



Practical Guidelines to help prepare for Interviews

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There are key principles of success ...

- ▶ Understand the merit criteria and the leadership competency profile by clearly demonstrating:
 - ▶ How you meet each element of the merit criteria; and,
 - ▶ How you meet the leadership competencies through examples of past experience
- ▶ You need to be deliberate with how you will communicate and control your message during the interview:
 - ▶ Develop a three minute message on your professional journey
 - ▶ Develop examples of lived experiences, personal achievements, and lessons learned, against each of the leadership competencies, that will enable you to answer interview questions with confidence, clarity and conciseness
 - ▶ Understand your strengths and weaknesses and be prepared discuss these
- ▶ Know everything there is to know about the details of your cv, biographical notes and the letter of interest you may have shared as part of the application process

The characteristics of a successful interview

- ▶ Managing your time to ensure you answer each question with an even pace
 - ▶ this is your interview, you need to take ownership and own it
- ▶ Managing your body language to ensure the board is not otherwise distracted and is focused on your message
 - ▶ avoid distractions and exaggerated hand movement, whether in a face-to-face or online interview
- ▶ Answering questions and communicating your message with confidence, clearly and concisely
 - ▶ Your message should demonstrate a positive outlook and avoid creating red, make that yellow, flags!
- ▶ Ensuring that the interview board members retain your message by being deliberate in how your message is communicated (see page 7 for more details on answering interview questions)
 - ▶ Includes an introduction that delineates how you will answer the question;
 - ▶ Includes a clearly delineated answer reflective of a method to address different types of questions; and,
 - ▶ Includes a conclusion that re-iterates how you answered the question

The “Introduction or Beginning” of the interview is an opportunity to ...

- ▶ Set the tempo for the interview
 - ▶ What approach are you going to apply to manage your stress or nerves – getting grounded is part of your pre-interview preparation
 - ▶ If given the choice between running the interview by selecting which question you will address first and last, or having the board members run the questions in order they were presented to you during your pre-interview preparation period, choose wisely
- ▶ Connect with the interview board members with a positive and initial first impression
 - ▶ You need to reflect on at least two or three ways you’ll respond to the ice-breaker lead-in, whatever it may be – your three minute professional journey message may be helpful here
 - ▶ Be focused, this is your interview, and you need to take ownership of how the first few minutes will be managed to set the tone of the interview

The “Body or Question and Answer period” of the interview is an opportunity to ...

- ▶ Be deliberate with the key ideas and messages you wish to communicate, and how you plan to weave these in your answers to the questions
 - ▶ You are essentially in an ideal position to tell a story that demonstrates your communications and strategic thinking skills by weaving your key messages throughout the answers logically
- ▶ Take ownership of the questions
 - ▶ Beyond the knowledge based criteria, there are no right or wrong answers to demonstrate your competencies, skills and abilities; but rather an opportunity to create an impactful impression with the ideas and messages you share to answer the questions calmly, clearly and concisely
 - ▶ Be clear about your vision of leadership; your strategic outlook for the position in question; and your personal value proposition - the two or three reasons why they should offer you the opportunity to join their organization and take on the position you are seeking

The “Conclusion or Ending of the interview” is an opportunity to ...

- ▶ Demonstrate your commitment, passion and enthusiasm for the opportunity at hand
- ▶ Re-iterate why you feel you are the ideal candidate to address the challenges and expectations of the opportunity at hand
- ▶ Re-enforce positive impressions that you feel will give you an edge with your parting words, what is it that you want them to remember about you

Answering an “*Interview Question*” requires a strategic and structured approach consisting three phases ...

1. The Introduction of your answer where you:
 - a. Take ownership of the question by framing it contextually to your experience
 - b. Define the most significant leading ideas that you see as relevant to answer the question – aim for three leading ideas max

2. The Body of the answer requires you to elaborate each of your leading ideas, up to three key supporting messages about each idea
 - a. Introduce the first leading idea and develop it by demonstrating concretely how and why you would go about doing it, or how and why you have done it in the past, via up to three specific examples / supporting key messages
 - b. Introduce the second leading idea and a third if you wish, developing each idea with supporting key messages
 - c. Note that each leading idea needs to have a transition indicator that let’s the board know that you have completed the first and now moving the your second idea. If you have a third leading idea to answer the question, you apply another transition indicator. Typical example: I have three examples of the work I did that demonstrates my (first leading idea) - first ..., second ... and third. Let me move to my (second leading idea) etc

3. The Conclusion is where you wrap up your answer and focus on what you want the board members to remember:
 - a. Re-iterate the key leading ideas that you have just presented
 - b. Provide a brief summative comment reflective of YOU in action, and let the board members know you are moving to the next question

Developing your key messages and leading ideas requires reflection and practice

- ▶ The development of leading ideas needs to include concrete demonstrations of your past experience and achievements
 - ▶ What lived experiences would you like to include in your key messages to demonstrate that you meet the essential criteria for the position
 - ▶ What examples of past achievements would you like to include to demonstrate how you've applied key leadership competencies in the past – you need examples for each of the key competencies being assessed during the interview, and you need to be able to explain why you did what you did
 - ▶ What examples of lessons learned would you like to share to demonstrate the you are able to deal with challenges, on the one hand, and are a continuous learner on the other
 - ▶ If asked to speak to an area of weakness, you need to ensure you don't leave the interview board with the impression that you are a risk by demonstrating your self-awareness in terms of strengths and weaknesses
 - ▶ Address an area of weakness as an area of development and continuous learning, and give examples of how you are or have done this - avoid raising a yellow flag or an unfortunate red flag about your candidacy and potential for the job, and clearly demonstrate that your professional and career development are a priority to you

In my experience, interviews are about sharing a compelling story of YOU with confidence, clarity and conciseness

- ▶ If you are well prepared, it shouldn't matter what the interview questions are cause you will own the interview by weaving your story of YOU among your answers with a strategic and structured approach
 - ▶ The interview is about YOU, own it and enjoy it!
- ▶ Practicing how you plan to communicate your leading ideas and key messages makes all the difference, don't underestimate the time and effort required to achieve confidence, clarity and conciseness
 - ▶ What is your professional journey?
 - ▶ What are your personal values and how do you bring life to these in the workplace?
 - ▶ What are your compelling stories of leadership - we all have them cause leadership is found at all levels of the organization, and how will you make these part of the key messages you want the interview board members to remember?
 - ▶ You need to identify concrete examples that demonstrate your competencies and how you meet the essential requirements for the position
 - ▶ You need to clearly communicate why you feel you are up to the challenge, your vision and strategic outlook, and ultimately you value proposition for the organization