

Recruitment and interview practice

Best interview practice and techniques: video guide

We have covered how to handle your nerves before, during and after an interview. But what about the practicalities of doing the interview? In this video, Patrick, one of our Youth Ambassadors, talks to Simon Connington about best interview practice and techniques. He asks all the questions he wishes he'd had the answers to when he went through this process a few years ago.

You will hear a discussion on the follow questions:

1. How much research into the company do I need to do?
2. How do I showcase my strengths and qualities?
3. How do I make a good first impression with the interviewer(s)?
4. How do I deal with difficult interview questions?
5. What questions can I ask to help me stand out?
6. How do I bring the interview back on track if it goes wrong?
7. Are there any tell-tale signs for a toxic company or one I'd want to avoid?
8. How do I discuss salary expectations?
9. How do I talk about mental health in an interview?
10. What are your top five tips for an interview candidate?
11. BONUS QUESTION FOR PATRICK: What interview are you most proud of?

0 mins

Introductions

Simon has over 30 years' experience in recruitment, starting at Allegis Group in 1992, before founding Hinton Lea Associates in 2001 and BPS in 2004. Simon has extensive experience in securing agreements across various industries, leadership in delivery operations, executive relationship management, and negotiation skills. This has been achieved through building and developing diverse teams.

Patrick graduated from university in 2021 and has been working at an insurance broker for the last three years. He has been a Youth Ambassador for the Charlie Waller Trust since January 2023

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1 min 30 seconds

How much research into the company do I need to do?

- A good amount of research about the company you're interviewing with.
- Knowing the job description, so that you are ready to highlight your strengths, but also the areas you may not be so familiar with but can grow into and learn about.

2 mins 50 seconds

How do I showcase my strengths and qualities?

- Doing your research and understanding the role and where you fit in.
- The best way to make your strengths come alive is by stories or experiences. This doesn't have to be directly about a job itself, you can relate it to your experiences at school/college/a club.

4 mins 10 seconds

How do I make a good first impression with the interviewer(s)?

- Bring energy and enthusiasm into the room.
- Be honest about what you feel confident with, as well as the areas in which you can learn.
- If you've done your prep, you will naturally be confident.

5 mins 40 seconds

How do I deal with difficult interview questions?

- If you didn't understand it or are unsure, you can ask the interviewer to clarify the question.
- Personal examples can allow an insight into your personality, especially if this is an interview for your first job.
- Prepare five examples from your life, before the interview, that you can draw on during the questions.
- Think about: strengths, challenges, times of difficulty, how you dealt with things going wrong, how you work with other people and in a team. If you're still at school, these can be examples from school or hobbies like drama, sports, classroom activities.

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9 mins

What questions can I ask to help me stand out?

Focus on the progressive questions, some examples may be:

- What do you most love about working here?
- Where have you been able to showcase your skills?
- What do you like about this organisation's workplace culture? Anything you would change?
- Can you tell me what kind of managers exist at the company and how they lead?
- What does success look like in a position?
- How do I grow within the role, and what do I need to bring to do so?

Simon also talks about some questions you might want to avoid during an interview.

11 mins 30 seconds

How do I bring the interview back on track if it goes wrong?

- This goes back to being open and honest.
- In a first interview, interviewers are more forgiving than you might think.
- You could ask the interviewer to come back to a tricky question later in the interview.
- If you're still reflecting on a question at the end of an interview, you could go back to it and ask the interviewer to revisit it.

14 mins 5 seconds

Are there any tell-tale signs for a toxic company, or one I'd want to avoid?

- Try focusing on the question of whether this is a great match for you.
- We are intuitive people, ask yourself during or after the interview - 'how am I feeling?'
- An interview is also about you interviewing the organisation. Look out for signs to see whether this is the right place for you.
- Remember that different people look for different things with a potential employer or workplace.

17 mins 30 seconds

How do I discuss salary expectations?

- Some jobs will present a salary, you can ask 'where do you see me sitting within that scale?'
- You could also ask 'Could you give me a case study: what has a person done within the organisation to have increased remuneration?'
- Think about extra costs eg travel, rent and a sense of reward for working. Everyone will have a different figure suited to them.
- Some roles are benchmarked, so you could ask how you need to grow/develop for them to promote you or have an increased income.

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19 mins 50 seconds

How do I talk about mental health in an interview?

Simon and Patrick talk about how one can talk about mental health in the workplace, especially in an interview. Simon talks about focusing on the positive and perhaps asking the interviewer 'how does your organisation go about fostering a positive culture and atmosphere in which you can talk about your mental health?'

22 mins 40 seconds

What are your top five tips for an interview candidate?

1. Do your research and be prepared.
2. Identify your top five strengths and how they relate to the job, so you can always refer to them throughout the interview.
3. Be authentic. Be yourself. Everyone else is trying to perform, so being yourself helps you to stand out.
4. Be ready to interview the interviewer. This will help you know if the role is right for you.
5. Say thank you to the interviewer immediately after. Include why you think you're right for the role, what you can bring to the role and what most impressed you about the interview.

25 mins 30 seconds

What interview are you most proud of?

Simon asks Patrick to give a personal example of an interview he recently had.

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