

Interview Prep: Candidate

CLIENT _____

HIRING MANAGER _____

CANDIDATE _____

INTERVIEW DATE _____

The Preface

“Before you speak with (hiring manager), I want to share with you some insights as to who specifically you will be meeting with, what they are looking for, and what to expect during that conversation. I’ll make one thing abundantly clear – my purpose in preparing you for this meeting is to help you determine if this is a right fit. If, during the interview, a light bulb switches on and you have the revelation that YES, this is where I want to be – my purpose is to prepare you with enough information that you are offered a follow up meeting or perhaps even an offer. That’s my purpose; my intent is for (client) to want to bring you back or hire you after this initial conversation. Now, it is 100% your right to decline moving forward with (client) – but I want that decision to rest with you, not with them. I want to make sure that I give you insights that the general public is not privy to – this will give you just that added edge and make you that much more prepared than others they may be speaking with.

I know you’ve interviewed before, and you’ve obviously done so successfully because of the great work history you’ve created for yourself, so I know you’ll probably know most of this. I won’t necessarily bore you with the petty details like ‘make sure your fingernails are clean’ and ‘bring a folio to take notes on’ – but I do want to make sure that I follow through on one of the commitments I made to you when we started in this process, which was to prepare you for any meetings that take place.”

Essential Question: *“Has anything changed since we spoke last?”*

- Current company
- Compensation
- Personal situation
- Job prospects

The Pre-work

“In preparation for your meeting next week, I am going to send you a brief interview preparation document for you to review. I’d like for you to print it out, and take a few minutes to fill out the information. It will not only save us time because it covers a lot of tips that you can simply read for yourself, but the information will start to put you in the interviewing mindset and articulate some of your relevant achievements and accomplishments that you perhaps haven’t thought of in a while. Are you able to carve out time between now and (time)?”

- Advise your candidate to do some research on the specific company and hiring manager
- Ask them to read through the interview preparation materials that you send to the candidate prior to your preparation call
- Create an interview preparation packet that covers essential information, but information best handled by an emailed document

The Who

"You are going to be meeting with (hiring manager(s)), who I believe you were going to spend some time researching. I can certainly start from scratch in giving you an overview of her background, but I don't want to duplicate anything you already know. Why don't you tell me what you learned, and we'll start from there."

- Share the background of the hiring manager
- Share any common ground between the candidate and the hiring manager
- Articulate the personality and style of the interviewer

The What

- The candidate needs to thoroughly understand the role and expectations of the core functions of the position
- The candidate needs to be prepared to market their skills and experience as it relates to the functions of the role

The Questions, Part 1

- Review the list of questions that the candidate has prepared to ask the hiring manager
- Are the questions structured in a way that shows this candidate's desire to benefit the company?
- Are there any questions that shouldn't be asked, or could be answered by you?

The Questions, Part 2

- With all questions asked to the candidate during the interview, there is an opportunity to expand and elaborate on those areas of achievements and contributions that they deemed most important
- Role play the most common interview questions, and coach the candidate to respond with impactful, factual, and quantifiable information

Standard Question #1: *"Tell me about yourself!"*

- The candidate's answer should directly fit the concerns and objectives of the prospective employer; your candidate wants to be "selling" what the client is "buying"
- Spend more time highlighting professional accomplishments, not personal ones
- Be brief - take a minute or less to answer this question
- It is acceptable to reframe and clarify this open-ended question, but since this is a standard question, the candidate should be prepared and develop a strong answer to this question

Standard Question #2: “Why are you looking?”

- Never speak poorly about the current company, team, or boss
- Put the reason for leaving in the best light possible; this question provides an additional opportunity to sell, not air dirty laundry or grievances
- If not actively looking, be honest – but be prepared to articulate reasons for initial interest
- Never claim the reason is correlated to poor current compensation, or for more money

Standard Question #3: “Why do you want to work for our company?”

- This is the perfect opportunity for the candidate to show they have done their research
- Make sure the candidate can articulate “why here” – what about the working environment, the reputation of the firm, the type of work, or the support of the team is compelling?
- Help prepare the candidate to respond in a way that continues to sell for the position and role

Standard Question #4: “Why should we hire you?”

- At this point in the interview, your candidate should know the short list of critical areas the hiring manager is looking for
- Share a specific situation, what needed to be done, what the candidate did, and what the specific result was – **quantify**.

Standard Question #5: “What do you want to make?”

- Both the candidate and client should be advised to stay away from the subject of money, but provide your candidate with several helpful scripts to help them handle this question without sounding evasive
- *“I trust that if we are both interested in moving forward, (recruiter) will help us come to a decision that makes sense for both of us. I am really here to get a feel for the opportunity and department and to determine if this is the best next step for me, and I’m sure you are doing the same. I’m confident that if you find me the best candidate for this position, you will extend me your best and most fair offer.” (Close with redirected question)*
- *“I am currently receiving (\$) annual salary with several other compensation components on top of that amount. I’m unable to determine what the offer should be at this stage until I understand more about the position. When it comes to making the offer, I’m sure it will be a fair salary based on my experience and the requirements of the role.”*
- *“It’s a good question, and I can certainly understand why you ask. However, I can assure you that I won’t be going to an organization simply based on money. I want this to be the right fit from all aspects, and I have no doubt, from what I know of your organization, that you will offer a competitive package.”*
- Ultimately, a number too high could rule the candidate from consideration, and too low leaves little room for negotiation

Additional Questions:

- Prepare your candidate for any unique questions specific to the client
- Possibly share any concerns from the client's perspective with the candidate, to better prepare them to structure their answers in a way that expands or negates those concerns

The Close

- Because people like people who like them, closing for next steps is a key way to show interest and leave the interview on a positive note
- *"I like what I have heard today and am very interested in moving forward. I understand you are looking for someone in this role who has (A, B, and C) and as we've discussed, I have (specific experience with A, B, and C). Before I leave, are there any more questions about my background or qualifications that I can answer or clarify for you to better assess my fit within your team?"*
- Remind the candidate to send a personal note to each individual they met with