

Interview Prep Guide

OVERALL INTERVIEWING STRATEGY/MINDSET:

This is a conversation, not an interrogation. It's a *conversation* about needs. The company has a need/problem, or they wouldn't be talking to you. Your strategy with this conversation should be to learn as much about the need/problem they have, so that you can as relevantly talk about how you can be the solution to their need. Remember too, that they want to solve this problem and thus would love for you to be the solution!

I: KNOW YOURSELF (be prepared to answer some variation of questions like these)

Tell me about yourself?

(the answer to this is a conversational version of the Summary on your resume and LinkedIn)

What are you looking for?

(the answer to this is what you're looking for in terms of functions you want to be doing and value you want to be adding – not a particular job title)

Why are you interested in working here?

(you should research the company a bit so you know what they do – then you can honestly say what's interesting to you about what they do and how you think you'd fit well with what they need)

What are you looking for in an organization?

Why should we hire you?

(relate your skills and experience to the needs of your position, as you understand it today)

What are your greatest strengths?

(pull these from your Core Competencies, but don't just read them off – make it conversational. Sometimes helpful to start it by saying "What I really enjoy is..." When you talk about what you're passionate about, your skill and expertise in this area comes through. Can also say: People say...or ...I've been told I'm good at...)

What are your weaknesses?

(come up with a real, work-related weakness you have, but one that's not core/integral to the job your interviewing for, and one that you're aware of it and working to improve)

OK to be humble.

You don't have to know everything, nor do you have to feel like you're bragging. You can use words like "As I understand," "From what I've read.....," "I've been told that I...," "People have said that I...,"

What are your salary requirements/present/recent salary?

(goal is to defer this as long as possible, but often they won't move you in the process without this answer. Try these 3 levels: 1.) Defer/deflect: Salary not my top priority, most interested in fit, I'm sure you have market salary and I'm comfortable with that. 2.) Range: Ask: Can you share the range? Or In my research, I have found the range to be \$X-\$X and that works for me. OR share a range (pretty wide) that you are comfortable with. 3.) You just may have to answer but answer it with what you want (requirement) if it's different than last salary. I am looking for \$X.

II: KNOW YOUR STORIES (have a stories/examples of your work for behavioral based questioning):
Below are sample questions but come up with stories for each of your core skills/primary functions. Know your audience and “answer” to them. (ex: technical v non-technical person)

- Tell me about a time you demonstrated outstanding customer service?
- Tell me about a time you resolved a conflict with a co-worker, direct report or customer?
- Tell me about an experience you had coaching an employee through improvement?
- Tell me about a successful project or assignment you managed from start to finish?
- Tell me about a time you came up with a creative solution to a problem?
- What is the most innovative thing you’ve done?
- Tell me about your largest sale? Or a time when you made the sale you didn’t think you would.
- Give me an example of your technical skills and abilities in a certain area?
- What are your long-term objectives?

(Negatively stated questions are not unusual. They are not trying to embarrass you but want to see if you will own up to it and talk about what you learned from it or how you changed.)

- 1) Tell me about a project that failed.
- 2) Tell me about time you were disappointed in your performance.
- 3) We’re all human, we all make mistakes, tell me about one of yours.

Formulate your stories in the following way (keep it simple to remember and concise):

What was the **Situation/Problem**?

What **Action** did you take?

What was the **Result/Success** of your actions? (Quantify when possible or use words that show the success such as: “successfully” or “improved” etc.)

III. Know What You Want to Know From Them

(have questions for them. You can sprinkle throughout the interview, you don’t have to wait until the end)

Responsibilities and expectations of position

- What is the need?
- Job description, major responsibilities, immediate attention, expectations?
- How can I best help/support YOU (to the person you’re interviewing with)?
- What is the most important deliverable that you want within the first 6 months?

Direction of the Company

- Where are they going? what is their direction/plans? how do you fit in?
- What would customers say is the best thing about your organization?
- What would they say you could do better?

Organizational Structure and your place in it

Reporting, decision making, policies and procedures

Culture

Describe, management style, environment?

Ask the person you’re talking to “what do you like about it?”

Resources available to do your job

Support, staff, training, budget

Performance Expectations, Measurement & Reward

Goals, appraisal, reward

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- If using cell phone, check on the reception in the location you will be in for the phone interview.
- Consider time of day and other issues such as possible construction when determining time to drive to the interview.
- OK to ask company when they call to set up interview what the appropriate dress is. Assume professional if you cannot speak to someone.
- Written/emailed Thank You's to everyone (customized) is always a good idea. Try to get business cards from everyone.
- OK to take notes during the interview. Bring portfolio with several copies of your resume, your reference list and your questions. Only give resume if they don't have it or reference list if asked.



About Julie Bauke

Want to reach out to Julie Bauke for some interview prep and coaching?

You can email her at: julie.bauke@thebaukegroup.com

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Let her know you found her via the **Coach Development Academy** with **Celia Slater!**

