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EXEC INTERVIEW  
PREP GUIDE

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# FORGOT HOW TO INTERVIEW?



If you are an Executive recently out of work or one looking for a job change, its possible you haven't had an interview in years. Perhaps you are used to having jobs referred to you in your network and have had less formal interviews in the past. Whatever the reason, preparation for the interview process will ensure you improve your close rate on receiving job offers. Executive job searches take on average five months up to one full year, and with less opportunities at the Executive level its very important to ensure you put your best foot forward when going to interview.

# PRACTICE HARDER THAN YOU PLAY



To prepare for your interview set aside at least an hour so you can:

- Review the job description for the organization you are going to interview with.
- Research the interviewer and leadership team at the company (besides the company page, go to the LinkedIn company page and click People to see the current list), review their story and areas of possible rapport building.
- Read up on latest industry trends relating to the organization.
- Read company press releases and any recent publications
- Review company financials, website and any public information.
- Think of 10 questions you would have regarding the position and company, write them down, we have included some sample questions for you in this guide.

# DO YOUR RESEARCH



It's important to know what your ask will be for an offer, having done the initial research on the position, salary range (if its posted) and being mindful of the stage the company is in (current revenue and size, startup, growth, maturity). **Remember if you do not ask, you will not get.**

- Our door at Ready Set Exec is always open for a consult on compensation ranges recommended for the position you are interviewing for.
- Review publicly listed salary bands, as well as compensation guides posted online.
- Know your minimum salary requirements that you require.
- Equity considerations, what risk do you take from a compensation standpoint taking a lower salary with equity if the equity is high risk?
- If you expect some form of LTIP (Long term incentive plan) consult with a tax accountant for your tax obligations.
- Vacation and Benefits, what are your expectations?
- Remote / Hybrid / On Site, what are your expectations and what is negotiable?
- Relocation / Travel? what are your work boundaries.

Make a list of your must haves and your negotiables. Think about what kind of situation you can live with long term, agreeing to 75% travel when you know you can't commit to it long term can lead to frustration and a short lived engagement. Be honest and transparent in your negotiations while maintaining your work boundaries.

# BE PRESENT AND ENGAGED



Here are some sample questions to ask your new potential employer, think of some more that are important to you, write them down and have them ready.

- How is success measured in this role?
- Why is this position available?
- What will the first three months look like in this position?
- What are the primary goals of the company right now?
- What are the biggest issues the organization is currently facing?
- What skills would you consider to be the most important for this position?
- Can you give me an idea of the workplace culture?
- What is the reporting structure for this role?
- What are the next steps to this process?
- When is the expected start date?





# BE A STORYTELLER



Embrace the art of storytelling when responding to questions, weaving your past experiences into a tapestry that illustrates your points and showcases the diverse scenarios you've navigated throughout your career.

Demonstrate authenticity by owning up to mistakes and acknowledging moments when your actions deviated from your usual self. Share compelling stories from your previous roles that substantiate the skills and qualifications outlined in your resume.

Project high energy and enthusiasm to leave a lasting impression. Actively listen, engage, and interact with your audience, empowering them in the process. Forge connections by being personable and authentic without undermining past employers.

Craft stories that spotlight your experiences, accomplishments, and profound industry knowledge without casting a shadow on previous workplaces. As you approach the sample questions on the following page, ask yourself: "Do I have a story for this?"

Practice articulating key landmarks, accomplishments, and moments of pride, speaking passionately about both successes and failures. In the realm of executive positions emotional intelligence is as crucial as intellectual acumen.

# KEEP IT SIMPLE



A simple yet effective methodology for answering questions in an interview is the STAR technique, try this to have some structure to your answers.

- S - Situation: Illuminate a scenario highlighting your exceptional leadership.
- T - Task: Showcase tasks where your leadership prowess shone through.
- A - Action: Detail the specific actions you orchestrated to attain your objectives.
- R - Result: Showcase achievements by quantifying success - for instance, "I propelled revenue by an impressive 30% quarter over quarter."

Master the STAR technique to dazzle in your executive interviews. Your goal with your answers is to:

- Show you are interested in the position and company, that you understand what is expected.
- Highlight your strengths and how they pertain to the role.
- Emphasize the value you bring to the organization, your skills and professionalism.



# PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Take some time and practice answering the following questions using the STAR method as well as storytelling.

- What are your strongest traits?
- Tell me about your biggest success and failure?
- Why do you want to be a leader in our company?
- Why did you leave your last job (why do you want to leave your present job)?
- What is your management style?
- What are your core values?
- Can you give me an example of a time you had to motivate your staff?
- What is your strategy for increasing company revenue?
- What would you want to accomplish within your first six months of employment?
- What do you think our company is succeeding at? What do you think needs to be changed?
- How would you approach an employee about poor work performance?
- How would you reward your employees for adequate work?
- What is the most challenging aspect of the job for you as an executive?
- What metrics do you consider the most important when conducting performance evaluations?
- What areas do you believe you could improve in?
- How would you gain buy-in from your team on new initiatives?
- What is the most satisfying thing about being in a leadership role?
- What leadership roles do you assume outside of the workplace?
- How would you ensure a successful employee onboarding process?
- How would you address employee complaints about company procedures?
- What is the most competitive situation you've ever experienced?
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision without all information you needed?
- What is the most difficult situation you've ever faced at work?
- Describe a time when you faced an ethical dilemma at work?
- Describe a time when you struggled to build a relationship with someone important. How did you eventually overcome that?
- Describe a situation when you faced a particularly demanding problem or challenge in your personal life. How did that affect you in your job?



# THE INTERVIEW

## BEFORE

- If meeting in person, dress professionally but try and adhere to company dress code.
- Have 3 updated copies of your resume on hand.
- Firm hand shake when greeting, eye contact with the questioner when answering.
- Avoid filler words like umms, ahhs.
- Stay hydrated and go to the bathroom, an executive interview can sometimes run longer than expected.
- Show up 15 minutes early, if online test your system in advance for connectivity issues whether you are using Teams/Zoom/Google meet. Have the programs installed and test your sound prior.
- Relax! if you need to do some meditation or breathing exercise prior to calm your nerves do what helps you feel at ease. When in doubt, Youtube 5 minute meditation or breathing exercises.

## AFTER

- Follow up with an email thanking the person for their time, ask them if they have any other questions for you and next steps. A personal touch is always appreciated.
- Follow up regularly just enough to show you are interested without pestering internal teams, sometimes the hiring process can take time.
- Don't take it personally if you don't hear back right away, and if you are ghosted by the company after an interview then you probably dodged a bullet.
- If you do get an offer letter, consider making a counter offer if you feel the offer wasn't compelling enough. You should not negotiate from a position of fear of rejection but instead of feeling of mutual compromise and starting the business relationship on a solid footing and with a fair offer.
- If you don't get the job, ask for feedback, it can't hurt and can help you see gaps and things for you to work on, it may help give you closure.



# THANK YOU!



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Thank you for taking the time to read interview prep guide for Executives. We hope this guide helps you have a successful interview. At Ready Set Exec we work to ensure our candidates are provided with the most transparent information possible on new roles as well as working with you to prepare for the interview. Our goal is to present you with the best opportunities with great companies to work for, do your part by being prepared, engaged and ready to put your best foot forward in the process.

Please like and follow our LINKEDIN page and see additional insights on our website. We would love to be in your consideration as a potential search partner for your next role in sales, marketing, HR and operations.

All the best,

Patrick, John and the team at READY SET EXEC

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