

Getting Ready for the Interview

A lot of us are quite nervous when we go through our first interviews. There are a lot of things at stake and it might be hard not to freak out, but don't panic. You can do this if you prepare. With interviews as with lots of other things in life, practice makes perfect. In order to get this practice try doing mock interviews pretending that you're in an interview even if it's not real will help you perform your best. You'll be more comfortable thinking out loud and providing clear answers to complicated questions. To do these mock interviews, recruit a friend or family member that's willing to practice with you. Even if they don't know the actual content, they can still help you get into interview mode. By practicing you'll get used to articulating yourself clearly which is key to nailing an interview. It's not just about knowing the answers. You also need to share your ideas clearly and concisely, for example, take some general technical subjects like DHCP, DNS, Active Directory, or any other technical area you've learned about. Have a friend or family member ask you to explain the concept to them. What's it for? How is it used? Practicing explanations for a non-technical audience will get used to breaking down complicated ideas and sharing them in basic terms. They can also create their own troubleshooting scenarios like asking you to explain what you did the last time you fix their printer or got their network online. While you're practicing answering questions you should also practice active listening habits, maintain eye contact with the other person, not understanding when they speak, and ask relevant follow-up questions. If you can, it's great to practice with someone who also plans to interview for similar roles. This way you can take turns being the interviewer and the interviewee. This will allow you to put yourself in the interviewer's shoes and understand how best to answer each question. Now keep in mind, I don't recommend trying to script or memorize all of your answers. Instead, try explaining the same concepts in different ways. This allows for a more natural conversation and will help you adapt your answers in the actual interview where you won't know the questions. What you can write down and memorize is your elevator pitch. An elevator pitch is a short summary of who you are and what kind of career you're looking for. Make sure to include information like what you're passionate about, how you would like to grow, and what you're looking for in a new role. Practice delivering this pitch to different people and see how it sounds, even if you have it memorized, stay flexible, you never know in which context you may need it. Reading your first elevator pitch from scratch can be hard. I've included a few examples in the next supplemental reading when developing your own, make sure that you keep it personal. Again, the key to getting interviews right is to practice practice practice. This will help you feel less nervous and show your best self during the actual interviews.

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