of hiring managers think not sending a follow-up shows a lack of follow-through

Summary of Interview Best-Practices

- Research the company
- Practice your interview
- Focus on your strengths
- Be Yourself
- Ask Questions
- Follow-Up

Did you know...

80% of jobs

are never advertised?

That's because many employers work with staffing agencies like Morgan Hunter. Don't miss out on an opportunity! Contact Us today.

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