

Candidate Interview Preparation Outline

Overall Comments

In today’s market, companies want to know that you are excited and enthusiastic about the opportunity and that you understand the business model and go-forward strategy of the company. **“Over the top”** research accomplishes both. The quality of the research differentiates you as the candidate from others on a panel of candidates. It also ensures that you are making an informed decision.

Research Suggestions

LinkedIn and Zoom Info, etc. enables you to learn all about most of the people you will be interviewing. Key word searches on Google are especially useful. Look for white papers on the company and the industry, especially on strategies and market trends.

Your recruiter can help you in several areas:

- Reason for the position if new
- Reason for failure of incumbent if any
- Corporate Culture
- Personality and “hot buttons” of interviewer(s)
- Recent issues and events in the company that are not public

A Sales Approach to Interviewing

Good relationship salesmen know the golden rule of selling is to get the buyer to talk 80% of the meeting about the issues and needs they are facing and to keep their conversation to 20%. A good goal for you is to get the interviewer to talk 50%. He is the buyer and we are the seller. We achieve this by using our research to ask great questions and increasing the interviewer’s engagement in the conversation. It helps to think of developing questions in eight areas:

Industry:	Problems	Opportunities
Company:	Problems	Opportunities
Interviewer:	Problems	Opportunities
Open Position:	Problems	Opportunities

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Structure of the Meeting

Always be aware of the duration of the meeting and the time left for the interview. It shows that you are respectful of time, both how you use yours and the interviewers.

Opening the Interview. Think of three to five key reasons why you are interested in the opportunity and open the conversation by expressing them to the interviewer. It is critical to start the interview demonstrating your excitement and enthusiasm in concrete terms.

Conversation and Dialogue. This is the body of the interview where you ask and answer questions. Keep yours short and succinct. Avoid going down rabbit trails always! Several areas to think about during this part of the conversation:

Why you left your last job. This is an opportunity for you to talk positively about your last employer and your work there, the fun you had, successes and actions, ending with a clear explanation about what changed to make you and the company decide to part company. You are painting a picture of a happy employee who left on good terms and who is maybe a little sad it happened.

The request you never answer. Many times an interviewer will ask you to tell him about yourself, or to walk the interviewer through your work history. It is an open ended question that can use up precious time. Instead, respond with a detailed explanation of three to five events or assignments that are particularly relevant in your mind to their needs today and in the future. Obviously, you need to know those before the interview.

Talking about money. Your recruiter can help your thinking and even communicate your compensation targets to the employer. Even so, you should have a baseline number you would start for (given the opportunity for the future, etc.); a higher number that you believe is your worth in the market today; and lastly, an even higher number, a “cartwheels in the hallway” compensation package that you can discuss openly if asked. This answers the question “what do you want” and yet gives you flexibility for future discussions.

Hands-on or executive leadership. In today’s markets, employers are looking for professionals who are both doers (hands-on) and leaders, both tactical and strategic. Often the word “executive” can be a negative to employers so you might leave that out of your conversation and even out of your resume.

Closing the Sale. Ask for the job, if you want it. Make a statement about what you have learned and why you want the job. Ask how you look compared to the others and what you can do to provide more information. Ask for next steps.