

Jobseeker advice: 7 steps to take before the interview

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The job interview process is a crucial one - it is all that stands between you and your next big break. For this reason, it's important to take the right steps - before, during and after the interview - to give yourself the best chance of securing the role you want.



The first step is to understand the purpose of an interview. Essentially it is a meeting in which you answer questions that highlight your skills, qualifications and suitability for a job. You may be interviewed by one person, or by a panel of interviewers – depending on the job you're applying for. You might have to go through multiple rounds of interviews to ensure you are the right candidate for the job. Job interviews can take place in person, over the phone, over video call or in a group setting. Ultimately the interview process is aimed at finding out if the job and the candidate are a good fit – for both sides!

Not sure where to start? Pnet is here to help. Here are seven ways to prepare leading up to the day of the interview:

#1 Research the interviewer and company

Over and above finding out what package is up for grabs, it's important to understand if the company you're applying to work at has principles which are aligned to your own and a culture that you can identify with. Visit their website to learn more about the company's history, the type of services and solutions they offer, who their target market is, and what their core values are. Understanding these things will also help you prepare for any questions around why you're applying for this position. You can also find out more about the company and the interviewer from their social media pages or by chatting to current employees. In addition, Google is a great place to explore articles, press releases, projects and other developments relating to the company.

#2 Generate a list of questions for the interviewer

As a rule of thumb, interviewers tend to be impressed by candidates who can show they've done their homework on the company – particularly when they not only answer interview questions confidently, but have some intelligent, relevant questions to ask the interviewer.

Start by creating a list of questions for the interviewer – however, don't ask for information that was provided in the job description or that can easily be found online. Consider asking questions that relate to your prospective job role (e.g. How does this position contribute to the organisation's success?), the management style of the company (e.g. How do leaders encourage employees to ask questions?), company culture (e.g. How would you describe the work environment?). You can also ask questions relating to issues like performance measurement and opportunities for growth, among others.

#3 Consider how you'll respond to questions the interviewer may ask

Take some time to reflect on accomplishments that you're proud of so that when it comes to the interview, you can talk to one that displays the skills required by the job.

Interviewers like to know how candidates deal with challenges and test their level of self-awareness, so consider a time that you made a mistake: choose one from the beginning of your career that led to an important lesson being learned and useful experience being gained.

Here are some other questions to ask yourself before the interview:

- How did you handle a difficult situation? *Tip: Don't blame others - focus on the solution you provided.*
- Did you ever go 'above and beyond' in your previous position? *Tip: Define what was required of you and then define how you went beyond these requirements.*
- Was there ever a time when you disagreed with your boss? *Tip: No blaming or insulting – focus on how you moved past the disagreement and reached an understanding.*

#4 Compare your skills to the job advert

A job advert is basically an employer's wish list. When someone reads your online profile, they are mentally 'ticking boxes' in terms of whether or not you meet the requirements of the job. In addition the [smart-matching technology](#) that Pnet uses, as part of the global StepStone Group, enables recruiters to 'match' with profiles that fit their job ad criteria ... so it's more important than ever that you align your online profile, CV and your cover letter with the listed requirements of the vacant position.

For each requirement (responsibilities, qualifications, skills, personality traits), write down how you meet the requirement and think about how you want to present them. More importantly, write down what to say where you don't meet the requirement. If there's a preferred skill or experience you don't have, explain how you'll be competent without it.

#5 Dress appropriately

As the 'big day' approaches, think about what you will wear to the interview. As a rule of thumb, it's better to err on the side of caution and go for a subdued and classic look. Wear clothes you feel confident in that are smart but not over-the-top and be sure to wear comfortable shoes. Don't over-accessorise and make sure you are well groomed (are you overdue for a haircut?). Finally, if you have tattoos or piercings – keep them covered.

#6 Empower yourself

If you are preparing for a face-to-face interview, practice a firm handshake, strong posture, and attentive body language. It's also a good idea to mentally prepare by thinking of a mantra you can call upon for self-confidence, for example 'No matter what, I will do my best' or 'I am confident and value myself'.

#7 Final planning

The night before the interview, try to imagine yourself acing the interview – there are many visualisation techniques on YouTube that you can use to do this. Make sure you eat wholesome, healthy meals leading up to the interview.

If you are prone to anxiety, use breathing techniques or meditation the morning of the interview – again, YouTube is a great place to find these.

Make sure you have the correct address for the interview venue and save it in Google Maps. Lastly, plan what to bring, for example extra copies of your resume or your portfolio (if this has been requested).

We hope you now have a better idea of what you need to do before the interview. Look out for our next blog, where we'll be unpacking tips for the interview itself.

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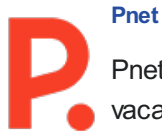
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