

Paragon Executive Intelligence: Interview Preparation Guide

Preparation is the key to a successful interview. This document aims to show candidates how to best prepare for any interview.

Paragon candidates are short listed from a range of others before attending any interview. This ensures all interviewees are suitable for the role at hand. Paragon consultants provide all interviewees with full details of the job role and, where possible, also provide a copy of the assignment brief and any corporate literature. These documents outline the purpose of the job, the key skills and personal qualities required, and give a sense of the client's business.

We recommend candidates undertake further research to accurately assess the opportunity and see how the company meets their own needs and career objectives. Our consultants will endeavour to answer any questions the candidate may have prior to interview.

Paragon consultants confirm the following details in writing.

- Interview date & time and approximate duration.
- Company address & directions.
- Interviewers details & titles.

We advise candidates to arrive early; giving themselves time to relax, get a sense of the atmosphere and mentally prepare themselves.

Interview Rehearsal

Rehearsal is a crucial part of interview preparation. Interviewees should be comfortable discussing every detail of their career to date. Facts, employment dates, key achievements and the particular challenges of each and every role should be easily and readily recalled.

As a recollection aid, we often advise interviewees to compose a short career statement that describes who they are, what they have achieved and what they can offer the employer. Any career statement should also include special skills or achievements, training courses and other experience that could distinguish the interviewee from other candidates. This exercise is invaluable when responding to open-ended questions, such as "describe yourself".

We also recommend that interviewees prepare a list of questions, informed by their own research, regarding the role, the company and future career prospects.

Common interview Questions

Paragon also recommends that interviewees prepare responses to the most common questions posed at interviews. Here is a list we compiled in tandem with some of our most successful clients.

- What do you know about our company?
- Why do you think you might like to work for our company?
- Why did you choose to work in the industry?
- Tell me about yourself.
- Why should we employ you rather than an alternative candidate?
- Why do you wish to leave your current job?
- What do you think determines a person's progress in a successful company.
- Which jobs have you enjoyed the most? Why?
- Which jobs have you enjoyed the least? Why?
- Describe a difficult situation and how you handled it
- Why did you leave your previous jobs?
- How would you describe yourself?
- Give examples of your major achievements to date.
- Have you experienced failure?
- How do you get the best out of people?
- How would you describe your management style?
- How do you motivate yourself?
- How do you manage your time?
- How do you react to pressure?
- Do you prefer working alone or as part of a team?
- Describe your ideal boss.
- To what sort of people do you most easily relate?
- Have you ever found it difficult working with a specific work colleague?
- Where do you see yourself in five years time?
- What would your current boss say about you?
- What contributions have you made in your previous jobs to justify your salary?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Do you enjoy having to make decisions?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- What level of salary are you expecting?
- How do you spend your spare time?
- What are your hobbies?
- What was the last book you read?

Creating The Right Impression

Before meeting the interviewee, the client will have formed an idea of them from the personal details the Paragon consultant will have submitted. Clients have high expectations of Paragon candidates, and these expectations can be built upon.

Research shows that an interviewer often decides within the first few minutes whether the candidate is the right person for the job. The subsequent stages of that interview are then used to verify and reinforce these initial impressions.

We recommend all candidates attend interviews formally dressed. Some companies may have a relaxed dress code, however, it is always advisable to be dressed and groomed meticulously from the outset.

Interviews begin the moment the candidate enters the building and ends when they leave. It is not uncommon for the interviewer to ask a secretary or receptionist for their impressions of the candidate. Candidates should make a positive and professional impression on everyone they meet.

Controlling the Interview

Candidates are interviewed to fill a vacancy. The interviewer's job is to ascertain whether the person in front of them is the right man or woman for the job. They will be evaluating strengths, weaknesses, skills, qualifications and intellectual qualities. They will attempt to determine attitude, aptitude, stability and motivation. The interviewee should inspire confidence, reliability and commitment at all times.

There are three basic points the interviewer must cover:

- Is the candidate capable of doing the job? I.e. Do they have the relevant skills and experience?
- Will the candidate do the job successfully? Are they motivated, hard working and able to handle stress?
- Will the candidate fit in? Will their values and personality suit the culture of the organisation?

By keeping these in mind, the candidate can control their responses, ensure they tick the right boxes and remain in control of the interview.

Candidates should not be reticent about inquiring whether the interviewer has any reservations about their ability to do the job. Engaging in direct dialogue

allows the candidate to uncover any issues, and prove their skills or previous experience negate those concerns.

Closing the Interview

It is important to finish the interview on a positive note. We recommend that candidates are alert to the signals that the interviewer is trying to wrap things up. Interviewees should heed these signals but remain in control.

Candidates should be sure that all their questions about the company and the role have been answered, and should briefly recap why they are the right person for the job.

Interviewees should not leave without finding out what happens next. There may be subsequent interviews. If so candidates should confirm their interest and enthusiasm and state that they would like to proceed to the next stage.