



We connect smart people
and great companies.

How can we help you?

Proper Preparation: The Key to Interview Success

By [Brad Gualtieri](#)

Interviews are tense and nerve-wracking situations for many – like a cross between a University exam and meeting your in-laws for the first time. We put ourselves through them though because they're a means to an (hopefully positive) end – a new job.

When writing a resume, you have the luxury of taking as much time as you need to tweak it and sell yourself. Interviews are different though – there's uncertainty around what you'll be asked, and you're on the spot to answer immediately. Despite having the necessary skills and experience, some people stumble in interviews and are unable to effectively communicate their qualifications and confidently sell themselves – and it's usually due to a lack of preparation. In this article we'll share things you can do beforehand to improve your interview performance.

Visit the company's website

It might seem obvious, but it's staggering to see how many candidates don't do something as simple as visit the website of the company they're interviewing with prior to the interview. And almost every time this happens, it's a deal breaker for the Hiring Manager.

Hiring Managers aren't going to give you a pop-quiz on the website, nor are they looking for someone to memorize every last word. What they are looking for is to see that someone genuinely cares about and is interested in the role – and doing some preparation for the interview beforehand shows this.

When you visit a company's website, click around to get a feeling for the site, the company itself, and the products or services they offer. Also, look to see if there's a 'news' or 'press' section where you can read up on any recent events the company has been involved in. Aside from this, try and look at the website from a business perspective – a common question for Hiring Managers to ask is "how would you make our website better?"

Know the Role

Go through the job description a few times and distill out the key attributes and

experience that the company is looking for. Reading through the 'Responsibilities' or equivalent section should also provide some insight into the role. Make sure you can speak to them and position your skills and experience in a way that shows you'll be able to come in and perform those key things at a high level.

Know Your Own Resume

For most people, a resume isn't something they look at on a regular basis – it's something they usually only visit when they're searching for a new job. Because of this, sometimes we forget the exact details of our job history, or other items listed on our resume. In an interview however, if you sound unsure or have to stop to think when questioned about something on your resume, it can make the interviewer question what you're telling them or what's listed.

It's always good to go through your resume before an interview and refresh yourself on the specifics around your prior work experience and the rest of what you have listed. Make note of beginning and end dates of prior jobs, as well as your accomplishments and any quantitative information you mention. Similar to preparing answers beforehand, try and go one step further and think about how you want to communicate the information on your resume if and when it comes up. Sounding sure and being able to confidently address any items brought up helps immensely in creating a positive impression.

Prepare Your Answers

While it's impossible to know the exact questions you'll get asked, most interviews at least in part, tend to ask variations of the same types of questions. By familiarizing yourself with the standard interview questions and preparing strong, concise answers ahead of time, your responses will come off much smoother in the actual interview.

A simple Internet search or a trip to your local bookstore can give you a good idea of some of the standard questions that you're likely to get asked. Knowing these ahead of time, you can then sit down and prepare answers – ideally in a way that shows your skills and experience are a good match for the position. You may not get asked every question you prepare for, but chances are good you'll be asked at least a few of them.

Know What You Want To Ask Them

The portion of the interview where you can ask questions back to the interviewer is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate how you work, your levels of initiative, and your thoughts on matters relevant to the role.

Preparing questions in advance is easy to do and allows you the time to make sure they're strong and help position you as a top candidate. Try and think of questions that show you're committed to results. Also think of questions that show you're thinking long-term and in a strategic manner.

Logistics

Finally, leave yourself ample time to get to the interview – especially if you don't know the area. Worst case scenario is you arrive twenty minutes early and have some extra time to run through what you want to say. Write down the address and directions, along with a contact number so that if the worst happens and you are running late, you can at least call and notify them. A call is always better than them sitting there wondering where you are.

Work Done Beforehand Pays Dividends

With interviews there's lots of things that we get stressed over. To make things easier on yourself, the more you do to prepare beforehand, the more relaxed you'll be and the easier the actual interview itself will seem. Before your next interview, take extra time to prepare thoroughly and see how much smoother it goes.

IQ Insight is published by [IQ PARTNERS Inc.](#) IQ PARTNERS helps intelligent companies hire better, hire less and retain more. Our services include Executive Search & Recruitment, Qualification & Assessment, Employee Retention, Career Management and Contract HR Services. We specialize in Marketing, Communications, Media, Technology, and Financial Services, and operate at the mid-to-senior management level. IQ PARTNERS' head office is in Toronto with partner offices across Canada, and internationally via the [Aravati Global Search Network](#).

[About Us](#)

[Why IO PARTNERS?](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

© February 2011 [IQ PARTNERS Inc.](#) All rights reserved.