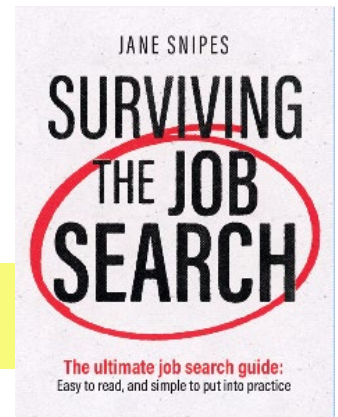


**Excerpts from *Surviving the Job Search***  
By Jane Snipes, Recruiter – Author – Coach  
Available for sale on Amazon and Barnes & Noble

For more tips, hints, and hacks, visit [www.SurvivingTheJobSearch.com](http://www.SurvivingTheJobSearch.com)



## Preparing for the Interview

### What's the Point of the Interview?

An interviewer has just one objective: to decide whether you're a match for the role. *Your* goal is to learn enough about the position and the company to make the right decision, should an offer be extended. An interview can happen on the phone, video, or in-person, and the preparation is the same for all three.

### The Right Mindset

You don't have a real choice until a job offer is made so view the interview as a sales presentation with you as the product. Even if you're not particularly interested in the job, go through the interview anyway, because:

- It'll be good practice and it'll give you a chance to hone your interview skills.
- If you do well, you'll have positioned yourself to be considered for other opportunities.
- You might learn something in the interview that changes your perception of the role such that you end up concluding it actually *is* the opportunity of a lifetime.

### It's All About Research and Practice.

- Read every word of the job description and think about how your experience matches each requirement.
- Draft some talking points and come up with a list of questions to ask.
- Go through the hiring company's website; in particular, look at their recent press releases.
- Go to YouTube to see if the company has any product videos—watch as many as it takes to get a good handle on what they do.
- Go to Glassdoor and see what employees have said about the company; take comments with a grain of salt, though, as there are always at least three sides to every story (the two opposing sides, plus the truth somewhere in the middle).
- Go to the hiring manager's LinkedIn profile and read it. Don't worry if the hiring manager sees you've peeked—it'll just go to show you're taking time to do the requisite research.
- Check your contacts to see if you know anyone at the company. If you want to keep your candidacy under the radar, then don't reach out. If you don't mind who knows, then, by all means, reach out to anyone who might be able to provide you with additional insight into the organization. Include anyone that might be able to put in a good word for you.
- Practice answering and asking questions *aloud*; the more you practice, the more at ease you'll feel. Role playing can also be very helpful.

### Interview Basics

- Smile—even if it's just a phone call, the caller will hear it.
- Make good eye contact during in-person meetings and video calls.
- Sit up straight, even on the phone call.
- Don't chew gum—even if it's just a phone call, the caller will hear it.
- Turn your phone off during the on-site visit. Muting the ringer doesn't always mute alarms, and a vibrating device can still be distracting.
- If you're kept waiting, don't get aggravated. You don't know what's happening behind the scenes and your patience will be noted and appreciated.
- Treat *everyone* as if they're the decision-maker or hiring manager. C
- Let the interviewer drive the discussion. If you're talking and the interviewer interrupts then you should be quiet and listen.
- Always thank people for their time and consideration.

## The Rule for Answering Questions

1. Listen to the question
2. Ask for clarification if you need it
3. Answer the question
4. Stop talking

## How to Ask Questions During the Interview

The interview is most definitely a two-way conversation so, while the interviewer is evaluating you, you're also evaluating the job, the manager, and the company. It's imperative you ask questions to capture a full picture of the situation, while also highlighting your own skills and experience and how they would contribute value to the company.

Prepare a written list of questions to refer to in the interview. Don't just rely on your memory. Never cross-examine the interviewer; just aim to be conversational.

If you're meeting multiple people at the same company, ask similar questions in every individual interview so that you can compare and contrast everyone's answers. If they're not all viewing the role and the goals the same way, it could be an indication that they're not consistently defining success. This will be something you would want to clarify with the hiring manager before accepting an offer.

## What You Should Ask at the End of the Interview

As you sense the interviewer is wrapping up the conversation, ask some combination of these questions:

- How close am I to the ideal candidate?
- Is there any experience you feel I might be missing?
- When would you like to have someone on board?
- What's the next step in this process?
- When should I expect to hear from you?

The first two questions in the above list are particularly useful: In an interview, there's a natural back-and-forth to the conversation. The interviewer asks a question, and you answer it. There will be times, though, when the interviewer interrupts you partway through your response then the conversation ends up going in a different direction. At the end of the interview, you might have this bucket of information that you *wanted* to get across but *couldn't*. To make sure the interviewer has an accurate picture of your skills, you should ask, "How close am I to the ideal candidate?" and "Is there any experience you *feel* I *might* be missing?" If you discover that some critical piece of information got lost in translation, you now have a chance to clarify and adjust the interviewer's perception.

## (Perfect) Practice Makes Perfect

The key to success is practicing your questions and answers *out loud*, prior to the interview. If you put together a list of questions that you found on the internet, but then do nothing with them until you ask them in the interview, the interviewer will know you didn't prepare and that you're just asking someone else's questions.

If you *do* practice aloud beforehand, however, you'll make the questions your own and will gain *voice memory*. The first few times you speak a question out loud in practice, it'll feel like a tongue twister but, through repetition, you'll be saying the words without even thinking about them. Then, when you ask them in the interview, the words will be second nature and you'll come across as prepared, polished, and confident.