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# S3 Group Interview Preparation Guide

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It is vitally important to be fully prepared for an interview. This is a step-by-step guide to help you prepare.

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## S3 Group Interview Preparation Guide

Thorough preparation for any interview has a critical effect on the outcome. In order to give yourself the best chance of succeeding, it is vital that you do as much research as possible. By going through this document and following the advice within it, you should be able to walk into any interview with confidence, knowing that you will leave the interviewer with the best possible impression of you.

### Interview Checklist

#### 1 **Research the Company**

Read press releases, what is happening in the company? Any major news? What can you find out about the key management team? What are their backgrounds? Do you know anyone who works there already? Talk to them, find out about company culture.

#### 2 **Research the Company's industry**

Who are the key competitors? What is happening in the industry? What are the industry trends? How do the company's products, solutions, or services differ from what the competitors are doing?

#### 3 **Go through the job description**

Do you thoroughly understand what is required of the role? What are the key requirements? How will you be measured? Do you have a Bio of the interviewer? Make sure you have an understanding of how you need to sell yourself

#### 4 **Confirm the details**

Make sure you have confirmed the date, time, and location of the interview with your consultant at S3 Group. Do you know who to ask for at reception? Make sure you know how to get to the office and allow yourself plenty of time to get there. Now is the time to get your suit dry cleaned, and get a hair cut if needed.

#### 5 **Develop an interview strategy**

You know what they are looking for from the job description. How are you going to match your skills against this? How are you going to prove that you are the best fit for the role? What have you done previously that adequately prepares you for this position?

#### 6 **Meet with S3 Group for an interview brief**

Once you have prepared the above, meet with your consultant at S3 Group for a practice run. Discuss any areas that you feel weak in or are nervous about. Deal with questions that you are unsure about.

#### 7 **Prepare for difficult questions**

If there is a gap in your resume, make sure you can explain it. Make sure you are prepared for questions on why you are looking to leave, and what you want to do with your career

#### 8 **Prepare a list of 15-20 questions**

Take a notepad with you. Have your questions written down. If through the course of the interview some of your questions are answered, don't worry – just ask those that have not been covered.

Do **NOT** skip this. If you don't ask questions, you will fail.

#### 9 **Develop a list of "interview anecdotes" to use when answering questions**

This is particularly useful if you are asked competency based questions

#### 10 **Prepare copies of your educational certificates, references, commission statements, etc**

You may not need these in the 1<sup>st</sup> interview, but should you progress to the next stage they will be required. Save time – get them ready now.

#### 11 **Arrive 10 minutes early. Make sure you have time to compose yourself**



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## Interview Checklist

Providing that you have done your research on the company and the role available, you should now be feeling confident about the interview, and should be looking forward to demonstrating how suitable you are for the job.

You will now know what the employer is looking for, you will be confident in the fact that you have the appropriate skills and experience necessary to impress. You will also know what you have done in the past that proves you have the required experience to be successful in this role.

### Below are some general tips for during the interview itself

- ✓ Give a firm handshake and maintain good eye contact
- ✓ Take notes
- ✓ Don't forget to use anecdotes when answering questions
- ✓ Listen to the question. Confirm what they mean. Give your answer
- ✓ If you don't understand a question, don't be afraid to say so
- ✓ Be descriptive with your answers, don't just answer "yes" or "no"
- ✓ Maintain a balance between giving too short an answer and talking too long
- ✓ Do NOT be negative about your current or last employer. This is interview suicide!
- ✓ Be determined. Make it clear, professionally, that you really want this job
- ✓ Sell yourself, tell the employer how great you are, but do so without arrogance
- ✓ Be positive. Be enthusiastic. Be honest
- ✓ NEVER ask about package, benefits, holiday, or bonuses during the first interview

## Common Interview Questions

### **Q: Why are you looking to leave your current company?**

A: You need to give answers that do not reflect negatively on your current or previous employer, but also highlight a genuine desire to move. Never mention you are leaving for more money as this is a short term motivator. Career progression is a safe bet here, a great challenge, and opportunity to learn more, etc

### **Q: What is your greatest achievement to date?**

A: Be prepared to discuss an achievement that is pertinent to the role you are interviewing for. If you are in sales, mention the biggest or most complex deal you have closed. If you are in a technical role, talk about zero downtime, or a successful project you worked on that is relevant to the job you are interviewing for.

### **Q: What are your strengths?**

A: Be straightforward but intelligent. I had one candidate answer this as "Football". FAIL

### **Q: What are your weaknesses?**

A: Be honest. Answers like "I am too hard working" are very transparent. The interviewer is looking for evidence that you are self-aware. To prepare for this question, ask others around you before the interview, friends, co-workers, etc. When discussing weaknesses, always add what you are doing to improve on them, or how you are overcoming them.

### **Q: Why do you think you are a good fit for the role?**

A: This is your golden opportunity to sell yourself. Providing that you understand what the interviewer is looking for, you can



## Closing the Interview

At the end of the interview, once the interviewer feels he has sufficient information to evaluate your suitability for the role, he will ask if you have any questions. This is the point where you can ask any of your 15-20 questions that have not already been covered during the course of the interview.

Once you have asked your questions, and the interview is drawing to a close, there are a few final steps to take.

- If you are interviewing for a sales role, this is where you need to close.
- Ask the interviewer, based on your discussion, how well he feels you fit the role.
- Ask if there are any areas of your experience that need further clarification
- Ask him if he feels that there are any areas you are weak in
- Ask what the next steps are. Is there another interview after this? If so, who with?
- If you feel the interview has gone well, ask if the client feels you have done enough to warrant a second interview.
- It is possible that the interviewer will not give too much away, and may tell you that they are still interviewing other candidates. Do not be discouraged by this. Frequently the interviewer will need to consult others before making a decision on the next step.
- Feel free to tell the interviewer how interested you are, and thank them for their time.

**AS SOON AS YOU LEAVE THE INTERVIEW, CALL YOUR CONSULTANT AT S3 GROUP FOR A DEBRIEF. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU CALL WHILE THE INTERVIEW IS STILL FRESH IN YOUR MIND.**