

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO LANDING AND ACING A *Job Interview*

Your mind is racing. Your palms are sweating. You can feel your heart thumping in your chest. All thanks to the dreaded job interview. It's natural to be nervous when interviewing for a new job, but there is no need to be. You've gotten this far for a reason. A big interview may feel like another hurdle to jump, but thanks to all of your hard work, it will be an easy leap to make.

We're going to walk you through the entire job search process. First we'll look at the job market landscape, then we'll work on landing the interview, and, of course, wrap up by creating a plan to ace that job interview.

We have a lot to cover, so why don't we just dive right in? Your dream job is waiting after all.

PART 1

Landing THE INTERVIEW

You know what you want and you're ready to get it. But how do you actually land that interview? Ironically, all those high tech digital application systems can leave you feeling disconnected. Note to employers: A little

confirmation that a real human read our resume would be nice! Don't worry, you'll stand out in your job search and increase your chances of landing an interview if you follow these three steps.

1 GET CLEAN

Just like our real lives, our digital lives can start to get cluttered if we don't stay on top of them. Normally we can just shut the laptop screen and forget about the digital web we've weaved, but when you're ready to launch a job search, you're going to have to clean up your digital presence. Set aside a Sunday morning to get your digital life in tip-top shape. Feel free to reward yourself with a mimosa once you finish.

Clean up your digital presence checklist

- Remove any offensive material.** You may appreciate a good political Twitter debate, but a hiring manager may not. Same goes for photos or captions on Instagram that could ruffle feathers (you know which ones we're talking about). Either set your social profiles to private or remove any evidence of controversial material. You might also want to check on that Tumblr blog you haven't touched since college.
- Enhance your social media accounts.** This may seem contradictory to the last step, but hear us out. Certain careers can get a boost by having a top-notch social media presence. A journalist may want to show that they're aware of big media moves by tweeting about them. Graphic designers can represent their taste with a perfectly curated Instagram feed. Social media managers will benefit by showing they have a handle on every relevant channel. School teacher? Keep the profiles private.

- Refresh your LinkedIn.** It may seem like a no-brainer, but having an updated LinkedIn profile is not enough to stand out in a job search. Make sure you're taking advantage of LinkedIn's best features like [setting a private alert that tells recruiters you are open to finding a new job](#), [signing up for email alerts](#) that announce when your favorite companies are hiring, and [using SEO](#) to make sure your profile shows up in searches. LinkedIn is also a great channel to help establish yourself as an expert or thought leader in your industry by sharing career updates and content relevant to your industry.
- Build a personal website.** Sadly a solid resume is not always enough to make your application stand out these days. While telling a potential employer how great you are can work, why not show them? You can use a digital portfolio to share examples of your work, success rates from past projects, and glowing testimonials from clients or colleagues. Here's [our guide for how to create a killer website \(even if you don't know what you're doing\)](#).

2 GET PERSONAL

Whether you're applying for one job or 40, it's important to treat every job application like it's own special career opportunity snowflake. When in the throes of a job search, it's way easier to submit the same resume and cover letter with your application, but chances are you're missing the mark a little. You're not applying for identical jobs at identical companies, so why would your application materials be generic? Personalizing your applications for each company and position you apply to is the most effective way to catch a recruiter or hiring manager's attention.

Customize your application checklist

- Build a base resume and cover letter.** Chances are, you've already done this with past applications. You should always have a resume and cover letter on hand that shares the main facts you want to get across like education and job history. You'll use your go-to resume as a template again and again throughout your search.
- Read the job description carefully.** Once you find a job you want to apply to, pause and re-read the job description and preferred qualifications carefully. Take note of exactly what skills and experience the employer is looking for. Write these down or highlight them. You'll need this info when you customize your resume and cover letter.
- Customize your materials.** You can only fit so much information on a cover letter and resume, which is why it's important to make every word count. Take your base resume and the notes from the job description and customize your materials to highlight the skills and experience you have that line up with what the job poster is looking for. You can still share other skills that you have, even if they weren't mentioned specifically in the job posting. As long as you clearly emphasize all of the qualifications that they are looking for.

3 GET SEEN

Jennifer De Castro is a recruiting pro thanks to her work as a Partner at [True Talent Advisory](#) and has read more than her fair share of resumes. We asked her to share the top reasons she skips over a resume so you can improve your chances at capturing a recruiter's attention.

The top 5 reasons recruiters skip over a resume

- 1 Introduce yourself properly.** When emailing with a recruiter, De Castro advises you keep your introduction email short and sweet as too long of an email becomes “uninteresting fast”. You should keep the context of the email “sharp and to the point.”
- 2 Master the right resume length.** If you're struggling to fit all of your experience onto a one-page resume, then don't. Utilize a second page (but no more!) if necessary to properly showcase your experience.
- 3 Never leave a job off a resume.** “I think you should reflect all of your jobs. It can be a red flag if you skip things, even if it's in the pursuit of saving space...Reflect your background appropriately, don't just put what you think someone wants to see or the last one or two jobs. Put the career moves on there, it's part of your story.”
- 4 Don't withhold information, it can cause a recruiter to doubt you.** “If you withhold something and it's obvious, it's concerning, because you're making an impression that says I'm not being transparent. Maybe it's no big deal, but the message it sends is, I'm hiding something.”
- 5 You can be honest about unemployment.** Not all recruiters or hiring managers assume that you were unemployed for a bad reason or were at fault for the parting.

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PART 2

Acing THE INTERVIEW

You got the call. OK fine, maybe it was a friendly email, but “you got the email” doesn’t have the same ring to it. Either way, your application knocked the socks off a hiring manager or recruiter and they want to interview

you. Now what? Let’s break your interview prep into bite-sized pieces so you can tackle it in a way that feels manageable.

Know your elevator pitch

You’ve probably been warned in the past to always have your elevator pitch ready. Let’s face it, elevator pitches are kind of like flossing. You know you have your pitch ready and rehearsed, just like you know you should be flossing every day and not just the week before a dental appointment. Take a few minutes now to perfect your pitch. Follow that up with practice, practice, and more practice. Why? You may not need to ever utilize your pitch in an actual elevator or anywhere unexpected, but rehearsing it will make nailing your job interview so much easier. There’s nothing more awkward than stumbling over basic questions during an interview. By knowing your elevator pitch like the back of your hand, you’ll ensure that you’re ready for your next interview.

What makes a killer elevator pitch?

- 1 Start strong.** You don’t want to lose them off the bat. Find a strong, simple, and clean way to launch your pitch. Practice with friends and family and get their honest opinion. Don’t start your pitch with weak language like “so” or “well”. Be confident in the pitch you are about to share and it will show.
- 2 Share your story.** Find a way to sum up your education and experience in two sentences or less. That may feel super brief, but you want to give a pitch about yourself, not a lecture. There will be more time to discuss your experience in detail after you give your pitch.
- 3 Back up your pitch.** Talk is cheap, facts aren’t. Don’t be afraid to show how valuable you are. Be armed with facts about why your skill set will be valuable to them. For example, if you’re a digital marketer with a background in SEO you could include in your pitch, “Did you know that a website optimized for SEO can increase traffic by x percent?”



- 4 **Loop yourself in.** That great point you just made backed by facts needs to include you now. How can you help their company with the problem you just illustrated or the solution you suggested? Make it clear that you're the one that can do the job.
- 5 **Where are you headed?** Wrap up your pitch with the next steps you'd like to make in your career. You can't expect your interviewer or anyone you're networking with to put the puzzle pieces together. Give them a clear picture. Ideally, they'll be able to help you make those next steps happen.

PRO TIP:

“When a pitch is authentic, it certainly captures attention....when pitches lack humility and are done just for the sake of doing it, it is *less effective*.”



Lina Alcalá

VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES, TINDER



Write your pitch

Use this spot to write your pitch, once you're happy with it, cut it out and keep it on hand to practice with or for a quick review before an interview. If you're applying for a variety of different jobs, you may want to create a few different elevator pitches (similar to what you did with your resume and cover letter) that most effectively sell you for the job.

MY ELEVATOR PITCH

Strong lead:

Your story:

Stats/facts:

Where you fit in:

Your next steps:

10 job interview questions you should be ready for

Some of these you've probably encountered before, but your answers have likely changed over the years. Review these questions before your next interview and jot down a few notes so you can easily practice your responses.

1 Can you tell me a little about yourself?

2 What about this position appealed to you? This company?

3 Why are you looking to leave your current role?

4 How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?

5 What's your greatest strength? What about your biggest weakness?

6 Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced at work, and how you dealt with it.

7 What interests you about our industry?**8** Where do you see your career in five years?**9** What do you think our company could be doing differently or improve on?**10** What are your salary expectations?

PRO TIP:

“Candidates that aren’t afraid to share the failures of their past career experiences and what they learned from it leave a lasting impression. Additionally, those that ask great questions, such as “what are some challenges you hope this role will help solve?” or “what are the priorities of the team and/or the business.” I am immediately impressed by their interest in making an impact at Tinder.”



Lina Alcalá

VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES, TINDER



Say Thanks

You just finished an interview, take a deep breath, you probably did way better than you think. The work's not over yet though. You should always send a thank you note after an interview whether it be a quick phone interview or the final one. It's best practice to send an email expressing your gratitude for your interviewer's time and excitement about the role. However, no one will bat an eye if you send it the next morning, just don't push it past lunch. To save you some time, we've created some fill in the blank email thank you note templates for you to use. See? It couldn't be easier!

Please note: If you'd like to mail a real thank you note, that's a great extra step! Just make sure you send an email too. It could take days for the hiring manager to receive your snail mail and you don't want them to think you forgot your manners.

Disclaimer: These templates should be used loosely and not word-for-word. Read through them carefully before sending!

PHONE INTERVIEW / SCREENER INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

Hello **[interviewer name]**,

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me **[today/yesterday]** about the **[title of position]** role. I'm so glad I was able to learn more about your team and the position. It sounds like this is an exciting time at **[company name]**. I'd love to meet in-person **[or follow up with a second phone call if the position is remote]** to discuss this opportunity and your company's goals further. I'm particularly excited about the possibility of working on **[detail from your call]** and **[second detail]**.

Extra: You can also include any materials or answers to follow up questions from your interview like portfolio samples or a reference's contact info:

As promised, **[below/attached/linked]** is the **[work sample/reference/etc.]** that we discussed.

I look forward to hearing from you about the next steps in your hiring process. Please, let me know if you need any additional information from me to move forward.

Best,

[your name]

IN-PERSON INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

Hi **[interviewer name]**,

I wanted to thank you for your time **[today/yesterday]**. I really enjoyed meeting you [and your colleagues/team members you met during the interview] and seeing your office. Based on our conversation, I feel confident that this is a position I could excel at. I really admire **[company name's]** commitment to **[having a healthy company culture/giving back to the community/etc.]**. I'd love to still be considered for the **[position]**.

Extra: You can also include any materials or answers to follow up questions from your interview like portfolio samples or a reference's contact info:

As we discussed, **[below/attached/linked]** is the **[work sample/reference/etc.]** that I promised you.

Please let me know if you have any more questions about my experience. I'm looking forward to hearing any updates on this role.

Warm regards,

[your name]

FINAL INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

Hello **[interviewer name]**,

I am so thankful we were able to connect again about the **[name of position]**. I really appreciate all the time you've spent with me during this process. I've really enjoyed learning about **[what you discussed is happening]** at **[company name]** and hope that soon I'll be able to contribute to the great work your team is doing. Please do let me know if you have any more questions you'd like me to answer before you make your final decision.

Extra: If you spoke with another member of their team during the interview process, you can thank them too.

Please pass on my gratitude to **[name of other interviewers]** as well.

Thank you,

[your name]



THAT'S *all* FOR NOW FOLKS!

Hopefully, you have all of the tools you need to understand the job market, land an interview, and blow your interviewer out of the water. We're pretty confident you'll land your dream job in no time!

We wanted to leave you with a few more tips before we go, but remember you've got this!

Tried-and-true job interview techniques

- Do your research.** Before even applying for a job you should have researched what the company's values, products, and services are, as well as be aware of any recent news stories they were featured in. Before an interview, step your research up a notch by learning more about your interviewer. A quick LinkedIn search will do the trick.
- Practice out loud.** Trying to talk yourself up isn't something we're naturally used to. Our whole lives we're taught to be humble, that is until we have a job interview. Practice your elevator pitch and the answers to popular interview questions (see above for more tips) with a friend, your mom, your dog, whoever. Even a couple quick run-throughs in the car will help your words flow off the tongue smoother when the time comes.
- Submit PDFs only.** Any resumes, cover letters, portfolio samples (that aren't on your personal website), and pre-written references should be submitted in PDF form. Why? 1. They are easier for computer automated application systems to process. 2. They open on any computer, even if their software is different than yours. 3. A PDF never highlights your spelling and grammar mistakes with that oh-so helpful little red line.
- Grin and bear it.** Never, ever under any circumstances speak poorly of a past company, boss, or colleague. If you're leaving your current position because you're unhappy, it can be tempting to vent, but always keep the conversation positive. Find another reason to highlight for wanting a new job and stick with it.