

# THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

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A practical framework for hiring and being hired

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### PRE-STEP

## Drop the Authority Hat

Before the interview even begins, take two to three minutes to forget that you are an authority figure from a company evaluating a potential employee. Walk in as one human meeting another. That single mental shift lowers walls on both sides and sets the stage for an honest, productive conversation.

Break the ice with something real. Ask how their commute was — then actually share yours. If your daily train ride takes an hour and it's brutal, say so. Authenticity is contagious. Follow up by offering water or a restroom break, and do it yourself rather than delegating to an assistant. An executive who insists on grabbing someone a glass of water leaves a lasting impression.

1

### Set the Stage

Open by telling the candidate exactly how the conversation will flow. You invited them to your house — it's your job to make them feel at home. Walk them through the organization's history, the department, and the role in honest detail. Share the wins, but don't hide the challenges. Glossing over real problems might close the hire faster, but it will unravel three months later when reality sets in.

2

### Invite Their Perspective

Now that they have a full picture of the role, ask them directly: given what they just heard, how does this position align with their interests, strengths, and goals? The answer will naturally be high-level and conceptual at first — that's fine. It's the warm-up before the real dive.

3

### Go Deep on Experience

This is the heart of the interview. Explore their background in detail — specifically how they have solved challenges similar to what this role demands. Ask follow-up questions. Push on the specifics. If something doesn't add up, say so directly and give them a chance to clarify. Miscommunication happens, and the strongest professional relationships are built on the ability to push back respectfully. Aim to finish within 45 minutes.

4

### Discuss Compensation

There's no point in building excitement on both sides if the numbers are impossible to align. Have the compensation conversation while you're still looking each other in the eye — it changes the tone entirely. Be straightforward about the range, and resist the temptation to oversell the opportunity. Undersell and overdeliver is the only move that works long-term.

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*"This is the cheat code that helped me successfully hire many strong candidates — and now I'm handing it to you."*

## PART II — INTERVIEWING FOR A JOB

Now let's flip the table. As a candidate, you're a guest in someone else's house. You don't control the format, the pace, or the style — but you can control your preparation, your presence, and your authenticity.

1

### Arrive 7 to 10 Minutes Early

Not five. Not twenty. Seven to ten minutes is the window that reads as calm, prepared, and professional. Arrive twenty minutes early and you risk seeming desperate. Cut it too close and any small friction — a slow receptionist, a second security checkpoint — makes you late. If you're early, sit in your car. It works.

2

### Read the Room and Adapt

You're walking into someone else's rhythm. A scrappy startup interview feels nothing like a structured corporate process, and the format can fall anywhere on that spectrum. Once you get a feel for the flow, tune in to what the interviewer is actually looking for. If something is unclear, ask before diving into an answer. Clarity is never wasted time.

3

### Be Authentic, Not a Highlight Reel

Talk honestly about your experience and your strengths — but don't perform. Overselling is transparent and, frankly, off-putting. The goal is a real conversation about whether this role is genuinely a good fit, not a sales pitch. Interviewers can tell the difference, and the ones worth working for always prefer the truth.

4

### Come With Questions

When they ask if you have questions, you should. Prepare at least two or three thoughtful ones — one about the organization's direction, one about the specific role or team. Asking nothing signals either a lack of interest or a willingness to accept any offer, neither of which serves you. Research the company and the people you're meeting. Show up knowing who you're talking to.

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#### A NOTE ON TOOLS

With AI and every other resource available today, you could print out scripts for almost anything. That's not the point here. What this guide gives you is the underlying logic — the mental wiring that makes an interview work. The specifics will vary by industry, company size, and culture. Take these principles and adapt them to your context. That's where the real skill lives.