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Your Career Our Mission

INTERVIEW SUCCESS GUIDE

Prepare with confidence. Communicate your value.
Get closer to the offer.



Fartun Mohamed

Founder & Career/Workforce Development Practitioner

Career & Workforce Development Resources

A practical, human guide to preparing for interviews, answering questions clearly, and showing employers the value you bring.

How to Use This Guide

You do not need perfect answers to succeed in an interview. You need to understand the role, prepare relevant examples, communicate clearly, and show how your experience can help the employer.

Your goal: Be prepared, relevant, clear, and authentic.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

1. Understand the Job

Start with the job posting. Identify what the employer is really looking for.

Look for:

- Required education, certifications, technical skills, and experience
- Key responsibilities and problems you may be expected to solve
- The people, clients, customers, or communities you will serve
- Important skills and behaviours such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, adaptability, organization, and digital skills

Turn requirements into evidence

Job Requirement	My Evidence
Customer service	Supported 150+ clients
Communication	Facilitated 20+ workshops
Problem-solving	Resolved client barriers through individualized support
Teamwork	Collaborated with employers and community partners

Do not simply say you have a skill. Prepare evidence that demonstrates it.

2. Research the Employer

Spend 20–30 minutes learning about the organization and the role.

- What does the organization do?
- Who does it serve?
- What are its priorities?
- What services, programs, or products does it offer?
- What is happening in its industry?
- Why are you interested in this organization?
- How does this position contribute to its goals?

Prepare a specific answer: “I am interested in this organization because…”

3. Build Your Career Story

A common opening question is: “Tell me about yourself.” This is not an invitation to tell your entire life story.

PRESENT → PAST → FUTURE

- Present: Who are you professionally?
- Past: What relevant experience and accomplishments do you bring?
- Future: Why are you interested in this opportunity?

Aim for about 60–90 seconds.

Example: “I am an employment services professional with experience supporting job seekers, building employer relationships, and delivering employment-readiness programs. In my previous roles, I supported clients with career planning, job-search strategies, and workplace preparation. I am now looking to bring that experience to an organization where I can contribute to strong client outcomes and workforce development.”

4. Prepare Your Achievement Stories

Do not memorize answers. Prepare 6–8 real stories that you can adapt to different questions.

1. A problem you solved
2. A challenging client or customer situation
3. A successful project
4. A time you worked effectively with a team
5. A conflict you handled
6. A time you demonstrated leadership
7. A mistake or setback and what you learned
8. A measurable achievement

Your stories are your interview evidence bank.

5. Use STAR—But Keep It Conversational

SITUATION → TASK → ACTION → RESULT

- Situation: What was happening?
- Task: What were you responsible for?
- Action: What specifically did you do?
- Result: What changed because of your actions?

Focus most of your answer on what you did and what happened as a result.

Example: A client was struggling to find employment because of several barriers. I assessed the situation, identified the main barriers, adjusted the job-search approach, and connected the client with relevant resources. As a result, the client developed a clearer employment plan and began applying for positions that better matched their skills and goals.

6. Turn Responsibilities Into Evidence

Employers want to understand what you achieved—not only what your job involved.

Instead of saying...	Show the evidence...
“I was responsible for customer service.”	“I supported 150+ clients and maintained a 95% satisfaction rate.”
“I organized workshops.”	“I facilitated 20+ employment-readiness workshops on workplace culture and job-search strategies.”

A strong answer often follows: ACTION + SKILL + RESULT

7. Prepare for Common Questions

Why do you want this job?

Connect your experience + the role + the organization. Be specific about why the opportunity interests you.

Why should we hire you?

Name a relevant strength, support it with evidence, and explain the value you can bring.

What is your greatest strength?

Choose a strength that matters for the role and give a real example.

What is your weakness?

Choose something genuine and manageable. Explain what you are doing to improve it.

For weaknesses, use: WEAKNESS → ACTION → IMPROVEMENT.

Avoid a scripted answer such as “I’m a perfectionist.”

8. Be Ready for Behavioural Questions

Behavioural questions ask about what you have actually done.

- “Tell me about a time...”
- “Give me an example...”
- “Describe a situation...”
- “How did you handle...?”

If you can describe what you actually did, use a real example instead of explaining what you would do.

9. Prepare for Situational Questions

Situational questions ask how you would respond to a hypothetical situation.

UNDERSTAND → ASSESS → ACT → COMMUNICATE → FOLLOW UP

Example: “First, I would listen carefully and clarify the concern. I would assess the situation, identify what I could address immediately, communicate the available options clearly, take appropriate action, and follow up.”

10. If You Are a Newcomer or Have International Experience

Do not apologize for your experience. Translate it into language that connects to the role.

Instead of saying: “I worked overseas.”

Try: “I bring experience working in diverse environments, coordinating stakeholders, and delivering programs with limited resources.”

- Leadership
- Communication
- Project management
- Customer service
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Adaptability
- Relationship building
- Technical expertise

If you have limited Canadian experience, show how your skills transfer to the role and demonstrate your understanding of the Canadian workplace.

11. If You Do Not Know the Answer

You can pause and think. Try:

- “That’s a good question. Let me take a moment to think of an example.”
- “I haven’t encountered that exact situation, but based on my experience, I would approach it by…”

Never invent experience. Honest reasoning is stronger than a made-up answer.

12. When You Have Limited Experience

You can demonstrate capability through more than formal employment.

- School or internships
- Volunteering and community work
- Projects or freelance work
- Part-time employment
- Student leadership
- Relevant family or community responsibilities

What did you do? What did you learn? What evidence can you provide?

13. Prepare for Virtual Interviews

- Test your camera, microphone, and internet connection
- Choose a quiet, professional setting
- Put your phone on silent
- Keep your resume and job posting nearby
- Join 5–10 minutes early
- Look at the camera when speaking
- Keep notes brief—do not read your answers

Your notes should remind you of key points, not become a script.

14. Use AI as a Practice Partner

AI can help you prepare, but it should not replace your own voice or experience.

- Generate practice questions
- Identify skills in a job posting
- Run mock interviews
- Improve clarity
- Identify gaps in your examples
- Practise difficult questions

Use AI as a practice partner—not as your personality.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

15. Communicate With Confidence

- Listen carefully
- Pause before answering
- Speak clearly and stay focused
- Give specific examples
- Show genuine enthusiasm
- Ask thoughtful questions

If you do not understand a question, it is okay to ask: “Could you please clarify what you mean by...?”

16. Avoid Common Interview Mistakes

Very long answers: Aim for about 1–2 minutes for most behavioural answers.

Generic answers: Give a specific example.

Repeating your resume: Explain the story behind your experience.

Speaking negatively about past employers: Stay professional and future-focused.

Saying “I don’t have experience” and stopping: Identify related or transferable experience.

Memorizing answers: Remember your key stories, not scripts.

Not asking questions: Prepare 3–5 questions in advance.

17. Ask Thoughtful Questions

Good questions show preparation and genuine interest.

- What would success look like in the first three to six months?
- What are the most important priorities for the person stepping into this role?
- How does this position work with the rest of the team?
- What is the biggest challenge someone in this role would need to address?
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

18. Follow Up Professionally

Send a short thank-you message within 24 hours.

Subject: Thank You – [Position Title] Interview

Dear [Name],

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about the [Position Title] opportunity. I appreciated learning more about the role and the team's priorities. Our conversation reinforced my interest in the position, and I would welcome the opportunity to contribute my experience in [relevant area].

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,
[Your Name]

19. If You Do Not Get the Job

A rejection does not automatically mean you were not qualified. Hiring decisions can depend on timing, specific experience, internal candidates, team needs, or another candidate being a closer match.

If appropriate, ask: "If you are able to share any feedback, I would appreciate knowing what I could strengthen for future opportunities."

Every interview can help you improve your next one.

YOUR 24-HOUR INTERVIEW PREPARATION PLAN

24 hours before

- Review the job posting
- Research the organization
- Identify the top five requirements

- Prepare 6–8 achievement stories
- Practise “Tell me about yourself”
- Practise common behavioural questions
- Prepare 3–5 questions
- Confirm the interview location or link
- Prepare your clothes and materials

30 minutes before

- Review your key stories
- Review the job requirements
- Take a few deep breaths
- Put your phone away
- Join early
- Remind yourself: You earned the interview. Now show them what you can bring.

THE INTERVIEW CHEAT SHEET

KNOW Know the job.

RESEARCH Know the employer.

PROVE Use examples and achievements.

CONNECT Connect your experience to the employer’s needs.

COMMUNICATE Be clear, concise, and genuine.

ASK Ask thoughtful questions.

FOLLOW UP Leave a professional final impression.

FINAL INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

- Can I explain why I want this job?
- Can I explain why I am qualified?
- Can I describe my three strongest relevant skills?
- Do I have specific examples of my achievements?
- Can I explain how I solved a problem?
- Can I explain a challenge I overcame?
- Can I discuss teamwork?
- Can I discuss a mistake and what I learned?
- Can I explain the value I would bring?
- Do I have thoughtful questions for the employer?
- Can I tell my career story in 60–90 seconds?
- Have I practised without memorizing?

A FINAL MESSAGE FOR JOB SEEKERS

You do not need to be the loudest person in the interview.

Be prepared. Be relevant. Be clear. Be authentic.

Your resume got you through the first door. Your interview is your opportunity to demonstrate the value behind your resume.

You do not need perfect answers. You need honest examples, clear communication, and a strong connection between your experience and the employer's needs.

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