Crescere Executive Search Interview Preparation Guide

Helping you present your best self in any interview setting

1. Preparation Checklist

Preparation turns opportunity into an offer. Work through the list below so you enter every conversation confident and equipped.

- Confirm the exact date, time, and format (in-person, phone, or video).
- Record the interviewer's full name, title, and proper pronunciation.
- Research the company: products, customers, recent news, financial performance, and growth outlook. Check the website, earnings calls, and credible business press.
- Study the job description line by line and map your evidence of fit.
- Review your own résumé without notes. Be ready to discuss each role, dates, responsibilities, and measurable impact.
- Match your achievements to the role's requirements. Focus on how you **Made money, Saved money, or Achieved strategic goals**.
- Prepare thoughtful questions (see Section 5). An interview is a two-way evaluation.
- Print or save extra copies of your résumé in PDF for quick sharing.
- Map the route or test your video link in advance to avoid surprises.
- Audit your public social media profiles to ensure they support your professional brand.

2. First Impressions

You have one chance to set the tone, usually in the first two minutes.

- Dress one notch above the company norm. When in doubt, ask your recruiter.
- Arrive or log in five to ten minutes early.
- For video calls, frame yourself in good light with the camera at eye level, a neutral backdrop, and a quality mic or headset.
- Silence notifications, close unnecessary tabs, and keep pets and people out of the room.
- Offer a firm handshake or a clear greeting on video, make eye contact, and smile.
- Show genuine energy. Enthusiasm is free and memorable.
- Sit or stand with confident posture, use open hand gestures, and nod to show active listening.
- Use the interviewer's name naturally early on to build rapport.
- Match the interviewer's pace and tone, but keep your enthusiasm genuine.

- Bring a hard copy of your résumé and a notepad for in-person meetings, or have a tidy one-page reference sheet just off-camera for video calls.

3. Common Questions and Smart Answers

Keep answers concise, roughly two minutes or less. Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to anchor your stories.

Question	**What the interviewer wants**	**How to respond**
“Tell me about yourself.”	A relevant snapshot.	Connect your recent experience to the role, ending with why you are excited to help their team.
“Why are you interested in this position?”	Proof you did your homework.	Highlight two or three role-specific points plus one cultural or mission fit.
“Why are you leaving your current role?”	Professional motivation.	Keep it positive. Focus on growth, new challenges, or values alignment.
“What is your greatest accomplishment?”	Evidence of impact.	Share a quantified result that maps to Made, Saved, Achieved.
“What are your compensation expectations?”	Fit within budget.	Express flexibility and interest in the full package. Offer a range only if pressed.

Strengths and Development Areas

Prepare **three strengths** with brief examples and **one development area** paired with active steps you are taking to improve.

4. Behavioral Interview Prompts

Expect prompts that begin with “Tell me about a time…”. Draft short STAR stories for scenarios such as:

- Leading a cross-functional project on a tight deadline.
- Adapting to a sudden market or customer shift.
- Resolving conflict within a team.
- Using data to influence senior stakeholders.

5. High-Value Questions to Ask

Lack of questions signals lack of interest. Use the examples below and tailor to the interviewer’s level.

1. **Role Clarity** – “What are the top three outcomes you expect from this position in the first year?”

2. **Success Metrics** – “How will you measure success for the person in this role?”

3. **Team Culture** – "How would you describe the working style of the team and leadership?"

4. **Strategic Priorities** – "Which market or customer initiatives are most critical this year?"

5. **Next Steps** – "Is there anything in my background that gives you pause about my fit for the role?"

6. Closing with Confidence

- Summarize your fit: "Based on what we discussed, I am confident I can deliver ____."
- State clear interest. Enthusiasm removes doubt.
- Ask about timeline and next steps so you can follow up appropriately.

7. After the Interview

Send a brief thank-you email within 24 hours.

- Within an hour, jot down quick notes on what worked and what you could improve while the conversation is fresh.
- Follow up promptly on any materials or references you promised to send.

Example of follow up, keep it brief and customize to each person. Don't send everyone you met the same message.

Subject: Thank you for today's conversation

Body:

Thank you for meeting to discuss the [Role] position. Our conversation reinforced my excitement about contributing to [Key initiative you discussed]. I look forward to the next steps.

- Individualize each note with a takeaway from the discussion.

8. Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Insufficient company research.
- Negative comments about past employers.
- Overly casual attire or language.
- Rambling answers without results.
- Failing to ask questions.
- Unprofessional virtual background or noisy environment.

Quick Rule of Thumb

If an answer or question does not **add value, build credibility, or show curiosity**, leave it out.

Prepared by **Crescere Executive Search** www.cescpg.com

Michael McGowan

(206) 240-9564 michael@cescpg.com

https://www.linkedin.com/in/crescere/