

2



**“Be Prepared: Why Doing Your Research Is Essential To Succeed at Interviews”**  
By Sean Duffy

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## “Be Prepared: Why Doing Your Research Is Essential To Succeed at Interviews”

By Sean Duffy

### About the Author

Until recently Sean Duffy was on of the team of consultants at Sue Hill Recruitment. He recently took unpaid leave to do a 3-month temporary contract at the BBC Proms, indulging his life-long passion for classical music, and has just joined the BBC full-time in a PR role.

Whilst at Sue Hill Recruitment he gave several presentations to library and information groups on all aspects of job seeking and has written several informative articles, all of which have been published by the LIS press.

Preparation is worth 10 times its weight in luck (and even ability) when it comes to job interviews. If you haven't prepared properly, you are far less likely to succeed, because there will almost certainly be other candidates who have. So, if you really want the job, you should consider what lengths other candidates will go to and plan to win against the competition.

The ability to improvise will not stand up against real substance, which is based on thorough research of the company and the position they are trying to fill. Most firms expect you have looked at their website as a matter of course - some will fully expect you to have read other sources beyond this. Imagine being asked 'What do you think makes our organisation unique?' and not having a satisfactory answer for them. They will likely seal your reject letter before you even hear the door click!

It is important to think of all the questions an interviewer might ask you and decide what you want to say in response. While you won't be able to prepare for every single possibility, you will be surprised how many obvious questions present themselves if you take the time to think about it. 'What three things do you think you could bring to this role?', 'Can you give an example of when you've handled a difficult situation?' It may be that, during the actual interview, you are faced with questions you didn't think of. However, if you've prepared properly, you will likely be faced with questions you did expect, which will certainly boost your confidence and improve your ability to answer the unexpected ones.

As well as preparing for the questions they could ask, you should also prepare questions for them. This doesn't mean asking questions for the sake of it. Try and think of some original, pertinent questions that will give the interviewer an opportunity to give you an interesting answer. You'll need a long list, because often some of your pre-prepared questions will be answered during the course of the interview.

Is it possible to over-prepare? Well, candidates who arrive with reams of notes and print outs can appear to have gone to too much effort (if it takes 30 pages to prepare for a 30-minute meeting, what kind of effort-to-output ratio can they expect from you as an employee?). But you must prepare to the extent that makes you feel as comfortable as possible in what is inevitably a stressful situation. Successful interviews are about presenting a relaxed and professional approach, and candidates who do are more likely to be offered jobs. So, be prepared!

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