

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW



Interviewing for your next career move can challenge the very best of us. Whether you're out of practice, you've only interviewed once or twice before, or you'd like a few tips to help overcome those nerves, this guide to preparing for an interview will help you make your best impression.

Preparing for an interview involves developing a plan for how you'll present yourself on the day of the interview. It's all about building your confidence and your ability to discuss your suitability for the role you're applying for. A plan gives you the best chance of making a positive impression on your potential new manager or team. It also ensures you ask the appropriate questions on the day to assess whether the role is the right fit for you.

- Know who you're meeting. LinkedIn is a great starting point for finding out more about who you're interviewing with and their background.
- Research the organisation. Find out what they do, then delve further to find out what they represent, such as their organisational values. As well as googling, try speaking with someone who already works there.
- Understand the role you're applying for. What are the day-to-day functions and how is performance measured?
- Know what to ask. Preparing questions takes the pressure off coming up with them on the spot. If you forget to ask a question, follow up with an email afterwards.
- Know how to respond. Preparing answers and role-playing them with a friend will help you talk through examples using interview techniques like STAR (see over).
- Show interest by staying up-to-date with the industry. Understanding current trends will help you participate in informed discussions.
- Make copies of qualifications and licenses to take along, and if you have specific accessibility requirements, let your recruiter know well in advance.
- Once in the interview, clarify questions asked - this will help you provide relevant and succinct answers.
- If you feel flustered, take a breath - asking the question to be repeated is a good way to slow things down.
- Avoid 'yes' and 'no' answers - provide context when responding.
- Breathe through your nose - it will help you stay calm. Remember, you're being interviewed because you're seen as a genuine contender.

Examples of non-behavioural questions

Situational or scenario based questions focus on what you'd do in a particular situation that relates to specifics within the role. Think of a relevant (not identical) situation you've encountered, explain how it's relevant, and elaborate. Here are some examples:

- You've been asked to share your knowledge of processes to a team in another area. How would you communicate your knowledge to ensure it was understood?
- You are working with a person who consistently makes errors in their work. How would you ensure that the quality of the end product is up to standard?

Motivational and cultural questions are the interview equivalent of 'what's your favourite colour?' - there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, so follow your gut - be honest, and take the opportunity to offer some insight into who you are and what you value.

- What are the most satisfying aspects of your work? What is the least satisfying?
- What are your short-term and long-term career goals?
- In your opinion, what makes a good leader?
- Describe the work environment in which you contribute most effectively?
- What do you think is your biggest strength?



Behavioural based interview techniques

While interviewers often vary in their approach, most interviews at MidCoast Council are conducted using 'behavioural based' questions.

These tend to start with 'Tell me about a time when...' and are a great tool for hiring managers to understand your approach to problem solving. They're also a great way for you to structure your answers and examples.

The key to a good answer is context, clarity, relevance and highlighting your contributions. An effective way to achieve this is by preparing examples using the STAR technique outlined below.

It is always important however to ensure your response is relevant in the interview situation... don't forget to listen to the question being asked.

S

Think of a **SITUATION** relevant to what the interviewer is asking you about, where you produced a positive outcome.

Remember to include the 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when', and 'how'.

T

Describe the **TASK** you were responsible for in that situation.

Keep it specific but concise. Make sure to highlight any specific challenges you faced.

A

This is where you describe your course of **ACTION**.

How did you go about problem solving and completing the task? Focus on your contributions and highlight the qualities you possess that enable you to create an outcome.

R

Share the **RESULT** of the situation, and how you specifically contributed to reaching that outcome.

What did you accomplish? What did you learn? What were the results of your actions?

