

How to Get Ready for a Screening Interview

A screening interview is an excellent opportunity to win over interviewers and prove to them that you are a great fit for a position. Just joining in the interview process without being properly prepared however, can be quite risky—especially if this job wasn't easy to come by. It is therefore important to play it safe and increase your chances of getting a job by gaining an insight into the common questions that are usually asked during screening interviews!

What is a Screening Interview?

To put it simply, a screening interview is the first step in the interviewing process. Typically, the interview does not last more than 30 minutes and more often than not, it is held over the phone. That being said, more and more companies today, especially those in the IT field, prefer video calls. As a rule, screening interviews are held by HR departments, but you might also be introduced to some other members of the team who play a key role in the project. The goal with a screening interview is to narrow down the pool of applicants and determine which candidates will move to the next stage. Most questions that you'll be asked during this interview will relate to your background, qualifications and job expectations.

Common Questions Asked During Screening Interviews

“Tell me about yourself.”

This is a classic question that usually opens an interview, usually asked to help you relax, whilst also giving the interviewer the chance to scan your body language. More often than not at this point, the interviewer already can tell if a candidate is a good fit for a position and if they will be able to blend into an existing team. With this in mind, make sure to **research the company thoroughly prior to the interview** and learn what their corporate culture is like, as well as what personal qualities they value most. When answering the question, avoid listing your resume in chronological order. Instead, speak of your professional background in relation to the company's organization. For instance, if you're applying for a [position as a Team Lead](#), describe what you were doing at company [X], focusing on the responsibilities that required your control. You can give examples of some of your job accomplishments and tell the interviewer what you have managed to achieve together with your team. This kind

of information is much more valuable than a list of all your previous places of employment.

“Why are you interested in this position?”

The right answer to this question is the most honest answer. Think of everything that you love about programming. If you truly love it as much as you say you do, your body language will not fail you. Let the interviewers know that you’ve worked hard to get to where you are right now. Candidates who are committed and passionate about what they do have a higher chance of getting the job.

“Why are you leaving the current job?”

This is a tricky question as it opens you up to accidentally saying something that will show you in an unfavorable way. To avoid this awkward situation, just **do not mention negative things**. Answer positively and portray as you making a new step to advance your career as a software engineer. For example, if you worked on one project for a long time, you could say that now you want changes and want to try something new. If you worked as a freelancer, say that now you want to be part of an in-house team. The point is, the interviewer is looking for red flags and you need to paint the picture that the main reason you applied for the job was to advance your IT career.

“Do you have any questions for me?”

Enthusiastic candidates always have questions. If you generally find it difficult to go beyond this interview stage, make sure to prepare [a list of questions](#) prior to the interview. This will help avoid situations when you don’t know what to say and it will increase the likelihood of your resume appearing in the pile of the candidates that will be going through to the next interview stage.

Of course, these aren’t the only questions you may be asked, but they are common reoccurring questions and practicing answering them beforehand will allow you to succeed.

Questions Related to Relocation

“Why do you want to relocate?”

Next on the list is the question “why do you want to relocate?” Be prepared to answer this question with enthusiasm, but do not show too much excitement. The fact that you’ve applied for the [job with a relocation package](#) in the first place already frames your answer, but you need to **make sure that you don’t sound as if you are ready to do just about anything to move abroad**. To answer this question, emphasize that

relocation has been on your mind for a long time, but it isn't a goal in itself. Add that the major reason you want to relocate is to hold this position and advance your career. This will reassure the interviewer that you are a committed candidate and that you are serious about making this step.

“Why do you want to move to this specific country?”

This is another question you are very likely to be asked. Be honest with the interviewer and tell them why you are attracted to the location. There should be at least a few compelling reasons why you have chosen this particular country. Gaining an insight into the culture, social life and social security system of the job's location will help get you on the right track.

How to Prepare for a Screening Interview

A screening interview is usually the first step in the hiring process that determines whether or not you are going to be invited to the next round of interviews, therefore it should not be taken lightly. Here are a few recommendations that will help you prepare for a screening interview and will increase your chances of getting a job:

- Research the company.
- Prepare smart questions prior to the interview.
- Make sure to find a quiet space where no one will disturb you during call (i.e. with no cats walking across your computer, or with background noise).
- When telling the interviewer about yourself, focus on your professional skills and strengths. Instead of just giving dry facts, describe what you were doing at company [X] so that the interviewer can see what value you can bring to the position.
- Practice answering questions. Make sure that you not only answer questions but can actually prove each skill you mention with examples. If possible, spend some time doing mock interviews with your friends, family or anyone who is prepared to help.
- Demonstrate your readiness to relocate, but make sure that you do not sound like this is the main driving force for applying for the job.
- Research the country that you are willing to relocate to. This will give you confidence when answering questions about relocation.
- Treat your interviewer as if they were sitting across from you. Do not forget to make eye contact.

That's it! Of course, it is difficult to prepare for every eventuality and there surely will be some unexpected questions—but if you are serious about the job and do your research, there will be less risk of you being caught off guard.