

Kimmel & Associates

INTERVIEW PREP GUIDE

TIPS FOR CANDIDATES

*We are dedicated to providing guidance
and support at every stage of the process.*





Interview Prep Guide

TIPS FOR CANDIDATES

The Best 1st Interview

Our client is interested in you and you are interested enough in them to move forward with an interview. You owe it to yourself to put your **best foot forward**.

Are you under the impression that you need to conduct an interview with a company, ask a barrage of questions, and then decide if you're interested? If so, we're here to tell you that this is a common **MISTAKE**.

While you may view this as an exploratory phone call or initial meeting, the truth is that there is a genuine hiring need that must be addressed. We want to avoid a one-sided conversation.

The worst is when a candidate takes the *interview the company* approach, only to call back later and say, "I really like this company and want this opportunity."

Unfortunately, the company may view the interview as a failure because the focus was solely on interviewing them, and the candidate forgot to sell themselves and explain why they're the best fit for the position.

The best 1st interview is one where a conversation flows and both sides walk away impressed. The mistake that is possible to make here is asking too many questions that are singularly focused on **YOU** and forgetting to **impress them** about the **VALUE** you can bring to their organization. You'll likely be thinking:

- How do I fit in
- How are they structured
- Who do I report to
- Who reports to me
- What are their financials
- Money Growth

While it's essential to address all relevant questions during the interview process, the primary focus of this initial conversation or interview is to **sell yourself**.

Approaching the interview as an opportunity to evaluate the company can leave you feeling enthusiastic about the position, but without selling yourself, you may not be considered for further advancement.

Interview Prep Reminders

First, do your homework. ☒

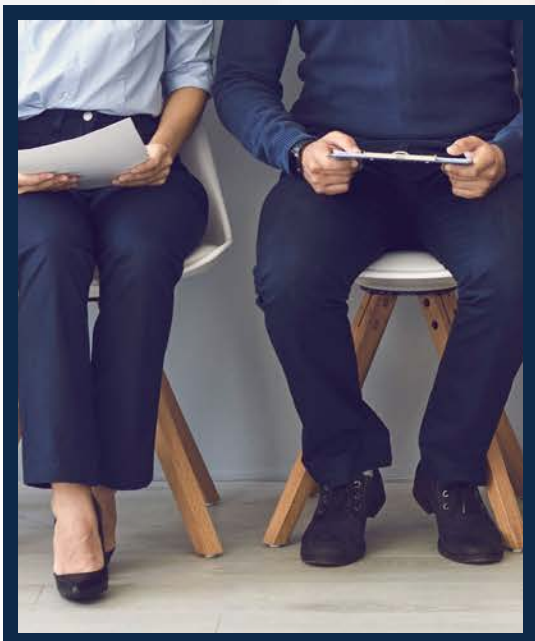
Learn what you can about the company, the interviewer, and the industry sector the company occupies. Know the highlights so that you can reference them during the interview.

Second, review your resume from THEIR perspective. ☒

Be prepared to explain BRIEFLY about career transitions and any red flags in your background that they might point out (i.e. gap in employment, taking a job outside of your core industry focus). Most interviews focus the majority of the time on your recent experience (the last 10 years).

Third, write down your accomplishments. ☒

Those things you didn't have space for on your resume. This communicates **why** you are good at your job.



First, There Has to Be Mutual Interest

Communicate Value. Clearly communicate the value you are bringing to the table. Even if this is initially an exploratory conversation, you should still be selling yourself.

If they walk away impressed with your ability after the first interview, it puts you in the driver's seat. It allows you to make the decision about moving forward or not... not them.

Selling yourself to a company is not being overly confident about your previous success; instead, it is being humble and straightforward.

Companies like to hear the words "**WE** were successful because" or "**OUR** team was successful because." Our clients want to hire the best people, but even the greatest successes are not done alone.

So, mention your individual successes and the things you have done, but make sure that your statements do not give the impression that you are a **ME FIRST** type of person. Our clients will want to know that you can make the entire team better.



It is important to keep in mind that the initial interview or phone call is an opportunity to showcase your skills and qualifications. We recommend limiting your inquiries to those that will enhance the conversation and demonstrate your value. We do not discourage you from asking questions altogether. In fact, asking big-picture questions can help you determine if the position is a **good fit** for you. Just remember that the company is also evaluating whether you are a good fit for the role.

What Have You Done to Create Value

There are 3 things you can do for a company that will make them HIRE, RETAIN, or PROMOTE you. They can be classified in **3** simple categories:

How have you **made money** for your current (or recent) employers?

How have you **saved money** for your current (or recent) employers?

How have you **solved problems** for your current (or recent) employers?

1 MAKE MONEY

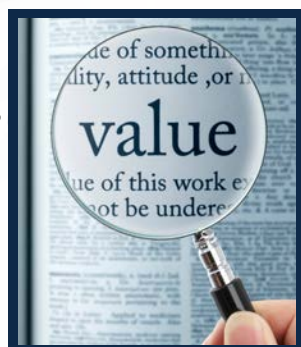
2 SAVE MONEY

3 SOLVE PROBLEMS

Value Question: If you had a lunch meeting tomorrow and someone asked you "Are you good at your job?" our hope is that you would say "Yes, I am good at my job." However, if someone asks you "Why are you good at your job?" this is a tougher question to answer.

Most of us don't go home at night and write down all the ways we created **value**. You know you have created value, but it takes a bit more thought to think through the areas where you have had the most impact. Therefore, we encourage you to be thinking about these things leading up to the interview.

- Why are you good?
- What value do you add?
- Where have you **saved money, made money, or solved problems** for your employer?



Quantitative results and sharing numbers are always wise.

Here is a great example of how to answer this question:

"Our company was having a difficult time with XYZ. I was asked to do _____ and because of my involvement and our team's commitment, we were able to solve _____ problem in ____ amount of time, leaving the client very happy."

Money & Motivation

One of the most common and significant mistakes we see in interviews is related to **money and motivation** questions. When it comes to motivation, it's essential to convey your genuine interest and engagement in the opportunity at hand. You must demonstrate that you're willing to invest your time and effort into exploring this opportunity.

If the interviewer asks, "**What are you looking for now?**", the only good answer is the job for which you are interviewing. Otherwise, they may not consider you for the next step, and both parties will have wasted their time. You must make it clear that you're taking this opportunity seriously and are committed to making the most of it.

Another common mistake is discussing future career goals that are not relevant to the job you're interviewing for. While it's great to have aspirations and long-term goals, you must focus on the job at hand and prove yourself before discussing future opportunities. The interviewer wants to know that you're **the right fit** for the current position, and you must demonstrate that you're capable of fulfilling the job requirements.



When an interviewer asks why you are motivated to make a move, it's important to provide a response that satisfies their interest and to be honest.

Saying "**I'm not really looking**" could potentially kill your chances of moving forward, even if you end up liking the position.

Be sure to provide a **positive and professional response** when asked about your motivation. An example: mention that you're looking for a great opportunity to grow professionally or for family-related reasons.

Research the company and mention its culture, or growth potential. If you've hit a glass ceiling or if there have been corporate changes, explain without blaming anyone.

Avoid making money your sole motivation, and if there are internal problems, address them delicately. Be straightforward but avoid sounding confrontational or disgruntled.

Money...Money...Money

Our promise to you is that we will be highly transparent with you and we expect the same in return. If you are going for an interview, we will have already made sure that the company's budget and your salary align enough that it makes sense to move forward.

If a company asks about your current salary, **they're not asking what you want**; they want to ensure they can attract you to their position based on your current salary. You should be honest about your raw base salary, bonus, and anything else that adds to your bottom line.

When they ask about your salary, they are asking for raw base salary and bonus.

Everything else – profit sharing, overtime, car allowance, great benefits, anything above and beyond that adds to the bottom line.

The other way money is brought up is if they ask you "**What would it take for you to make a move?**" Avoid throwing out a high or low number without enough information.

Example: A candidate was offered \$140k, which was \$10k less than his current base salary of \$150k. However, the bonus was 20% higher, and the benefits were fully covered for his family. He accepted the offer.

The lesson is to gather all the information before making a decision. When asked about salary expectations, respond with "**I'm open to a fair and reasonable offer for what I can bring to the organization.**" Once you have an offer, then you can discuss it further.

Verbal and Formal Offers



Receiving a formal job offer is a pivotal moment in the job search process as it demonstrates the company's interest and simplifies the negotiation process.

Attempting to negotiate compensation or other terms before this stage can lead to difficulties, so making it a top priority to reach this point is crucial. If your present employer has given you an above-average salary due to a unique arrangement, it is vital to convey this information to the potential employer.

Verbal offers can be ambiguous, so it is advisable to wait until you have the **offer in writing** before discussing any further.

Formal offers indicate a higher level of commitment and provide a better foundation for negotiation, so it is essential not to reject an offer too hastily.

Helpful Final Points and Topics

- ❏ **Clarification...** Seek clarification when asked a question instead of assuming you know why it's being asked.
- ❏ **Be A Doctor...** When interviewing for a job, remember that the company has a need to fulfill, typically driven by a pain point they want to solve or prevent. It's like visiting a doctor - they ask what hurts and why. Similarly, your goal is to uncover the company's pain point or the problem they are trying to avoid and provide a solution. Keep in mind that companies may be hiring based on an opportunity rather than a pain point.
- ❏ **No Robots...** When in an interview, avoid being robotic or pretending to be someone else. Stay true to yourself and be respectful. Let your professional persona shine without fear.
- ❏ **Elephant in the Room...** If you think there is something in your background, skills, or leadership that the client feels uncomfortable about, you're probably right. Therefore, talk about it.
- ❏ **Selling Yourself...** It's crucial to sell yourself during interviews, even if the outcome is uncertain. Generating interest from companies grants you the power to make decisions and cultivate professional relationships that may benefit you in the present or future. Furthermore, we've seen numerous occasions where an individual's impressive interview led to them being offered a more senior role than the one for which they were initially interviewing. So, aim to impress during interviews.

Interview Day Reminders

Phone Interviews. Find a quiet place with no distractions. Have a notepad handy so you can write down your thoughts and stay on topic.

Dress for the job you want, not the job you have. Your dress should be business casual at a minimum, and some interviews will call for a suit and tie.

Stand up to greet the person interviewing you. An interview is as much about personality and cultural fit as it is ability. Be friendly and polite to everyone you encounter in the office. You never know who holds decision power or who can influence a hiring decision.

Smile. Smiling is contagious, and individuals are drawn to those who radiate positivity and optimism.

60/40 Rule. The interviewer should do 60% of the talking and you 40%. Slow down, and ask great questions that elicit conversation and prove your knowledge. Don't overwhelm the conversation by speaking too much. Know when to expand upon your answer and when a short answer is sufficient.

Confidence is attractive, but arrogance is not. While it's important to be self-assured, avoid excessive self-promotion. Instead, use language such as "we" to emphasize the importance of teamwork. Remember that excellent companies are built on great teams, and great teams are composed of individuals who work together.

Be on time. Allow yourself enough time to get to the interview. Be 15 minutes early.

Compliment. Praising others is universally appreciated. Whether you're complimenting a successful project, an award the company received, or the pleasantness of the front office staff, a compliment can help ease tensions and create a positive atmosphere.

Say Thank You. Follow up within 24 hours of the interview. Send an email or handwritten note thanking the interviewer and team for meeting with you.

[Read More](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

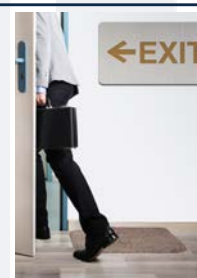
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[How to Answer 5 Tricky Interview Questions](#)[How to Prepare for a Multi-Interview Hiring Process](#)[11 Questions Candidates Should Be Asking During Job Interviews](#)

COUNTEROFFERS

[Offering and Accepting Counteroffers: It's a Mistake!](#)[4 Reasons Not to Accept a Counteroffer](#)[Accepting a Counteroffer Affects Your Job](#)

RESIGNATION

[6 Resignation Do's and Don'ts](#)[Resignation is a One-Way Process](#)

ONBOARDING

[Onboarding Do's and Don'ts for Employees: How to Successfully Transition to a New Company](#)[3 Reasons Maintaining Integrity During the Hiring Process is a Must](#)

CAREER SUCCESS

[How to Take Control of Your Career Trajectory](#)[A Guide to Professional Networking: How & Why to Make it a Priority](#)[Don't Let Others' Reviews and Opinions Determine Your Career Choices](#)