

# INTERVIEW TIPS

PREPARATION FOR LANDING THAT  
PERFECT ROLE



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# 01



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# 02 - PHONE INTERVIEW TIPS

## CONDUCT THOROUGH RESEARCH

Most job seekers know that researching the company is a must. However, stand-out candidates do a deep dive into the granular details of the company, position, people, corporate objectives, team goals, and desired attributes. Companies generally hire when they are launching a new initiative, an employee leaves or is promoted, or to fill a skills gap. They have a set of tasks and goals in mind for the new employee. Attempt to answer the following questions when conducting company research:

- When is the interview? How long will it last?
- Who will conduct the interview? What is their background?  
What type of candidate will impress?
- What are the basic facts: history, size, locations, divisions, etc.?  
What products or services do they offer?
- Who are their competitors?
- What is their industry reputation?
- Who are their clients?
- What are the job requirements?
- Why is this position open?
- What are desired milestones and accomplishments for the role?
- What are the challenges in the role?

# 03 - PHONE INTERVIEW TIPS





## ANTICIPATE QUESTIONS

Interviewers across various industries pull from a pool of common questions to gauge a candidate's interview preparation. Candidates should rehearse answers to these frequently-asked questions.

1. "Tell me about yourself."
2. "What experience do you have that relates to the job?"
3. "What are your strengths?"
4. "What are your weaknesses?"
5. "What do you know about our organization?"
6. "Why are you looking for a new opportunity?"
7. "If we hire you, where do you see yourself in five years?"
8. "What can you bring to our team?"

## PREPARE STRONG ANSWERS

Stories are an effective way to answer a question; they are enjoyable to hear, make facts easier to remember, and tend not to get interrupted. Build six or more success stories demonstrating job-related skills in action—to ensure a structured, thoughtful response to a variety of questions. Use the STAR method.

-  S - Situation or problem: set the scene.
-  T - Task or target: give specifics of what was required, who was involved, where, when, etc.
-  A - Action: explain steps taken, skills used, behaviors, characteristics.
-  R - Result: frame the outcome positively, even if it did not go according to plan.

**A STAR story should take about 2 minutes to tell. Deliver each story with energy and enthusiasm about a real experience.**

# 04 - PHONE INTERVIEW TIPS

## ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

“Do you have any questions?”

Interviewers generally leave time at the end of the interview for the candidate to ask questions. This is an essential opportunity for candidates to differentiate themselves to the interviewer. Target the conversation to demonstrate research and to highlight relevant skills that have not yet come up in the conversation. Be sure to show strong interest in the company with every question.

Bring 12 or more prepared questions to the interview—although there will not be time to ask all of them, many will be answered during the course of the conversation, and it is important not to run out.

- Ask for opinions, not absolutes. It will get better answers and build rapport faster.
- Ask questions exhibiting strong research. This demonstrates intelligence, competence, and preparation. They also show enthusiasm.

## SEND A THANK YOU NOTE

Within 24 hours of the interview, e-mail a thank-you note. Emphasize success in the areas of need that arose during the discussion. Provide any follow-up information requested by the interviewer, such as references.



# 05 - SKYPE INTERVIEW TIPS

## TEST OUT THE TECHNOLOGY

Become familiar with the video call software in advance, under the same circumstances as the interview. Companies may use Skype, Google Hangouts, Facetime, or another platform. Download the interviewer's preferred software and allow plenty of time to practice using it. The username, display name, and profile image should all be simple and professional.

Do not risk the computer unexpectedly restarting in the middle of the conversation! Before the interview, install any updates and make sure that no automatic restarts are scheduled.

## DO A MOCK INTERVIEW

Practice with a friend or Blue Signal recruiter to gather feedback and make adjustments. Nuances that are otherwise unnoticed can stand out during a video call. Give the friend practice questions to read, and have them evaluate body language, expression, voice, and the content of the response. Check for distracting behaviors, such as staring down at the keyboard, fidgeting, the use of filler words such as "um," or distracting hand gestures. All of these behaviors are harder to moderate when the audience is on a screen instead of in the room.

This is also a good time to practice a confident, enthusiastic delivery of responses. Record answers, if possible, and gauge whether they need revision before the interview. The interviewer only has one chance to hear the answer to a question!

# 06 - SKYPE INTERVIEW TIPS

## CREATE A FOLDER OF REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Some reference documents and notes can help to move the conversation forward. For instance, supporting documents such as sales figures may be handy to have during the conversation. Save documents to a new, dedicated folder on your desktop. During the adrenaline-filled moments of the interview, this will avoid a frantic search to find a key piece of information.

## USE NOTES

Aside from a desktop folder of helpful documents, keep a separate printed set of notes. This includes a resume copy, a quick reference sheet of company research, the job description, and any other key facts. Keep notes organized and easy to read; large blocks of text are difficult to glance through quickly and may result in the candidate frantically shuffling through pages or losing focus as they look for the fact they were trying to find.



# 07 - SKYPE INTERVIEW TIPS

## "MEET" WITHOUT MEETING

### CAMERA ANGLES

Looking down into the camera creates an illusion of a double-chin, while looking up into a camera emphasizes confidence and compliments cheekbones and jawlines. If necessary, raise the level of the laptop by placing it on a box or stack of books. Before the video conference, test out the camera and adjust it to the optimal height, angle, and distance.

Maintain eye contact with the camera, not the face on the screen. Be certain that the camera is at the top of the laptop to make this more natural. Looking directly the camera gives the illusion of making eye contact with the interviewer, while looking at the screen gives the impression of looking away from the interviewer's eyes.

### BACKGROUND

A bare, solid-colored wall makes the best background. No controversial or confidential material should be in view of the web camera. The interviewer will want a clear, unobstructed view of the candidate's face and shoulders. When in doubt, sit farther back.

During the interview, the goal is for the interviewer to focus on the conversation, not the surroundings. If the background is distracting, it will detract from the content of the conversation.





# 08 - IN-PERSON INTERVIEW TIPS

## RESEARCH AND REVIEW

### USE PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS TO DEVELOP AND REFINE

Use notes from previous conversations to develop and refine research topics for the in-person interview. Come prepared with a few talking points to refer back to the phone interview.

Conduct additional research on topics that came up during the phone interview. Record notes and create follow-up questions.

The in-person interview involves more detailed questions that focus on goals, experiences, and problem-solving abilities. Additionally, be ready to answer some of the same questions again—this time with even better answers. The company's goal is to determine whether candidates have the technical expertise to do the job and benefit the company. They are also judging how candidates will fit into their culture and how much they desire to succeed.

REVIEW THE STAR METHOD FROM PAGE 03

# 09 - IN-PERSON INTERVIEW TIPS

## CREATE PAPER TRAIL

- Bring 5 to 6 resume copies; interviewers should have them, but often do not. It is an easy way to demonstrate good preparation skills.
- Bring a notepad in a professional portfolio, plus several pens.
- Bring a printed copy of references in case the interviewer asks for them.
- Ask everyone for a business card to avoid forgetting contact information or the spelling of a name.

## MASTER NON-VERBAL CUES

- Posture and body language has a big impact on the impression a candidate conveys. Maintain posture that is poised and alert. Do not fidget.
- Maintain friendly eye contact throughout the interview. Do not stare at the floor while speaking.
- Echo the same level of enthusiasm as in the phone interview.
- Smile to convey a positive attitude.



# 10 - IN-PERSON INTERVIEW TIPS

## ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

“When should I expect to hear from you?”

It is important to prepare carefully thought-out questions to ask during the interview. If meeting with multiple interviewers, prepare questions in advance for each of them.

- Ask open-ended questions (what, when, where, and why questions); they elicit longer answers and therefore lead to more conversation.
- Ask the interviewer to describe their ideal candidate, then relate past experience to their answer.
- Prepare questions that relate to larger business issues: competition, technology, etc. Listen to the answers and incorporate them into follow-up questions and remarks.
- Do not interrupt.

If a candidate truly desires the job at the conclusion of the interview, it is appropriate to ask for the opportunity. Candidates should reiterate enthusiasm and interest in the position, give an example of how they can benefit their team, and ask if there is any additional information the interviewer needs before making a decision. Close with a handshake, smile warmly, and ask when to expect to hear from them.

# 11 - LUNCH INTERVIEW TIPS

## LET THE INTERVIEWER LEAD

**ALTHOUGH LUNCH INTERVIEWS ARE LESS FORMAL BY DESIGN, CANDIDATES SHOULD CONTINUE TO PUT DILIGENT THOUGHT INTO THEIR PRESENTATION.**

AN INTERVIEW OVER LUNCH OR COFFEE IS SIMILAR IN FORMAT TO AN IN-PERSON INTERVIEW, SO PLEASE REVIEW THOSE TIPS FOR BEST RESULTS.

Allow the interviewer to lead the way to the table and sit down first. Be open to their suggestions and allow them to lead the conversation. Lunch interviews will generally follow a format that is similar to a standard interview. Take advantage of the less formal setting to connect on a more personal level with the interviewer. A touch of humor is appropriate and goes a long way towards building trust and professional rapport.

Let the interviewer order first, if possible. Order something similar in price and size. Do not order a porterhouse steak if the interviewer orders a small salad. If the interviewer orders a drink and invites you too as well, feel free, but otherwise avoid ordering alcohol.

Match the interviewer's speed of eating and speaking. In a lunch interview the interviewee and interviewer each take longer turns answering and asking questions, in order to allow the other to eat. If the interviewer asks too many questions, politely attempt to re-balance the conversation by returning with an open-ended question.



# 12 - PRESENTATION INTERVIEW TIPS

## UNDERSTAND THE ASSIGNMENT

**First things first: find out the interviewer's objective and type of presentation they want to see. Meticulously read any instructions provided. Get an example presentation or a detailed verbal description, if possible. Before starting the presentation, find out:**

- How long should the presentation be?
- What skills or data do the interviewers want to see?
- Who will be in the room?
- What technology is available?

## PRESENTATION CONTENT

- Include an agenda on one of the first few slides to keep focus, reassure you will cover what is asked of you, and to stay organized.
- Keep the slides simple. Use 50 words or less per slide, no more than 4 colors, and a consistent background.
- If you use pictures - make sure they have a purpose. While aesthetically pleasing, they can be distracting and are sometimes not as fit for a serious presentation.
- Humor can be beneficial to a presentation, but more often than not, it is an unnecessary risk if a joke falls flat. Keep the content on target and to the point.

## FINAL NOTES

- Save the presentation in multiple locations.
- Smile, make eye contact, and genuinely get excited about the points in the presentation.
- Be natural, and attempt to connect personally with each of the interviewers on the panel.

# 13 - FINAL INTERVIEW TIPS

## CLARIFY AND ASK QUESTIONS

Many candidates feel discussing their concerns is not relevant in an interview process. Nothing could be further from the truth! The final interview is the last opportunity to review what challenges to expect in the role—personal and professional—and whether they can be surmounted. Interviewers generally expect more targeted, in-depth, and strategic questions from candidates at this stage of the process.

One of the main goals of a final interview is to clarify expectations—and that includes the expectations of candidate, not just the company. The final interview is an ideal time to talk about the future as it relates to the position.

## EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS

- Have there been any changes in the responsibilities or scope of the position since we last spoke?
- Where do you see the company in 5 years? (Follow-up: What will drive that change?)
- What do you believe is the largest opportunity for the organization right now?
- How do I compare to the other candidates you are interviewing?

# 14 - FINAL INTERVIEW TIPS

## THE OFFER

**BE PREPARED FOR A VERBAL OFFER. RESPOND ENTHUSIASTICALLY NO MATTER THE NUMBER. STATE INTENTION TO ACCEPT, ONLY AFTER REVIEWING A CONTRACT.**

Use Blue Signal as a resource, as recruiters have an established relationship with the hiring manager. Blue Signal's recruiters can assist in understanding offer packages and other details. Every offer is unique, so good communication is essential.

When reviewing an offer:

- Review the whole package, not just the salary.
- Stay positive during interactions and negotiations with the organization.
- Keep in communication with the recruiter working on the job requirement, because they can work to answer questions or concerns.



# 15 - RESOURCES

## FOR MORE INFO

**Call Blue Signal immediately after any interview. Processes can move quickly. Follow up with personalized thank-you notes to interviewers, and let us know how it went.**

Email our recruiting team directly at [info@bluesignal.com](mailto:info@bluesignal.com)

Call us at (480) 939.3200

Visit our site for further tips at [bluesignal.com/candidates/](https://bluesignal.com/candidates/)

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