

Guide to preparing for the selection interview

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to effectively prepare you for the interview process in order to maximize your chances of obtaining the position you want. This guide will accompany you as you prepare for the interview, providing you with points to reflect on and suggestions to help your interview go smoothly.

The selection interviews

As the candidate, the selection interview gives you the opportunity to introduce yourself and outline your successes and your command of the skills required for the position. It is an opportunity for you to get more information about the position and the organization. The interview also serves to confirm whether the career opportunity meets your expectations and whether your profile meets the needs of the organization.

Interview types:

Here are two types of interviews that are commonly used in our selection process:

1) Telephone interview

The telephone interview is a very important first point of contact, lasting 15 to 30 minutes. However, it can be more difficult to convey motivation and personality over the telephone, so you have to be that much better prepared.

2) Face-to-face interview

The interview is a shared responsibility between both parties to get to know one another in a transparent manner.

Recruiters often use the **behaviour-based interview**, also called a behavioural interview. This type of interview is based on the principle that the best way to predict a candidate's performance is to analyze his or her past and present performance.

The following are the main steps of the recruitment process:

<h4>1. Before the interview</h4>

The better prepared you are, the more confident you will be in the interview, thereby increasing your chances of success!

It is important to know your strengths and areas for improvement and to be prepared to discuss them. Below, you will find a few tools to help you with your analysis.

Telephone interview

Prepare to:

- Answer basic questions about yourself and your interest in the position;
- Be interviewed in your second language. If you have applied as a bilingual (English/French) candidate, a portion of the interview may be conducted in your second language;
- Find a suitable place to talk where noise and other people will not disturb you;
- Talk in a cheerful and clear manner.

A few days later, a recruiter will contact you, either to invite you for the official interview or to inform you that your candidacy will unfortunately not be forwarded for consideration.

If you are invited for an interview, take the time to analyze the following three components: knowledge of the position, knowledge of the organization, and knowledge of yourself.

Prepare your answers to the most common questions, including those about your experience and training.

Face to face interview

Know the position

- Review the job description or posting;
- Identify the required qualifications;
- Analyze the qualifications you possess, those that are transferable, and those you do not have;
- Identify in what way your skills and accomplishments are useful, relevant, or transferable to the position. Start to think about how you could develop any skills you are lacking;
- Link the skills required with those you possess so that you can highlight them during the interview.

Know the organization

- Collect information about the organization from its website, newspapers, your network, and so on (for example, its history, the executive staff, the clientele, the number of employees, its values, its mission, etc.);
- Highlight the potential challenges and issues for the organization and/or the industry;
- Prepare a few questions about the organization and the work environment.

Know yourself

Do a self-evaluation of your skills and accomplishments:

- What are your biggest strengths? (an example of how you have applied your strengths)
- What are your areas for improvement? How do you intend to improve them?
- What are your career objectives for the next three to five years?
- Which of your accomplishments are you most proud of?
- What are some difficulties you have experienced at work? What did you learn from these experiences?

Also **prepare questions** that you want to ask the manager and recruiter about the position, the team, etc.

2. During the interview

The questions asked during the interview will focus on demonstrating your expertise. We suggest that you answer using specific examples from situations you have experienced.

Answering behaviour-based questions

Your answers to these questions should highlight your skills as they relate to the requirements of the position. Highlight your experience and give specific examples, using the **STAR** method to help you structure your answers:

- S**ituation you were faced with (who were the people involved?)
- T**ask that you had to complete or a challenge you had to take on
- A**ction that you took (limit yourself to what you did)
- R**esult of your actions (your accomplishments)

Remind yourself that the examples you give simply have to showcase your attitude and the methods you use to attain the goals set for you.

Answering situation-simulation questions

For situational questions, the recruiter is looking for a detailed description of what you would (or would not) do and the reasoning you followed in order to make your decision. We suggest that you practice formulating your responses using the following structure; that way, you are less likely to forget important details that might make all the difference.

For situational questions, formulate your answers using this principle:

1. What actions would you take?
2. What is the reasoning behind your actions?
3. How did you arrive at this decision?
What factors did you take into consideration to make your decision?

Tips for giving a good interview

- Remain calm, show enthusiasm, and be yourself. Provide an accurate depiction of your skills.
- Answer questions in a direct manner. Provide relevant details and avoid giving never-ending responses. Formulating your answers using the STAR and the simulation questions principles will help you in doing this.
- Listen carefully to what the interviewer says to you.
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question.
- Take the time to think about the question, formulate your response, and express it clearly.
- Do not give in to panic if you are not able to answer a question. You can pass on the question and come back to it later.
- Ask your own questions. Reassert your interest in the position, if applicable.

3. After the interview

Shortly after the interview, make a few notes. Writing down and reviewing these notes will help you to identify the strengths of and areas for improvement in your interview performance.

- How did the interview go?
- What were the strong points of the interview?
- Did you have difficulty with certain questions? How could you resolve these difficulties next time?
- What points did you forget to touch on?

Lastly, contacting the interviewer to thank him or her for the interview and reiterate your interest in the position is a good practice.

Want more information?

Would you like more detailed information on certain aspects of this guide? The following are some sites that you might find useful:

- <http://interview.monster.ca>
- <http://www.workopolis.com/work.aspx?action=Transfer&View=Content/Common/ResourceCentre/career911/interviewing/InterviewIntroView&lang=EN>

Good luck, and we look forward to meeting you!

The Human Resources team