

5 TIPS FOR
**INTERVIEW
SUCCESS**

reo+group

Advice



**DO YOU BREAK OUT
IN A SWEAT AT THE
MERE THOUGHT OF
A JOB INTERVIEW?**

YOU'RE NOT ALONE.

Even the most qualified and experienced professionals out there can find them uncomfortable.

But while you're tossing and turning the night before your interview, there are other candidates sleeping soundly. So, what's their secret?

STARTING POINT

Ask yourself these questions:

- 1 What will the job interview process entail?
- 2 What are the expectations of my prospective employer?

Then read on as we share five critical interview tips, compiled by our expert recruiters, that will help you WIN in your next interview!



1 UNDERSTAND & GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT

For most employers it's not just about qualifications and experience.

Of course you need the right skills to do the job well, but to win a position at many of the best companies you also need to tick some other boxes.

Many high-level employers we've worked with agree that demonstrations of critical thinking, emotional intelligence, perseverance,

and an appetite to learn and grow are all rated highly in an interview.

So, what does this mean for you?

You'll need to be prepared to go beyond your qualifications and experience. Prepare examples of times you've shown resilience, solved problems or stepped up to lead when required – because it's almost certain you'll be asked.

TOP CRITICAL COMPETENCIES:

■ Problem Solver

■ Creative Thinker

■ Relationship Orientated

■ Mental Toughness

■ Curiosity

■ Passion for detail

Google's head of hiring, **Laszlo Bock**, once stated in an interview that the number one thing they look for in a potential employee is learning ability, closely followed by emergent leadership and humility – with expertise bringing up the tail.

Gareth O'Brien, Finance Director at **Elgas**, looks for business cognition, the ability to “make sharp decisions specific to the key elements of the business”. He also values “tenacity, curiosity, personal accountability, self-confidence and inner strength”

2 PITCH YOUR WHY, NOT YOUR WHAT

To make a lasting impression, go beyond the facts detailed on your resume and share your unique “why.” This is your pitch.

It’s the reason behind pursuing your chosen path, the story behind your motivation.

Why have you chosen to do what you do?

Which experiences have shaped who you’ve become?

What drives you every day and makes you tick?

Sharing your pitch gives the interviewer an insight into your values and helps them to understand not only if you’re a good fit for the role but also if your values align with the company and their culture.

PITCH EXAMPLE PITCH EXAMPLE

If you’re asked to explain your current role, you could say: *“I’m a Financial Controller at a large company, I’m accountable for monthly results, and I lead a team of 10.”*

But your interviewer already knows this because they’ve read your resume.

A more memorable pitch could be: *“I’ve always had a passion for helping people and solving problems and working in finance allows me to have a real impact by being on the frontline of business problem management. I believe that the best finance professionals always have people at the centre of their decisions, and this has allowed me to become a successful Financial Controller. My passion for helping others and ability to solve complex problems allows me to manage highly-organised teams who are engaged in their vision”.*

3 DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMPETENCY & POTENTIAL

Interviews are no longer choosing a candidate purely on their CV, which was not uncommon in the past. Today, competency and knowledge have high importance and being able to demonstrate these attributes in relation to the position can make the difference between being shortlisted or not.

To convince the interviewer that you have the potential to be a genuine leader of the company, you will need to do research and preparation.

- Start by reading up on the company, get a feel for the culture, the people and the interviewer
- Look closely at the job description and pull out the main challenges of the role
- Develop compelling and relevant ways you can address those challenges
- Identify the leadership qualities that will see you succeed in the role
- Prepare some examples of when you've demonstrated ability to lead in the past

SHARE YOUR REAL-LIFE STORIES

Rather than reciting points from your resume, share real-life examples from times you solved a problem or provided leadership. The STAR model, as recommended by Victoria University in Wellington, can help you structure great responses to leadership questions:

Situation: describe a situation or problem that you have come across

Task: describe the task the situation required and your ideas for a resolution

Action: describe the leadership style you demonstrated and the obstacles you overcame

Results: highlight the outcomes your actions achieved.

A FURTHER TIP

Link your examples from the past with how they can benefit the company in the future. This allows your interviewer to immediately see the value you can bring.

4 BE CURIOUS - ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

It's no secret that at some point during the interview you'll be asked if you have any questions.

Asking insightful questions can really set you apart. Get it right, and you'll show that you understand the role, plus, you'll also find out some valuable information on the company. Get it wrong, and it can be a disappointing note to end on.

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By asking relevant and thoughtful questions, you leave a positive and lasting impression - so put some time into coming up with some good ones. It's also smart to prepare at least four quality questions, as there's a chance some of them may be covered during the interview.

HERE ARE SOME GREAT EXAMPLES OF POWER QUESTIONS THAT WILL IMPRESS:

What do you expect me to accomplish in the first three months? Six months? Twelve months?

This shows you intend to hit the ground running and add value from day one. It also gives you an insight into the expectations of the role, so you can be better prepared.

Which behavioural attributes do the top performers at the company share?

This give you an insight into which attributes are highly valued in the team and the organisation in general. Knowing this in advance gives you an edge and shows that you want to have an impact and join those at the top.

What's the strategic direction of the department/business for the coming year?

This is a key consideration in any role and gives you an important glimpse of the bigger picture. It allows you to think about what will be needed from you outside of your daily tasks.

What keeps you at the company?

Asking your interviewer this question not only gives you a little insight into the company's culture, it also helps to create a more equal dynamic for the interview.

5 BE GRACEFUL, PUNCTUAL AND LOOK YOUR BEST

We've discussed some important tips to help you win the job - but no matter how prepared and suitable you are for the position, if you look shabby or turn up late, you'll likely find yourself at the wrong end of the shortlist.

THE FOLLOWING TIPS SEEM OBVIOUS BUT THEY ARE OH-SO IMPORTANT:

Don't dress down or turn up looking like you haven't made an effort.

Get organised the night before to avoid a wardrobe malfunction and give yourself time before the interview to look your best.

Even if you're applying for a position at a company with a relaxed dress code, you're still much better off over-dressing slightly than turning up looking too casual.

Time your arrival, so you're not late or too early - this is critical!

Being late will put a big question mark on your reliability and commitment.

Arriving too early can also be awkward - if you're there more than 15 minutes before your interview find a way to occupy yourself so you're not hovering around

No matter the circumstances around your decision to seek a new position, it is never wise to criticise your current or former employers. Think about an honest but diplomatic reason for leaving. Being graceful is key here as negativity around your previous boss will make your interviewer uneasy and worried you'll turn on them next.

A FINAL WORD

It's natural to feel nervous about a job interview – but when you understand the process and are fully prepared you can counter your nerves with confidence.

Being confident in your approach to a job interview also allows you to focus on the excitement of a potential new role, rather than feeling anxious about the interview. Your enthusiasm and positivity can then shine through, which is another big tick.

Knowing your strengths and being clear on your unique pitch, helps set you apart. Combine this with some well-chosen questions and you'll be well on your way to a winning interview!



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