

# Resiliency at Work

NAILING THE INTERVIEW



*By Peggie Koenig*

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A comprehensive guide to putting your best foot forward

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# Resiliency at Work

NAILING THE INTERVIEW

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## *Introduction*

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Working a job that sustains our livelihood is a crucial part of life. With the average full-time employee spending approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  or 90,000 hours of their life working, it's essential to find the right fit to ensure our mental well-being. In this e-book, we'll show you how to improve your resiliency by finding a job that aligns with your career goals and talents. You'll learn how to ace job interviews and secure the job of your dreams, leading you to a fulfilling and successful career.

# CHAPTER 01

## THE JOB INTERVIEW

You might be reading this because you are facing career challenges, such as:

- Finding a job
- Considering a career change
- Being unhappy with your current job

During the interview, you must shine among all the other candidates, make a positive impression, and leave the recruiter with the impression that you are the perfect fit for the job and the company. It's an opportunity for you to market yourself and explore whether you're a good fit for the company.

To be successful, you must be mentally, physically, and emotionally prepared.

# CHAPTER 02

## MENTAL PREPARATION

### Building the Backstory and Your Confidence

Are you ready to nail your next interview? Follow these simple steps to build your backstory and wow your interviewer with your confidence and knowledge about the company:

1. Start by identifying your strengths, skills, education, experience, accomplishments, and goals. Conduct a Job Match Analysis to compare them against the job requirements and showcase how you perfectly fit the role.
2. Research the organization, industry, manager, and culture to show that you are genuinely interested in the company. Find out who is going to be interviewing you and familiarize yourself with their background and role in the company.

*Use your past experiences  
to showcase your skills  
and accomplishments  
and highlight how they  
align with the company's  
values and goals.*

3. Review your resume and accomplishments ahead of time and highlight your achievements that align with the job requirements.

4. Practice delivering behavioral responses to typical interview questions with confidence and appropriate body language. Use your past experiences to showcase your skills and accomplishments and highlight how they align with the company's values and goals.

To prepare well for your interview, practice behavioral responses based on past experiences. Utilize the sample questions provided in Chapter 5 and engage a friend for mock interviews. Conduct research on the company to assess your fit and interest and ask intelligent questions during the interview. Remember, you got this!





# CHAPTER 03

## PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Fit body, fit mind

Take care of your physical well-being by exercising and avoiding alcohol, caffeine, sugar, and saturated fats before a job interview.

Focus on positive thoughts and mindset, do deep breathing exercises and try to get plenty of sleep the night before.

### What to wear

First impressions are important, especially in interviews. Most interviewers make up their minds about a candidate within the first four minutes. To make a good impression, plan what you are going to wear in advance and dress one level higher than the job requires. For example, wear dark pants or khakis, a long-sleeved shirt, and formal or business casual shoes for a construction site job interview.

Go to the job site prior to the interview to get a feeling for the dress code of someone in a job comparable to the one you are being interviewed for. Dress one notch above that level for the interview.

### **How to get to the interview**

To prepare for a job interview, plan your route to the interview location in advance and arrive at least 10 minutes early. For virtual interviews, check your connection, camera, and microphone, and set up in a well-lit space.

### **Communication**

Communication goes beyond just words; it's about your nonverbal cues too. Your body language speaks volumes even before you start talking, so it's crucial to be mindful of your posture, gestures, and tone of voice.

To improve your nonverbal communication skills, pay attention to your body and voice. During an interview, sit up straight, lean slightly forward, flash a smile, maintain eye contact, and avoid crossing your arms or keeping your hands in your lap. By projecting a calm, confident, and engaged demeanor, you can make a lasting impression and boost your chances of success. Remember, your nonverbal cues are just as important as the words you choose, so make them count!



## Voice

To improve your communication skills, follow these tips:

1. Record your voice and get feedback from others. Watch for voice patterns and avoid raising your voice at the end of words and sentences.
2. Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.
3. Practice answering interview questions.
4. Remember how you say something is as important as what you say.
5. Take a few seconds to gather your thoughts before speaking. Consider your communication style and work on improving it.

*Try to anticipate questions  
related to your skills and  
prepare behavioural  
responses that demonstrate  
relevant past behaviour.  
Preparation and practice  
are keys to success.*

# CHAPTER 04

## EMOTIONAL PREPARATION

### Minset and Resilience

Visualize yourself succeeding in the interview and at the job. See yourself there; confident, resilient, looking great, feeling strong and empowered.

Practice positive self-talk. Focus on your strengths and attributes.

Examples of positive self-talk:

- “All I need is within me right now.”
- “I am confident.”
- “I can do it.”

Talk about your fears with a calm and respected friend or mentor. It will calm your mind and get your nerves under control.

Attitude is everything. Look like you fit right in and leave the scowls and chips on your shoulder at home.

# CHAPTER 05

## THE MAIN EVENT

Of course, what you say in a job interview is of primary importance.

Try to anticipate questions related to your skills and prepare behavioural responses that demonstrate relevant past behaviour. Preparation and practice are keys to success. You don't want to memorize responses because you really don't know what the interviewer will ask, but you want a firm understanding of your experience and how it relates to the job.

Avoid rambling or repeating yourself. If you are challenged to come up with a good answer, it is perfectly okay to ask the interviewer if you can come back to a question later.

Try to stay on topic and keep your personal life to yourself. This is not the time for deep sharing of personal details unless you feel it is really important for you to share.



*The onus is on you to sell yourself. Be prepared by anticipating likely questions in advance and developing answers. Avoid simplistic answers.*



Just beware and know that you may be eliminating yourself from the “A” pile by talking about your kids, your marital situation, sexual orientation, or mental health. The personal details can be shared, if you feel it is necessary after an offer is on the table.

Any open-ended questions (“Tell me about...”) is an opportunity to sell yourself. The onus is on you to sell yourself. Be prepared by anticipating likely questions in advance and developing answers. Avoid simplistic answers. The interviewer is looking for a well-measured response that goes beyond two or three sentences but is not a chapter.

### The preliminary interview

Job interviews can be a lengthy process that may involve a preliminary interview also known as a pre-screening interview. This type of interview is usually shorter than a full interview and is designed to help the interviewer assess your suitability for the job. Typically, the interviewer could be someone from the Human Resources Department or a third-party recruiter, whose job is to create a shortlist of qualified candidates to present to the Manager who is hiring.

During this interview, the interviewer may ask questions about your motivation for applying, willingness to move, experience presented in your resume, and salary expectations. It is important to be prepared to answer all these questions and any others that may arise.

The willingness to move to a new location is an important one that is designed to help the interviewer understand if you have any family considerations that may affect your ability to take on the job. It is important to be honest and disclose any such considerations in a professional manner. The salary question can also be a tricky one. It is important to ask for the salary range of the position to ensure that your expectations are aligned. If the interviewer refuses to provide that information, you can disclose what you are currently making or what your salary was at your last position. If you have done your research, you can also share what you have found out and see if they are aligned with competitive data.

In summary, it is important to be prepared on all fronts for a pre-screening interview. Your goal is to impress the interviewer and move on to the next stage of the interview process.



*Sometimes the  
interviewer may approach  
the interview in an  
unusual way. Be ready  
for anything and  
stay focused.*

## How the full job interview usually rolls out

You're all set for your job interview. Great job on the preparation!

Most job interviews follow a predictable process, but sometimes the interviewer may approach the interview in an unusual way. Be ready for anything and stay focused. Here are the steps of a typical interview:

### Step 1: Introductions

1-2 minutes

- The interviewer will introduce themselves and shake your hand
- They may start with some small talk, like commenting on the weather or offering you a glass of water or coffee.

### Step 2: "Tell me about yourself"

2-5 minutes

- The interviewer may ask you to talk about yourself
- This is your chance to showcase your skills and accomplishments, but keep your answer concise

### Step 3: The dialogue

15-45 minutes

- The interviewer may ask you behavioural questions to learn more about you



- Use the CARs method (Described in the Accomplishments section coming up) to provide examples of how you have behaved in the past

#### Step 4: Your questions

5-15 minutes

- The interviewer will invite you to ask questions about the position or company
- Be prepared with some questions ahead of time
- If you are asked to hold all questions until the end, do so

#### Step 5: Closure

1-5 minutes

- Thank the interviewer for the opportunity to interview
- Salary expectations may be discussed
- Ask about the next steps in the process

## The formal presentation

If you are applying for a managerial, technical, or senior leadership position, it's possible that you may be requested to give a formal presentation during an interview, after the introductions and before the formal question and answer session. Here are four important things to keep in mind when giving a presentation:

- Stick to the topics that have been requested, and sprinkle in some personal anecdotes and humor to make the content more engaging.
- Ensure that you stick to the allotted time, as going over the time limit can give the impression that you have poor time management skills.
- Dedicate enough time to preparing and rehearsing your presentation. If you choose not to do a presentation, keep in mind that other candidates likely will. Bring your presentation on a memory stick and check in advance about any technical requirements or needs.
- If the interview is conducted through Zoom or Microsoft Teams, make sure you know how to access your presentation on your computer so that you can share it with the interviewers.



## Types of interviews

Job interview formats can have many variations including one-on-one, panel, behavioural description, and stress-based (i.e., often used for professions or jobs where stress and decision-making are the primary focus of the job). Our focus here will be on the Behavioural Description Interview.

### Behavioural Description (BD) Interviews (or Behavioural Interviews)

BD interviews are based on the theory that:  
**Past Behaviour is the best predictor of Future Behaviour.**

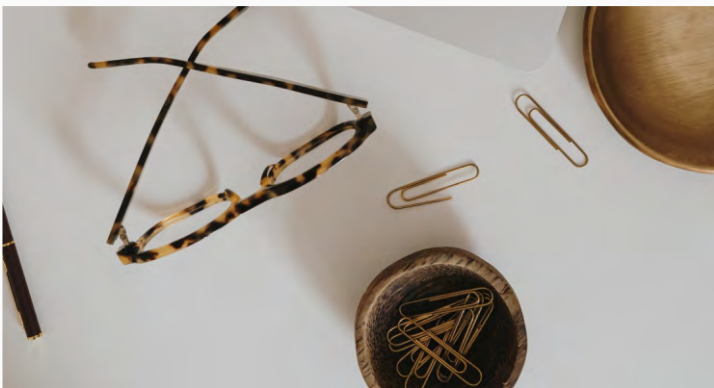
Behavioural interviews have become almost standard in today's Human Resources field.



*Even if you are asked a  
hypothetical question,  
you should try to respond  
with a behavioral  
response.*

## Why?

- B.D. questions focus on the key competencies required by the position. These could include skills in: communication, leadership, negotiation, planning, project management, technical areas, judgment, team building, financial, analytical, problem solving, safety, sales, etc.
- B.D. questions focus on actual behaviours rather than hypothetical behaviour. Rather than asking “How would you...” interviewees are asked: “How did you...” Even if you are asked a hypothetical question, you should try to respond with a behavioral response.
- The process is more objective because it is based on fact rather than opinion or hunches.
- B.D. questions make it easier to predict how an individual will act on the job.





### Accomplishments

If you've already put in the effort to develop accomplishment statements for your resume and incorporated condensed versions of them into it, then get ready to reap the rewards! You can now use the original, more detailed version of your accomplishments analysis during interviews, using the CAR formula, which stands for Circumstances, Action, and Results.

By following this formula, you can showcase your abilities and demonstrate how you can overcome challenges and deliver results. Remember, your hard work will pay off, and you'll be one step closer to landing your dream job! So go ahead and take the first step by developing a question about a key competency for the job you're interested in, such as communication, leadership, negotiation, planning, project management, technical areas, judgment, team building, financial, analytical, problem-solving, safety, sales, and more.

Now, think about your Behavioural Response using the CAR formula to the following question:

*Tell us about the most difficult safety issue you've ever encountered?*

## ***Circumstances:***

*Describe the circumstances of your experience*

## ***Action:***

*What specific actions did you take*

## ***Results:***

*What were the results*



## Examples of interview questions.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. How do you think you're a good fit for this job? or "What would you bring to this job?"
3. Tell me about a time when you had to handle conflict. How did you resolve the situation?
4. Why did you leave your last position?
5. Tell us about how you've helped subordinates/team members develop their skills.
6. Tell us how you think others describe your management/leadership/business acumen/sales ability/technical knowledge.
7. Describe a time when you demonstrated your skills in .....
8. What are your strengths? Name three.
9. In what areas do you need development? or What are your weaknesses?
10. Why should we hire you? Why do you want to work here?
11. How are your project management skills? (Substitute any other skill requested in the job posting).

*Try to ask open-ended questions that allow the interviewer to expand on the topic. Avoid closed questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no."*

12. Think about the best supervisor you've ever had. What qualities did you admire the most? Or “Tell me about this person.”
13. This position seems to be a bit of a change in your career direction. How do your skills transfer to this organization/ industry?
14. What are your plans for the future? Or “Where do you see yourself in one/three/five years?”
15. Tell me about a compliment given to you by a previous supervisor.
16. Describe the most unpleasant task you've been asked to do on the job.
17. What are your salary expectations?
18. If we offer you the job, when could you start?



### Intelligent questions for you to ask

Towards the end of your interview, the interviewer may ask if you have any questions. It's important to avoid asking questions that have obvious answers or that you could have researched beforehand. For instance, asking about the number of employees at a local plant may indicate that you haven't prepared adequately.

Instead, try to ask open-ended questions that allow the interviewer to expand on the topic. Avoid closed questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no."

Limit your questions to 3 or 4.

Here are examples of some questions you might ask:

- Questions about the company or industry.

Organizational questions could deal with the following topics:

- Mission, goals, long-term objectives
- Future plans
- Culture
- Areas for potential growth
- Anticipated/recent changes
- How success is measured





### Questions about the job

- Challenges facing the position
- Short- and long-term objectives
- Opportunities to develop/grow/advance
- Orientation process
- Benefits
- New position? If so, what fueled its creation?
- Avoid asking about salary - the time for that is when you get a job offer
- Clarifying questions: “Is that the kind of information you are looking for?” or “I think you're saying...Am I right?”

*Listen actively to the interviewer and pay attention to their nonverbal cues to ensure you are answering their questions effectively.*

## Summary of tips to POWER UP the job interview

Preparing for a job interview can be nerve-wracking, but with these tips, you can put your best foot forward and increase your chances of success:

1. Arrive 10 minutes early to show that you are punctual and reliable.
2. Listen actively to the interviewer and pay attention to their nonverbal cues to ensure you are answering their questions effectively.
3. Use positive examples to showcase your skills and abilities and avoid mentioning any shortcomings.
4. Make a good first impression by leaving your coat or jacket in the reception area.
5. Boost your confidence by psyching yourself up ahead of time.
6. Prepare 6 to 10 CAR accomplishments to share during the interview to demonstrate your value.
7. If you get stuck on a tough question, ask if you can come back to it later.
8. Show how your qualifications align with the company's values and mission.

9. Remember the interviewers' names to show that you are attentive and invested in the conversation.
10. Be friendly and approachable by smiling and maintaining eye contact.
11. Be aware of cultural differences in personal space, eye contact, and attire, and adapt accordingly.
12. Ask if the interviewer shakes hands, and practice beforehand to ensure a confident and appropriate greeting.
13. Sit down only after being invited to do so.
14. Avoid chewing gum during the interview to maintain a professional demeanor.
15. Turn off your cell phone to avoid distractions.
16. Decide ahead of time what to do with your hands to avoid fidgeting.
17. Show interest and engagement by leaning forward but avoid putting your elbows on the desk.
18. Answer questions directly and succinctly without volunteering irrelevant information.
19. Ask thoughtful questions that demonstrate your knowledge and research of the company and position.
20. Lastly, avoid criticizing your past employer during the interview, as it may reflect poorly on your professionalism and attitude.

# CHAPTER 06

## THE AFTER PARTY

### Job Interview Follow-Up

1. Evaluate your performance and identify areas for improvement. Seek feedback from a trusted coach or mentor.
2. Use the follow-up opportunity to showcase your enthusiasm and fit for the job.
3. Practice areas that require development. Determine the minimum compensation you are willing to accept.
4. Negotiate confidently but realistically. Know your worth and the market rate.
5. If there's a significant gap between your expectations and the offer, negotiate a reasonable increase now and another in six months.

6. If negotiation fails, be prepared to walk away.
7. Seek feedback and refine your interview style for next time.
8. Remember, every interview is an opportunity to develop resilience, learn, and grow.

By applying these tips, you can amplify your strengths and unlock fulfillment in your career.





# Resiliency at Work

## NAILING THE INTERVIEW

*By Peggie Koenig*

*Hi there, I'm Peggie Koenig, a career coaching and recruitment expert with almost 30 years of experience. I understand how nerve-racking interviews can be, but don't worry - I know exactly what employers are looking for in their candidates.*

*Thanks to my years of experience, I've developed an effective job search approach that can help you find a job you'll love. I can show you how to present yourself confidently, stand out from the crowd, and make a lasting impression on your potential employer.*

*So, whether you're just starting out or looking to take the next step in your career, let me help you find the job of your dreams.*

