

CAREER

Tips for acing your FIRST JOB INTERVIEW

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It might seem intimidating if you have been invited for an interview and it's your first time conversing with hiring managers. However, it's essential to remember that you've been called for the interview because the company is interested in hiring you and wants to get to know you better.

It's crucial to showcase your professionalism and enthusiasm right from the start. This includes knowing how to respond to the initial email. There are a few key points to consider at this stage. Displaying disinterest in your response to the acceptance or being inflexible with scheduling the interview can create a negative initial impression, placing you at a disadvantage compared to other candidates. For some highly sought-after roles, there may be hundreds of other applicants, and these minor details can influence the hiring decision significantly.

All interviewers commonly pose different iterations of similar questions aimed at assessing several aspects, including your qualifications, personality and cultural fit within the company, your potential contributions to the organisation, and your commitment to staying with the company.

Additionally,
for skill-
intensive
roles,
anticipate

encountering critical or analytical questions related to your field of expertise.

So, how should you approach answering these questions? First and foremost, conduct thorough research on the company and the role to tailor your responses accordingly. Next, practice is key. Without practice, even addressing the most basic question, such as, "Tell us about yourself," can be challenging. Ironically, this is one of the most crucial questions, as a well-crafted response can immediately leave a positive impression on the interviewer. The challenge lies in its open-ended nature, often causing individuals to struggle with where to begin and end. The key is to align your answer with the requirements of the role you're applying for, highlighting how your educational background, training, and experiences have equipped you with the necessary skills for that very role.

Employers know you are applying for the money. This is not a secret. But think about what else motivates you. One common issue I've personally observed in some interviews is candidates responding with statements like "I couldn't find any other job" or "I just graduated so I need a job." Such answers fail to help the employer gauge whether you're a good fit for the company and capable of effectively performing the job.

The last few questions will aim to assess your career plans. Even if you excel in the rest of the interview, for highly coveted positions, long-term commitment holds significant importance. It's crucial to realise that the

hiring process is time and resource-intensive, and can sometimes extend over several months as the company seeks the right candidate.

The questions can range from inquiring about your short-term career plans to evaluating your level of ambition. Ambition and confidence are appealing traits to an employer as they indicate independent thinking and a clear sense of purpose.

Throughout the interview, it's essential to clearly articulate your skills and demonstrate to the employer

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that you have a well-defined career plan. This signals that you've chosen to apply for the position out of genuine interest and passion, as when you are passionate about your work, you tend to excel at it.

A great method for demonstrating your skills and ambition is by employing the "show, don't tell" approach. For instance, when applying for a writer position at a daily, merely stating that you're passionate about writing and skilled in it might not effectively convey your message. Instead, consider saying something like, "I discovered my passion for writing fiction during a Literature course at university. Since then, I've dedicated an hour every night to refining my writing skills. My commitment to the craft is evident through my active involvement in the University newsletter, where I consistently contribute."

Finally, it's essential not to be too hard on yourself if you don't land the job. The current job market is unfairly competitive, and the company may not be seeking the particular skill set you offer. It's crucial to stay current as a candidate by keeping up with the latest trends in your field. However, it's equally important to understand that your job status, whether employed or not, does not reflect your talent or your worth as an individual.

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