

How to Prepare for a Panel Interview



Posted by [George Jacob](#) in Companies • 3 Days Ago



In trying to snag a high-level job, you may have to undergo a panel interview in which you sit in the hot seat while a panel of managers and executives judge your abilities. Organizations often do this to streamline the interview process, but they may also conduct this type of interview to see how you perform under pressure. Either way, it is important to prepare questions, answers and techniques for a successful panel interview.

If the organization has not informed you of the makeup of your panel, ask the recruiter or hiring manager to give you the interviewers' names and titles. You may have already met one or more panel members in a prior interview. Try to memorize their names, and match them with faces if you have access to photos. This way, you can more easily address them during the interview. Lisa Quast of Forbes adds that learning their titles and job areas helps you to understand what is most important to each interviewer.

During your [interview preparation](#), you should also come up with questions to ask the panel near the end of the interview. While one-on-one interviews allow you to ask all your questions to one person, you should come up with at least one question for each member of a panel interview, showing respect and acknowledgement of each individual. According to HR expert Frank Lyons, asking thoughtful questions is important for showing a panel that you have vision for the future.

Another important aspect of interview preparation is preparing to answer questions the panel may ask you. Brainstorm possible questions based on the positions and interests of each panel member, and practice giving your responses out loud to become more familiar with them. Science Magazine suggests that you practice your answer to "Tell us about yourself," which often starts off an interview.

Be careful not to make the mistake of thinking a [panel interview](#) is just like any other interview. Practice good panel interview etiquette by introducing yourself to each interviewer before you begin, making eye contact and giving a firm handshake. During the interview itself, it is important that you make eye contact with all members. Pay attention to whoever is asking a question, and keep eye contact with that person as you begin answering the question. As you expand on your answer, glance from one interviewer to the next, being careful not to miss anyone.

After the interview ends, be sure to send a personal thank-you note to each panel member. This follow-up technique shows that you have good etiquette and respect. A panel interview may seem intimidating, but remaining calm and collected is key. Panel interviewers know that you are feeling pressured and nervous, so don't let a small mistake or awkward pause throw you off. With preparation, you can impart a positive impression on your interviewers.

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