



— GO BEYOND —

# PREP

PREPARE • REVIEW • EVALUATE • PERFECT

**AT MORGAN MCKINLEY, WE ARE  
VERY SERIOUS ABOUT YOUR CAREER.**

We listen in order to understand your ambitions,  
your career goals and most importantly help you  
to realise them.

## PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Invest some time in research before your interview. Finding out as much as possible about the company and the people you are meeting with in advance is the best way to ensure you are ready for any eventuality, and prepare plenty of relevant questions. The more you know before your interview the more confident you will feel and appear.

- Know the company website inside out.
- Read as much third party information on search engines as you can to familiarise yourself with the company's past, present and future.
- Speak to business associates you know have worked at the organisation for their advice.
- Utilise the knowledge your Consultant will have about their client to build a picture of previous successful interviewees, likely questions and interview structure.
- Know the job description. Having an understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the role will help you prepare and ask relevant questions. This will also help show the interviewer that you are serious about the role and have taken the time to identify how your skills will fit to their needs and expectations.

## COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

An employer's objective in an interview is to build a detailed picture of your skills, experience, competencies and personality in order to assess whether you have the correct skill set and cultural fit for their business. You meanwhile are trying to establish whether they and their firm offer you the best next step in your career. There are a number of interview questions that are commonly asked, and we would recommend that you prepare your answers in advance.

**Always remember** when responding to questions to keep your responses concise and relevant. Make sure you sell yourself and your abilities using a variety of examples that reflect different aspects of your experience.

## Typical questions that are often asked include:

### Tell me about yourself.

This is your opportunity to talk about your main attributes, your qualifications, experience and the skills that you possess, highlighting the skills that are most relevant to the position.

### What have been your major achievements?

Try to use an achievement that is work-related and fairly recent. Talk about the skills involved and how this benefited the company - try to quantify the benefit to the organisation.

### Tell me about a difficult situation that you have been in at work and how you overcame it?

Employers use this question to try to gauge what you view as a 'difficult situation' and if you are able to show a logical approach in how you go about solving problems. Always aim to show yourself in a positive light. We would normally advise that you choose a difficult situation that was not caused by you, remembering to:

- Define the problem
- Discuss the options available
- Give your final decision and reasons for your choice
- The final outcome, always try to end on a positive note

### What is it about this role that interests you?

They have asked this question to explore whether the role suits you and fits in with both your medium and long-term goals.

### What is it that you like about your current role?

Always try to relate your 'likes' to the skills that are needed for the position. Be aware of the balancing act required when answering this question; you need to appear to be positive about your current job while making it clear why you are looking for a new role.

### What is it that you dislike about your current role?

In your answer it is key that you get across to the interviewer that you are able to tackle problems and frustrations as part of your job. You can also use this to demonstrate why you are interested in their role, for example if one of your frustrations is a lack of management responsibility, and they are offering a Manager role.

## **What are your strengths?**

We recommend basing your answer around three or four key skills. You will probably be asked for examples of how you have demonstrated them, so try and prepare a few in advance of the meeting. If your job description contains key competencies for the position you are interviewing for, you should look to these for examples of skill areas you could discuss.

## **What is your greatest weakness?**

A common mistake is to say you don't have one, as this can lead to a number of other questions. There are two ways that we suggest you can tackle this; either talk about a weakness that is not a key area for the job or a weakness that you have recognised in yourself and how you have worked to overcome it.

## **What are the reasons behind your decision to leave your current employer?**

The golden rule when answering this question is not to be negative about your current employer, as this can imply disloyalty – a trait few employers seek to inherit. Simply mention all the positive reasons for why you want to move on, whether they are more responsibility, greater career prospects or a change in direction. Stay away from referring to money as the main reason for the move.

## **If asked if you are interviewing at other institutions?**

You should always be prepared to answer the question and explain what stages you are at, you do NOT need to divulge the company names though.

## **If asked about your current salary?**

It is also very common to be asked about your current compensation, and what your salary expectations are. We suggest you speak to your relevant consultant for advice on how to answer this.



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## COMPETENCY BASED QUESTIONS

There is a growing trend towards employers using 'competency-based' interviewing techniques as a way of separating the really strong candidates from the rest of the crowd. Interviewers want you to be able to talk about how you have dealt with real problems in the past, as this helps them decide how effectively you would tackle future issues you might encounter in your career with the firm. Competency based interviewing is scenario based; you are asked to give detailed examples of situations you experienced in previous roles, and use them to demonstrate your underlying skill-set. They often relate to areas such as influencing, communication, management, collaboration and conflict resolution.

**The best way to answer these questions is to break them into three parts:**

1. **Context** - what was the situation?
2. **Action** – how did you influence the situation?
3. **Outcome** – how did your actions make a positive contribution?

**Typical questions that are often asked include:**

- Can you give me an example of when you had to work under a great deal of pressure?
- Can you give me an example of when you felt that you were out of your depth? How did you handle this?
- Tell me about some risks you have taken in your working or professional life? How did you go about this?
- Can you describe some of the approaches you take when 'selling' ideas to clients / colleagues?
- When you have managed a project can you take me through how you have approached it?
- When have you had to go against general feelings or policies to accomplish a goal? Tell me about it.

## PREPARE QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Remember that an interview is a two-way process; it is not just about the company assessing whether you are right for the role, it is also an opportunity for you to find out information about the company that will help you decide whether the role is right for you. It is important to appear bright and enthusiastic, so let your questions project that image:

### Questions to ask about the company include:

- How has the company grown / developed over the past few years? Who are the company's main competitors? Ask about the competitive environment and the industry sector generally.
- Ask for more details on the company products, especially if they are complex or numerous.
- If I was offered this position what kind of training would be provided?

### Questions to ask about the position and progression opportunities include:

- What are the position's main goals and responsibilities?
- How will my performance be measured in the position?
- What is the reporting structure in the department, and to whom will I report?
- What are the computer / business systems used for the position?
- How many people will I be working with in the company / department?
- Who will be my main points of contact daily in the role?
- If I were successful and assuming I proved myself in the position, what would be the progression opportunities for me in a few years time? (However, don't give the impression that you will be looking for a promotion as soon as you are in the door.)
- Also remember that this is your opportunity to really get to grips with the details of the job itself – use the job description if available to cover off any questions you have around your day to day duties.

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

The interview is your chance to sell yourself, so don't be shy about discussing your positive points – this is your time to shine; just make sure that you are able to back up what you are saying with examples.

Your consultant will follow up the interview with you and the client, so don't worry if you have forgotten something – it can always be communicated to the client by your consultant at the feedback stage.

### It may sound obvious but ensure...

- You are punctual
- You know the date, time and exact location of your interview
- You know who you are meeting, title, phone number
- You have clear directions and know how long it is going to take you to get there
- You wear appropriate business dress and are well groomed
- You switch mobile phones and other devices off before entering the interview room
- You stand up when the interviewer enters the room and firmly shake their hand
- You concentrate on maintaining eye contact throughout the meeting, while ensuring you minimise fidgeting and slouching

## CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

If you are interested in the role, ask about the next interview stage if appropriate. If the interviewer offers you the job on the spot and you want it, accept it there and then. If you require further time to think it over, be tactful in saying so and qualify your reasons. Try and provide a definite date as to when you can provide an answer. Even if you have not decided if this is the job for you, the interviewer should be left with a positive impression – they should want to make you an offer even if you are not sure you would accept it.

### Ensure that you thank the interviewer!



## COMMON INTERVIEW MISTAKES

- Insufficient interview preparation – you did not know enough about the company or the job.
- Poor personal appearance or attitude; ensure you are dressed appropriately and neatly.
- Conceited or overbearing attitude.
- Body language - timidity, poor posture, limp handshake, no eye contact.
- Lack of tact or courtesy, arriving late for the interview, forgetting interviewer's name, not switching off your mobile phone.
- An inability to talk about your weaknesses or take responsibility for past mistakes. Making excuses or blaming someone else reflects badly on you. Confront these questions with frank answers and move on.
- No clear career path in mind which highlights a lack of plans and future career direction.
- Unclear answers, repetition and inability to organise and articulate thoughts clearly.
- Unable to quote examples relating back to experience.

- Sole objective for job change is money / package related. You give the impression that you are moving with no appreciation for what this prospective company will offer you by way of experience, company reputation and size, team or project work.
- Giving no clear / plausible reasons for leaving current position.

## FEEDBACK

After the interview it is essential that you call your recruitment consultant and provide feedback. One of the most important learning aspects of interviewing is the feedback that you will receive from your recruitment consultant after they have spoken to your potential employer. Whether it is positive or negative, it is essential that you take it on board and use it for future interviews.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the interview process please contact your consultant who will be happy to provide you with further advice and assistance.

## **YOUR JOURNEY WITH US**

Finding the right career path is a journey that extends beyond your next job opportunity. At Morgan McKinley we aim to go way beyond what other recruitment companies do, providing comprehensive, trusting and honest support at every stage of that journey. We are committed to working with you to shape the best options and provide the best advice.

## **OUR CAREER PARTNER PROGRAMME**

### **And what it means for you**

Essentially, our Career Partner Programme means that we will give you the right advice at the right time. That involves meticulous preparation for your next opportunity but it also means keeping you informed and up to date about trends and developments in your professional discipline and your industry.

*Your Career Ally*

## WORKING INTERNATIONALLY

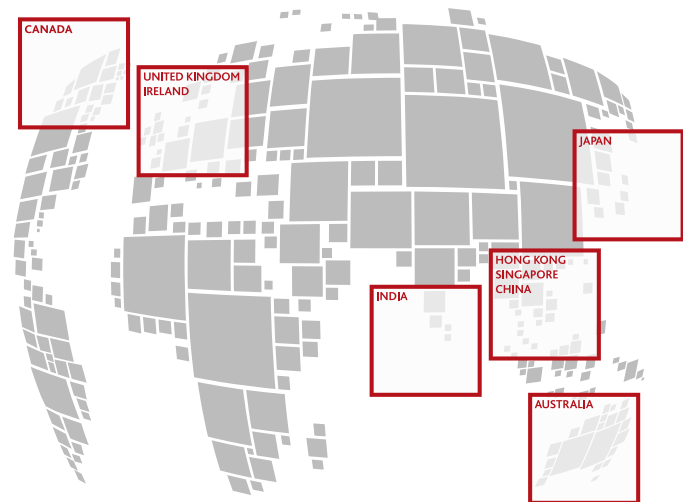
Morgan McKinley's international network of offices allows professionals to find and consider jobs with employers outside of Singapore. Moreover, working abroad offers professionals significant opportunities to experience a new way of life, as well as career development.

At Morgan McKinley, our specialist consultants combine in-depth local knowledge with international expertise to make the prospect of relocating for career reasons an exciting and realistic proposition.

In addition, we can offer practical advice and guidance on the day-to-day realities of securing and accepting a job in a different country. Our offices are located in:

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| <b>UK</b>        | <b>Singapore</b> |
| <b>Ireland</b>   | <b>China</b>     |
| <b>Japan</b>     | <b>Australia</b> |
| <b>Hong Kong</b> | <b>Canada</b>    |

Morgan McKinley can offer you support and advice about working abroad - contact us today to find out how we can help you.



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