Interview Preparation Guide

Before the Interview: Build Your Confidence

Interviews are not designed to trick you. They are an opportunity for employers to learn whether your skills, experience, and personality align with the role and organization. The best way to build confidence is through preparation. Strong candidates do their homework. At minimum, research:

The Organization:

- Company website
- Mission and values
- Products and services
- Current news and announcements
- Customer reviews
- Social media channels

The Position and Job Posting:

- Key responsibilities
- Required qualifications
- Technical skills
- Soft skills

The Industry:

- Current trends
- Industry challenges
- Competitors
- Customer needs

Interviewers are often impressed when candidates demonstrate a genuine understanding of the business and industry.

Break Down the Job Description

One of the best interview preparation techniques is to create a simple chart. Start by listing all of the tasks from the job posting in the first column, then how you can meet them in another column, and finally an example from your past experience.

Job Requirement	How You Meet It	Example From Your Experience
Customer Service	Strong communicator with a customer-first mindset	Resolved member billing concerns while working at a fitness centre and retained the customer
Problem Solving	Able to investigate issues and identify solutions	Improved a workflow that reduced delays
Teamwork	Work well across departments	Collaborated with multiple teams on a project

This exercise helps you quickly connect your experience to what the employer is seeking and prepares you to showcase your past experiences.

Prepare Your Interview Stories

Most interviews rely heavily on behavioral questions. Employers want proof that you've successfully handled situations in the past because past behaviour often predicts future performance. Review your past experience and look at the times you performed at your peak. Choose 4-5 examples that showcase your best skills. These might include customer service, teamwork, deadlines or problem solving.

Write out your top stories in the STAR format and practice telling them in front of the mirror or camera until they are perfect. Now you can draw upon them to answer any question you might be asked in the interview. Instead of trying to predict what questions will be asked, you can use these stories to sell your experience.

During The Interview

Use the STAR Method

The STAR method helps organize your answers clearly and professionally.

Situation- Provide context.

Task- Explain your responsibility.

Action- Describe what YOU did.

Result- Share the outcome.

Whenever possible, include numbers or measurable results.

Example

Situation: A customer was upset about a billing error.

Task: I needed to resolve the issue while maintaining a positive relationship.

Action: I listened actively, reviewed the account, coordinated with the accounting team, and kept the customer informed throughout the process.

Result: The issue was corrected within 24 hours, and the customer chose to continue their business with us.

Always focus on what **you** did. Avoid saying 'we' and instead say "I". Highlight what you did on your team.

Building Rapport with the Interviewer

Why It Matters

Interviewers are assessing not only whether you can do the job, but whether you would be a positive addition to their team. Building rapport helps create a strong, memorable impression.

Simple Ways to Build Rapport

- Start strong by smiling, making eye contact, and thanking the interviewer for their time.
- Show genuine interest by listening carefully and engaging in the conversation rather than focusing only on your next answer.

- Find common ground by commenting on something that attracted you to the company, industry, or role.
- Use stories and examples instead of one-word or generic answers. Stories help interviewers remember you.
- Ask thoughtful questions about the team, company culture, and what success looks like in the role.
- Match the interviewer's energy while remaining professional and authentic.

Common Interview Question Types

1. Open-Ended Questions

These questions help employers get to know you. Examples include:

- Tell me about yourself…
- Why are you interested in this role?
- What makes you a strong candidate?

Keep your responses focused on your professional background, key skills, and career goals.

2. Behavioral Questions

These focus on past experiences. You should use the STAR method for every behavioral answer. These are questions such as:

- Tell me about a time you made a mistake.
- Describe a challenge you faced at work.
- Tell me about a time you worked successfully on a team.
- Share an example of when you demonstrated leadership.

3. Situational Questions

These assess problem-solving and decision-making skills in a hypothetical scenario:

- What would you do if a customer was unhappy with a recent change?
- How would you handle competing priorities?
- What would you do if you noticed an error in a report before it was presented?

Focus on your thought process, professionalism, and customer-focused decision-making.

Practice Makes a Difference

Preparation improves confidence and performance. Recommended ways to practice:

- Conduct mock interviews with a friend or mentor
- Record yourself answering questions
- Practice in front of a mirror
- Create cue cards with key interview stories

Pay attention to your:

- Eye contact
- Voice volume
- Speaking pace
- Confidence
- Body language
- Filler words such as "um" and "like"

After The Interview

Immediately after the interview, conduct self-reflection and ask yourself:

- What went well?
- Which answers were strongest?
- Which questions caught me off guard?
- What should I improve for future interviews?

Every interview is valuable practice that helps you become a stronger candidate.

Send a Thank-You Note to the interviewer for their time and reinforce your interest in the position.

Final Takeaway

Successful interviews come down to three things:

Preparation + Practice + Confidence

Know your skills, understand the employer's needs, prepare strong STAR stories, and practice until your examples feel natural. When you can clearly explain how your experience creates value, you significantly increase your chances of receiving an offer.