

# Interview Prep Tool

This tool contains excerpts from the book How to GET A JOB in a Tight Economy.  
Order the book now at [www.sunsetharborgroup.com/book.htm](http://www.sunsetharborgroup.com/book.htm) for more help on this and many other important job search topics.

Name and title of interviewer:

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List any other people mentioned as you go through the interview.

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## Questions to prepare for:

Question Areas	Write your answers here. Use bullet points to mark items you want to emphasize.
<i>High Level Questions</i>	
Tell Me About Yourself. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Give brief statements about your education and professional achievements.</li><li>➤ Briefly describe why you're qualified for the position you seek and what you can contribute to the organization.</li><li>➤ Keep your answers short.</li></ul>	
What Are Your Career Goals? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Tell the interviewer about your short and long term goals as they pertain to the position you are seeking.</li><li>➤ Frame these answers to show the interviewer what you will do for them.</li><li>➤ Good goal planning shows you know how to plan</li></ul>	

<p>Tell me About Your Current Job.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be prepared to talk about your current job, or to discuss why you are currently out of work.</li> </ul>	
<p>Why Do You Want to Change Jobs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ You may want to talk about career opportunities or company directions.</li> <li>➤ I'm ready for a new challenge.</li> <li>➤ I'm not confident in my company's future.</li> <li>➤ The company isn't going in the direction I wish to go.</li> <li>➤ Make this as positive as possible; don't complain about your current situation.</li> </ul>	
<p>Why Do You Want to Leave Company X After 10 (pick any high number) Years?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ X has been a great company for years, but it has gone in a new direction lately. I think it's time to move on to a new experience.</li> <li>➤ For every job I had at company X over the years, I could always see a bigger challenge ahead. Two years ago, though, I got to the position I most wanted to do. Now I don't see the next challenge, so I think it's time to find a new place to expand my horizons.</li> </ul>	
<p>What About Our Company Interests You? Why Do You Want to Work For Us?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It might be because you've heard they're a great company to work for (be ready with examples of why you think so.)</li> <li>➤ It might be because it's a</li> </ul>	

<p>growing company.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ One friend of mine had the goal of working for a startup because he had done many different things in his career, but all were at medium to large companies, so he wanted to add startup experience to his resume. That might be something you want too.</li> </ul>	
<p>How Are You Qualified For This Job?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be prepared for this question.</li> <li>➤ What are your qualifications?</li> <li>➤ Education</li> <li>➤ Experience</li> <li>➤ Skills</li> <li>➤ Tell specific things you can do to help the company.</li> </ul>	
<p>What Are Your Strong Points?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Pick out several strong traits you have that are relevant to the job's needs.</li> </ul>	
<p>What Are Your Weak Points?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be prepared for this question</li> <li>➤ It is a loaded question, so you need to know how you will answer it.</li> <li>➤ Provide something that you are really trying to improve about yourself. Choose something that isn't a key requirement of the job you're after.</li> </ul>	
<p>What Are Your Salary Requirements?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Try to avoid a specific number.</li> <li>➤ You might say something like, "Since I have quite a lot of experience, I believe I would be at the upper end of</li> </ul>	

<p>your salary range.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ You might mention your willingness to negotiate salary vs. vacations or other benefits.</li> </ul>	
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<i>Job-Skill Questions</i>	
<p>Tell me how you're a good problem solver, able to choose between conflicting options, able to resolve conflicts of team members, leader, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To anticipate what topics might be covered, carefully review the job description you are applying for.</li> <li>➤ Think about two or three of your top projects and be ready to provide specific examples of how you demonstrated these skills.</li> </ul>	
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<i>Technical Questions</i>	
<p>Technical questions can be very wide ranging. It's not even uncommon these days for employers to test potential employees to make sure they have the knowledge they claim to have.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do your homework before you go to an interview. If you are rusty on any technical topic related to the job, study hard to eliminate any weak spots. You will never get another chance to answer questions right the first time and make a great impression.</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Note: Be sure to practice these answers so you'll give confident, smooth answers. It's even better if you can practice with a friend.</i></p>	

## Questions to ask the interviewer:

Your Questions	Interviewer's Answers
<p>Questions About the Company.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tell me about the financial health of the company. Listen carefully. You may hear things they're not saying out loud.</li> <li>➤ What are the best things about this company/group?</li> <li>➤ What are the worst things about this company/group?</li> <li>➤ What areas do you want to get them to talk about more?</li> <li>➤ Ask open-ended questions to lead them where you want.</li> <li>➤ Ex: tell me about.....</li> <li>➤ Be quiet and let them talk. You'll learn more that way.</li> </ul>	
<p>Questions About the Job</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Is this a replacement or growth position?</li> <li>➤ How many people have held this job in the last 3 years?</li> <li>➤ How much travel is involved?</li> <li>➤ Why did the last person leave?</li> <li>➤ What % of quota did the last salesperson attain?</li> <li>➤ Who does this position report to?</li> <li>➤ What are the growth path opportunities?</li> <li>➤ What could I do in the first month to make you say I'd done a fabulous job?</li> <li>➤ Describe the best person who ever worked for you.</li> <li>➤ Describe the worst person who ever worked for you.</li> <li>➤ What are the key challenges of this position and</li> </ul>	

<p>company?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What are the key advantages of this position and company?</li> <li>➤ What benefits does the company offer? This is not a question about salary. It's about things like insurance, work-at-home, etc. Most experts agree that it's bad to ask about salary up front. This rule does not apply to sales positions, however. In sales, the base salary and target compensation are typically discussed very early in the process.</li> <li>➤ Describe the decision and hiring process and timeline.</li> </ul>	
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**Show them you know their business:**

<p>What Do You Want to Tell Them to Let Them Know You Can Do the Job?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Talk about how their industry is doing.</li> <li>➤ Mention where you think the industry is going.</li> <li>➤ Talk about their products and services.</li> <li>➤ Relate to them what you see as their company's products and services strengths.</li> <li>➤ Talk about how they are doing in their industry.</li> <li>➤ Mention their relationship to competitors.</li> <li>➤ Show a direct relationship between what you've done and what they do.</li> <li>➤ Don't leave it for them to see the relationship</li> </ul>	
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## Be Prepared for Difficult Topics:

<p>What Areas of Discussion Do You Want to Avoid, and How Can You Change the Topic If the Discussion Goes in That Direction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ This is tricky.</li><li>➤ You can try to steer the conversation, but if it's really important to the interviewer, you might have to answer the question anyway.</li><li>➤ So be prepared to answer in the best possible light if necessary.</li></ul>	
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## As the Interview Wraps Up:

<p>Ask for Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ This feedback will enable you to confirm the interviewer's understanding.</li><li>➤ It will also give you a chance to correct any misunderstandings.</li><li>➤ You'll also learn where you need to improve.</li></ul>	
<p>Recap Your Qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Directly relate them to the position you seek.</li></ul>	
<p>Provide More Info That Reiterates Your Industry and Company Knowledge.</p>	

## **ASK FOR THE JOB (if you are really interested)**

### Follow up:

<p>Make Sure to Follow up After the Interview.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Call or email to thank the interviewer for the chance to meet.</li><li>➤ Be sure to reiterate your</li></ul>	
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<p>strong points. Emphasize any points that were key interests of the interviewer when you spoke.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ After all, you know what your strengths are in the interviewer's eyes since you got their feedback.</li></ul>	
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