

# Interview Prep Guide

A step-by-step guide to get you ready!

# Why Spend Time Preparing?

*Wanting the job won't make you stand out – everyone wants the job. Being prepared to make your case is what gives you the best shot at winning it.*

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*Interviews aren't just about what you know. It's also about how you present yourself and who you're communicating it to. A little prep goes a long way.*

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*The purpose of this guide is to show you the types of interviews you may be facing, help you recognize what the interviewer is looking for, and maximize your chance at securing the job.*



# Phone, Video, In-Person

*There are quirks to each format*

## Master Every Setting

**While the core content is the same, there are differences depending on how you're connecting.**

***Phone Interviews – your words have to work harder***

*Without body language, examples are more important than ever. A solid anecdote can overcome lost meaning. Standing while on the phone makes a HUGE difference.*

***Video Interviews – the stage is yours to set***

*Your background should be clean and distraction free. Place your video on the screen as close to the camera as possible for eye contact. Test **everything** beforehand.*

***In-Person Interviews – It starts before you sit down***

*Dress one step up from the day to day dress code. Be kind to EVERYONE, you never know who's watching or has a say. Watch your body language and stay engaged.*



# The Three Core Questions

*Most interview questions fall into 1 of 3 categories*

## Can They do the Job?

Do you have the skills, experience and ability to do the job effectively.

Tell me about a time you solved [specific issue]

Tell me about your experience with [specific skill]

Walk me through how you would handle [event]

## Will They do the job?

Are you motivated and committed, in the right salary range, likely to stay for a while.

What made you leave your last job?

What motivates you in your day to day work?

What are your compensation expectations?

## Do they Fit?

Will you work well with the team, culture and company.

What kind of environment helps you thrive?

How do you handle conflict in the workplace?



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# Different Types of Interviews

*Different interview types focus on different things*

## ***Interview Type***

*What the interviewer is working to understand.  
What are they thinking? What is their goal?*

## **HR/Recruiter**

Usually, this is about whether an interview with you is worth the hiring manager's time. You're working on getting to the next step.

## **Hiring Manager**

This person is directly affected by your potential performance in the job. They want to know that you are going to make their work-life better.

## **Technical/Applied**

Some interview processes will have a separate technical or applied step. This is pure 'Can they do the job?' Show your skills!

## **Informal**

A coffee or lunch can be seen as an 'informal' interview - but take these seriously. This is sometimes more focused on 'Do they Fit?'

## ***The Takeaway***

*Understanding who you're talking to can give hints as to what their priorities are. Always be authentic, but keep their focus in mind.*



# Why I Want This Job

*What makes this job a match for you*

## Research is Golden

**Take the time to research the company and job. What fits?  
What do you like?**

*What is exciting about this role?*

*Beyond the job title or the money – what about this job's challenges, growth opportunities or responsibilities is a fit for you?*

*What is great about this company?*

*What about the company's mission, values, reputation, or goals are a fit for you? Having an idea what the company values can only make your interview stronger.*

*How does this fit with my long term plans?*

*This may or may not be your dream job, but it should at least fit your long range progression. How does it help you? How can it fit in your overall career journey?*



# Professional Questions to Ask

*What questions do you have for the interviewer*

## It's a 2-Way Street

**The most common interview question is “Do you have any questions?” There is absolutely a wrong answer.**

***Never say “No, I don’t have any questions.”***

*In an interview, interest goes both ways. It’s a little like being on a first date – if the other person never asked about you, it wouldn’t leave a good impression.*

***Stay away from “Me” questions (The 3 Cs)***

*You can negotiate later in the process; interviews should be about fit. **Comfort, Convenience, Compensation** can be worked out once you’re getting to the offer stage.*

***Be authentic– ask questions that are relevant to you.***

*Ask about the job, how the interviewer sees you fitting in the job, what a ‘day in the life’ looks like. But don’t just ask to ask, make sure it’s something that matters to you.*



# Compare Yourself to the Job

*Take a brutally honest look at the description*

## It's a Match Game

**Every normal job description lists a few skills. Reviewing each point can get you ready to make your case in the interviews.**

### *The required hard skills*

*For direct skills like “5+ years selling SaaS” – take a note of everywhere you’ve done that skill and add it up. Be ready to talk about it.*

### *The ‘preferred’ skills*

*While these are obviously not required, a strong preferred skill can help make up for weakness in other areas. Pull out these experiences to emphasize.*

### *When you’re missing a piece*

*Sometimes there’s just some part of the job description you’re missing. In this case, remember they are still talking to you and look for transferable, similar skills.*





# EXAMPLES!

*Specific examples of your skills/achievements*

## Remember “Show don’t Tell?”

**Books, TV and movies exist because we connect and communicate through stories. It’s the interview SUPERPOWER.**

### *Good Vs. Great Answers*

*You can always run through the steps of how you’d solve a problem, that’s a ‘good’ answer. A GREAT answer is telling a story of a time you ACTUALLY solved it.*

### *Preparation means thinking ahead*

*Thinking about the job description, where are you the strongest? Write down an example. Think about the type of interview, what they are looking for, and prep for it.*

### *Social proof is powerful*

*Awards for achievements, recommendations on LinkedIn, and referring to experts who endorse you are all strong. Use them as examples of your success where you can.*

EXAMPLE

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# Challenges to Address

*Reality is that there are very few perfect matches*

## Pobody's Nerfect

**It is vanishingly rare that a candidate is a perfect, 100% match to a job, interviews perfectly, and commits no errors.**

### *Unfavorable facts*

*How to handle a fact that works against you? The best approach? Be honest, then pivot. "I was only with Acme for 6 months, which is why I am interested in and focused on long-term opportunities now."*

*Get the unfavorable fact out, succinctly, then pivot to a positive connection to the job.*

### *But... what if I was fired?*

*The same structure works. "Acme was not the right fit for me. What I am looking for today is a skills, culture and job fit that will be mutually beneficial and I hope to find that here."*



# The Rest – Highlight Strengths

*Your skills/experiences that are over and above*

## What's Your X-Factor?

**So far we've gone through the hard stuff – but there's always uniquely wonderful and qualified things about you as well.**

**SHARE THEM!**

*Where do you stand out the most*

*Where do you have exceptional skills for this job? You've already tackled the tough parts, now where are the gems in your experience?*

*Highlight wisely though, don't raise red flags*

*If the job is asking for 5 years of experience, highlight that you have more than 5, but telling them you have 25 probably won't help you.*

*Sometimes you have to bring it up*

*Sometimes there are strengths that may not be obvious to the interviewer – don't be afraid to bring things up they didn't ask about.*

**HIGHLIGHT**

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# What are The Next Steps?

*Do your best to understand what happens next*

## A Question and an Opportunity

**At the end of the interview, if you don't know what the next steps are, it's time to ask – and don't be afraid to really ask!**

*What are the next steps for me*

*Simply, just ask for what to expect. The interviewer has a range of responses here, but you should make sure you know how to proceed.*

*If the answer is generic or vague*

*Follow up! If it's not clear that you are moving to that next stage, you lose nothing by pushing a little here. "You said there is another interview next, do you think I am a fit to move forward?"*

*It can feel uncomfortable, but asking gives you information. If yes, great! Get it set up. If no? Try to answer any concerns while you have the chance.*



# Follow Up!!

*Don't just go home and wait – make it happen!*

## Forget ME? Impossible!

**Follow-Up is key. You need to reinforce the interview, make sure you're top of mind, and help them remember you.**

*Email a thank you and recap within 24 hours*

*A thank you email isn't just polite, it's your chance to reinforce your value, recap why you're a great fit, and stay top of mind.*

***How does that work then?***

*Subject: Thank you for your time [Interviewer Name]*

*[Name], I appreciate the time you took with me today. I enjoyed [some connection or 'moment']*

*Reinforce your strengths [tie back to the job]*

*Re-Affirm interest and looking forward to [next steps]*



# Honest Assessment Time

*What do you like and dislike about the job?*

## Forget them, do YOU want the job?

**Earlier in this guide, we talked about a 2-way street. That's real. Now that you've had a moment, do you actually want this?**

***What are the highlights for you about the job/company***

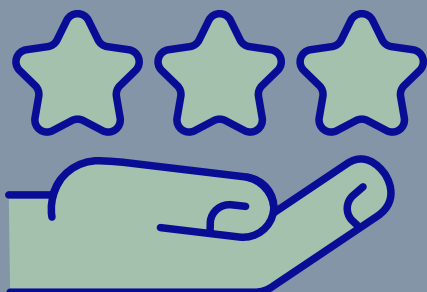
*What are the best things about this job for you? What do you like about the job itself? The company? The people you met?*

***What questions do you need answers to***

*Did you get answers to everything you needed to know? Do you have reservations about moving forward? If so, it's time to get those answers.*

***Are there any gaps to address***

*Is there anything that is a 'deal breaker' that you've run into so far? If so, now is the time to think that through and if you're willing to move forward. What would it take?*

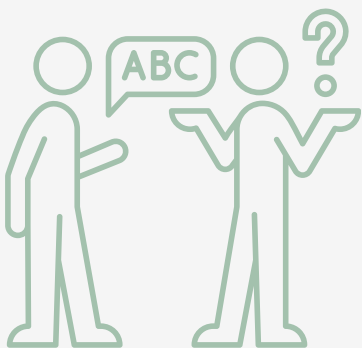


# Interview Jargon

*Let's decode some of the buzzwords*

There are tons of HR and interview buzzwords out there – what does it all mean?

- **Behavioral Interview** – just means they are focused on experiences, “Tell me a time when...” Use your examples, you’re fine.
- **STAR Method** – Situation, Task, Action, Result. In other words, what happened, how you were responsible, what you did, and what the result was (with numbers if you can).
- **Structured vs. Unstructured** – means, does the interviewer have set questions or are they just going to talk to you.
- **Panel Interview** – there will be at least 2, maybe more people. Expect a mix of priorities and styles.
- **Screening or Pre-Interview** – this is an assistant, they just need to check boxes to either move you forward or reject you.
- **Personality vs. Skills Assessment** – Personality assessments you can’t really prep for much. Skills should be about what you know.
- **Technical Interview** – Just means they are going to focus on your technical ability.



# We hope you found this guide helpful

Final thoughts. Be prepared, be confident, be memorable. Treat the people you meet like people, and be yourself. At the end of the day, you have to work there if you get hired so make sure they are hiring the real you.

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We are always open to feedback and improvements. If you have thoughts, think we got something wrong or just want to say 'hi' – email us at [guide@emetcalf.com](mailto:guide@emetcalf.com)

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