



INTERVIEW PREPARATION STRATEGIES

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With any important meeting or proposal your goal is to sell a product, an idea, service or particular outcome to someone. For this to happen you need to, adequately prepare, before the meeting takes place to ensure successful results. So, how do you usually prepare for an important meeting? You research the topic to find out what and where the current needs are. Next, you must analyze what it would take to fulfill the need and finally determine how to sell your plan. Using the research results, you prepare what you want to say and lastly you practice the presentation to ensure, everything will be said accurately, completely, and will leave the recipients wanting more.

When asked to interview for an [executive position](#) you should prepare the same way you would if you were preparing for an important meeting. If done properly it will impress the interviewer and help you to gain an advantage over the competition.

Begin by researching the company you plan to interview with. The more you know about the company the better understanding you will have of the job being presented to you. Learn about the senior management or board of directors; find out the economic climate and financial outlook of the company. Is the company currently involved in any pivotal decisions, changes or actions? What is the environment within the organization? How does the company address and resolve issues?

Take a closer look at the particular [executive level position](#) you will hold. What will be expected of you and what can you expect from the department, location, company and coworkers? What will your work week be like? How much travel will be expected of you as well as nights, weekends, and average work week? There are many questions, that, can be asked so it is very important to thoroughly research the company and decide if this job is worth competing.

After becoming familiar with the company, you will want to focus on interview, and, what would be the most likely questions asked. With the experience level of the position you are interviewing for, you can probably estimate the type of questions to be asked. If not, there are websites on the Internet that have sample interview questions available. If you have been let go, have gaps in your experience or have other issues that could cause you to stumble during an interview, make sure you decide ahead of time what you will be saying. Expect to answer easy, difficult, and completely irrelevant questions during the interview. A good way to prepare yourself is to write out your answers for each question, the easy, and the difficult. This forces you to think through each answer, not just assume you know how to answer in the most effective way.

Once the answers have been written out completely have someone conduct a mock interview with you. Even if you are used to giving presentations, leading meetings, and conducting interviews, when you are in the "hot" seat it is equally important to be prepared. Since you have already researched the company, make sure your answers fit the position, and are aligned with the objectives, and goals of the organization. Remember the interview is a two way street and it should help you to decide if this is the type of environment you would like to grow and develop in. Almost important as what you say is how you say your answers and practice will make you more comfortable; which will look more self-assured and confident.

By completing a mock interview with someone who will give you an honest review, you can address any non-verbal communications you may or may not even know you are emitting. How is the sound of your voice? Is it strong and clear? Does it evoke confidence? How is your handshake and eye contact? As an executive your manners, and mannerisms should reflect your status; an interviewer is looking for impressive both non-verbal and verbal communications.

Your manners and style of speaking also reflect your effectiveness as a leader. An organization will want their executives and senior management to know how to act, react, and present themselves in public and professional environments. Make sure your manners are in check while setting appointments with the assistant or secretary all the way through the completion of the interview. All of your actions and words are fair game for interview critiquing.

Finally, after you have completed the interview remember to send a thank-you letter to the interviewer. This should be done immediately. The letter should be mailed within 24 to 36 hours. It demonstrates your ability to follow through, that you are thorough, serious about the position, and it gives you a chance to reinforce your top skills or experiences in the letter. Usually less than a page in length, your follow-up letter



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should remind the interviewer of your meeting, your confirmed interest in the position, and relate something unique to be remembered.. You can briefly review skills or experiences that were discussed or you can bring up something that you and the interviewer connected. It may have been a conversation on a sporting event, a picture, something in the room that you both share an interest in, or the discovery of a mutual acquaintance or friend. Use something to remember you by, something that will refresh their memory of the interview and give them a chance to again mentally scan your qualifications.

Executives can improve their odds by preparing with research, practice and a bit of career management knowledge. The more you prepare the better your chances to land the [executive job](#) you know you deserve.

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