

Job interview hacks.

The framework to landing and accepting the job you want.

CONVERSATION

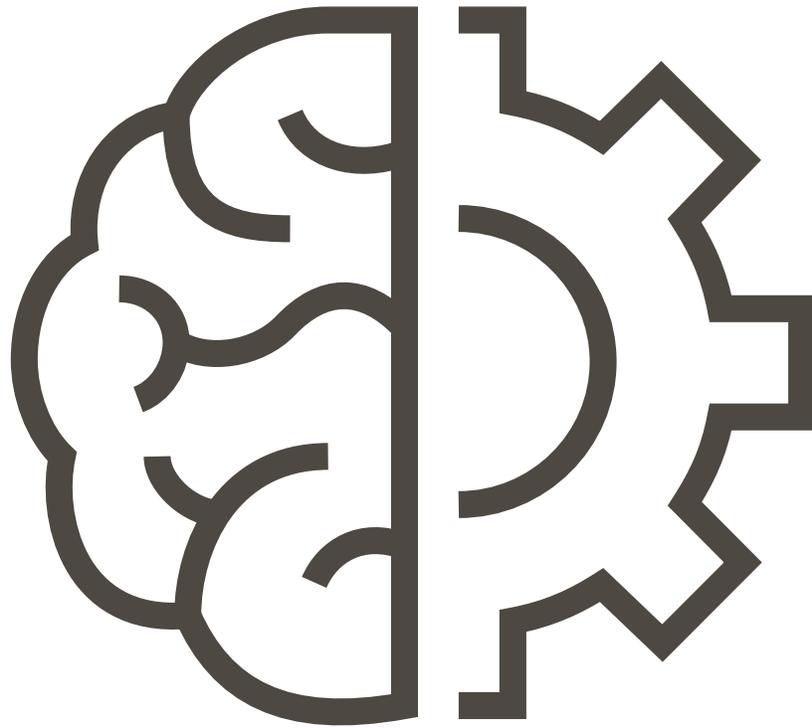
OUTPERFORM

OPPORTUNITY



HGI

HARRISON GROUP INC.



Getting ready for an interview is way more than just dressing for success.

You've already separated yourself from the piles of resumes and applications to land an interview. But your job – which is getting the job – isn't over yet. Even construction professionals with years of experience and tons of talent can stumble when face-to-face with an interviewer.

Yes, an interview can be intimidating, but relax; we've been helping construction professionals like you thrive in their interviews for decades.

In this guide, you'll find our most valuable strategies, tools and tips to turn interviews into offers and to accept that offer when you get it.

So, are you ready to close the deal and connect with the job you want? Check out these interview hacks.

Hack 1:

Gather intel on the employer.

Even though you're not working there yet, you should be able to talk about this company like you've been there for years. Learn as much as you can about its history, its current situation and its future.



Put Google to work for you. Go beyond the basic research and set up Google alerts to get up-to-the-minute news about the company. Then take that a step further: set the same alert for the company's competitors. You can even use the "company search" feature on LinkedIn to see who has recently joined or left the company. Get as much information as it takes to help you shine during an interview.

Additional sources of information include:

- A recruiter
- Company websites
- Periodicals and trade journals
- Annual reports and 10K reports
- Friends and business associates

Then, once you feel comfortable in your knowledge about the company, study up on the position. Find out what are the primary responsibilities and expectations and be prepared to ask questions like:

- Who has been successful and why?
- What technical skills are required?
- Who has failed and why?
- Who does the position report to?

Hack 2:

Get to know yourself.

Start by reviewing your career history thoroughly. Get familiar with all dates, positions, responsibilities and accomplishments. Brush up on any new accreditations, trends and industry jargon. Focus on your most recent positions but don't be afraid to highlight your progress throughout your career. You don't want to be struggling to recall any important info while the pressure is on.



Next, take a good, honest look at your strengths and weaknesses. Be prepared to cite specific examples of how your assets have helped your employers achieve success. Also, use your knowledge of the company and the position to explain to the interviewer why your strengths are the right fit.

Being able to stay composed when discussing your experiences and achievements will make a world of difference. Remember, the prospective employer will make his or her hiring decision based on these key factors:

- Attitude and business poise
- Image, presentation and communication skills
- Experience and skillset
- Education and certifications
- Transferrable industry and technical background

Hack 3:

Prepare smart answers.

Practicing before your interview is critical. Of course, you won't know every question the interviewer will ask, but by role-playing with a friend, neighbor, relative or even your recruiter, you'll start to get into the flow of recalling information, answering questions and thinking on your feet.

The following are some popular interview questions to help you prepare an answer. Now, there are no standard answers to these questions, but being able to provide quick, honest, direct and positive responses can make your interview more memorable and more successful. Where applicable, make sure to tie your answers into real-life examples that demonstrate the potential positive impact you can have on the employer.

- What are your short- and long-term career goals?
- What are you looking for in a job?
- Why are you leaving your current job?
- Why did you choose to interview with our company?
- What do you enjoy about working in IT or engineering? What do you dislike?
- What can you do for us that someone else cannot do?
- Why should we hire you?
- Do you work well under tight deadlines?
- What management style is most effective for you?
- What are your biggest accomplishments in your present or last job? In your career?
- What was the last new technical skill you learned?
- What is your biggest strength? Your biggest weakness?
- What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in this role?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
- How long would it take you to make a contribution to our company?
- How long would you stay with us?
- If you could start your career again, what would you do differently?
- What new goals or objectives have you established recently? Why?
- How has your leadership style changed over the years?
- What qualities do you like or dislike in your boss?
- What was the most difficult ethical decision you ever had to make? What was the result?
- Describe a situation in which your work was criticized. How did you handle it?
- How would you evaluate your present company?

Hack 4:

Prepare smart questions.

A good interview should be a free-flowing conversation, not a soliloquy or an aggressive question-and-answer session. Be sure to ask questions that can help you learn more about the position, make you look informed and give you a better idea of where you stand with the interviewer.



Here are some questions to consider asking:

- How do you feel your major competitors stack up against you in terms of product, market share, marketing strategies, strengths and weaknesses? (This is where you can use your up-to-date news from your Google alerts to really wow them.)
- In the recent history of the company, what has been the biggest advance and what has been the biggest setback?
- What is your highest priority in the next six months and how could someone like me help?
- Can you give me an idea of what a typical day would be like if I were to get the position?
- What characteristics do your best employees have in common?
- Where do you see your company going in the next several years?
- What are three main qualities you are looking for in a candidate?
- Do you have any concerns about my ability to be successful with you company?
- Could I have an opportunity to meet some of the people with whom I would be working?
- What are your personal satisfactions and disappointments since you have been with the company?

Hack 5: Dress for the job you want.

It's important that your outfit convey confidence, professionalism and respect for the interviewer. There's no one-size-fits-all dress code for every position with every company. However, for engineering and IT professionals, the following guidelines generally apply:

Field positions

While applying for a technical position, you won't need a suit unless your recruiter says otherwise. For men, arriving for the interview in a collared shirt or sweater paired with khakis or slacks works well. For women, suitable attire could include a blouse and a skirt.

Operations position

For a higher-level job, like a managerial position, make sure to upgrade your attire accordingly. Dress to impress in a suit, pantsuit or skirt suit. It's smart to stick with "safe" colors when choosing your interview outfit: think black, navy and gray. Avoid ostentatious accessories and loud colors.

While dressing for success helps bring a job offer, the most important thing to wear is a smile. Displaying positivity through your posture, your attitude and your confidence is key. Interviewees who exhibit a positive attitude are more likely to snag the job they want.



Hack 6:

Prepare for the salary question.

The question of compensation can be pretty sensitive. You should never start discussions about salary during your interview. Actually, it's important to note that, in some states, it's now illegal for an employer to ask an interviewee to identify their prior pay. So, while the interviewer may ask you what you're looking for, in most cases, it's best to defer salary negotiations to your recruiter.



Keep any salary discussions vague.

If, in fact, you are asked directly what salary you are looking for, try to avoid quoting a specific figure. Instead, offer this response: "I am very interested in the opportunity and I feel I can make a meaningful contribution. I would be open to a competitive offer per industry standards and based on what a person with my experience is worth at your company." It's best not to name a figure if at all possible—you don't want to over- or under-price yourself.

Leave the negotiations to your recruiter.

Part of a recruiter's job is to handle sensitive negotiations and move both parties to a fair and acceptable compensation package. We do this for a living and can often offer alternatives that will satisfy both parties. We are also a good buffer and can keep sensitive negotiations on a professional level.

So, while it's important to educate yourself and conduct some research on what you're worth, be sure to discuss any salary and benefits questions with your recruiter.

Hack 7:

Follow through by following up.

Even after you've shaken hands and said goodbye, the interview process isn't over. Instead, you must continue to sell yourself and reinforce your qualifications.

Sending a follow-up letter is a great way to remind the interviewer about your skills and could be your last chance to communicate things you forgot to say during your discussion. These days, a follow-up letter is more than a courtesy – it's an imperative. Choosing not to send one could actually lead to someone else getting the position you worked so hard to attain.

Here are a few points to consider:

- Send the follow-up letter as soon as possible. This allows you to convey a sense of urgency and a high interest level in the opportunity. Ideally, your letter should go out the next day.
- A hard copy letter is preferred, but an email is acceptable. You can also send a LinkedIn note.
- Be as brief as possible. It demonstrates respect for the interviewer's time.
- The body of the letter should accomplish four main objectives:
 - Thanking the interviewer for their time.
 - Reiterating interest and enthusiasm in the company and position.
 - Highlighting your experiences and accomplishments.
 - Asking if you can proceed to the next step.

Have someone carefully proofread your letter, then email it as an attached document to your recruiter for a final review. Together, we'll make sure that your follow-up letter represents you and everything you have to offer.

Hack 8:

Review the offer the right way.

When all your preparation brings an offer, what do you do next? Review any offers with the bigger picture in mind. Here are some points to consider as you review your offers:



Most companies want to make a fair offer.

They want to bring new employees on board at a salary level that will entice them to accept the offer. At the same time, they also need to remain consistent with their existing compensation structure for that position.

Manage your expectations.

Organizations keep a close eye on salaries, so make sure your expectations are realistic. Speak with your recruiter to get an accurate understanding of what the position should earn in your specific location.

The position is the single most important element of your decision.

If the company, the position or the environment is a poor fit for you, no amount of money will fix that. A quality position and the opportunity to work with people in a dynamic work environment offer many rewards that money cannot buy.

Consider the whole package.

Compensation packages are a combination of salary, bonus, titles and perks. These elements can be arranged and rearranged—sometimes very creatively—to satisfy both you and the company.

Hack 9:

Be a good quitter.

Resigning from any job can be emotional and stressful, however there are several things you can do to make the process go smoothly. Here are some tips to handling resignations and counteroffers:



Put it in writing.

Once you know you're leaving, have a conversation with your boss, as soon as possible—and bring a formal resignation letter. This resignation letter will become a part of your permanent record. Keep the focus on the positive aspects of your career move rather than any negative aspects of your old situation. Make it thorough, but brief, and professional, not personal, for your own protection.

The sooner you leave the company, the better.

Once you resign, you are in a “lame duck” position. So, give fair notice, but ask to be relieved as soon as possible. The company will get by without you and you should now invest your time and energy into getting ready for your new opportunity.

Counteroffers are a lose-lose situation.

Though it may seem like a good idea, there are many reasons for not accepting a counteroffer. Check out this excerpt from The Wall Street Journal:

Ten reasons for not accepting a counteroffer:

1. What kind of company are you working for if you have to threaten to resign before they pay you what you are worth?
2. All companies have strict wage and salary guidelines, so where is the money for the counteroffer coming from? Is it your next raise early?
3. Your company may immediately start looking for a new person at a cheaper price. In many cases, you could be training your replacement.
4. You now have made your employer aware that you are unhappy. From this day on, your loyalty will always be in question.
5. The fact that you considered leaving may hurt your chances for a promotion.
6. When times get rough, your employer may begin the cutbacks with you.
7. The same circumstances that caused you to consider a change will most likely not change.
8. 85% of people who accept a counteroffer are gone in six months, and 90% of people who accept are gone in twelve months.
9. Accepting a counteroffer is an insult to your intelligence and a blow to your personal pride, knowing that you were bought.
10. Once the word gets out, the relationship that you now enjoy with your co-workers may never be the same.

The Interview Hacks Shortlist

Do you have a last-minute interview? Here are 12 quick tips to nail it:

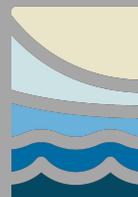
- 1. Practice, practice, practice.**
Rehearse potential questions and answers with a friend, family member or recruiter.
- 2. Arrive early.**
We recommend you get there about 15 minutes ahead of schedule.
- 3. Bring several copies of your resume.**
You may meet more than one interviewer, so have enough copies to go around.
- 4. Be enthusiastic about the position and the company.**
Remember, you're being measured on how positive, poised and prepared you are.
- 5. Do not answer questions with a simple "yes" or "no."**
Keep answers clear and succinct, but cite specific examples and measurable accomplishments.
- 6. Answer every question, even the tough ones.**
You should not intentionally ignore a question or be evasive. If you're unsure about the question or need some time to think, ask the interviewer to repeat it.
- 7. Ask specific questions.**
It will help you look interested and find out if this is the right job for you.
- 8. Mitigate the negatives.**
Do not speak negatively about other employers. If you have to discuss negative experiences, point out what you learned.
- 9. Be positive about your reason for leaving your current job.**
The key word to remember is "more." You want more challenges, more responsibility, more opportunity, etc.
- 10. Always represent yourself honestly.**
You want to be hired for what you can do, not for what you think the interviewer wants to hear. Dishonesty could land you on the unemployment line.
- 11. Make the job you're interviewing for your chief objective.**
Even if you're interviewing with multiple companies, frame your answers so that the interviewer feels this is your #1 choice. At the end of the interview, ask for the position.
- 12. Do not discuss salary or benefit packages.**
Remain open. Let your recruiter handle these sensitive negotiations.

Now, let's put it all together.

The interview is just one crucial part of the job search. We can help you outperform expectations at every stage. From resume writing tips to career advice to free online training, we're here to connect you to the job you want. To find out more, visit harrisongrp.com today.

To learn more about our services,
or the industries we serve, contact us today.

www.harrisongrp.com



HGI

HARRISON GROUP INC.