



# Solution

## Module 5, Lesson 1 Transcript

Hello, everybody. Welcome to Module 5, Lesson 1, of the Job Search Master Class. This is all about interview preparation well in advance. What you will learn is how to prepare for an interview now before you even applied and what some of the new types of interview techniques that are being used out there. You get tricks and frameworks for handling virtually any question and what not to do during an interview. The flow of this lesson will start with a challenge and head right into solutions with tricks, mistakes, excuses, and a huge amount of handouts and a special surprise.

Face it; interviews are super hard. Even if you think you do well in them, they're hard. How do you ace them? The first rule of thumb is that interviewing is a performance. The fact is most candidates today interview pretty poorly. I'm going to not only take you to a level where you're good, you're going to be great. There's no excuse for poor interview answers for more than 80% of the questions that are asked out there. You're not going to fumble through an interview again, not even 80%. You're going to understand how to answer 100% of the questions no matter what they are. You can do it right now, no waiting. W-A-I-T, out of there. You can prepare for a great interview right now without having any scheduled.

News flash, you need to forget all that you know about interviews and restart. Boy, this is when I wish I had that Men in Black neurolizer and I could just zap each of your brains and erase it and start fresh. Now, success does require good old fashioned preparation and practice. You're going to get plenty opportunities. The more nervous you are, the more you need to prepare, but guess what? That's everybody; I'm nervous; everyone's nervous in interviews. That's just a basic truth. Let's bust some interview myths here.

Here's a myth. The interviewer really cares about what I'm saying, the content. Sometimes. Now, sure, with certain questions, such as your strengths, your weaknesses, yes, they want to learn, but they're also looking for your ability in a number of areas. Can you articulate ideas? Can you start a thought and then stop? Maybe just observing your speaking style. Is it clear? Is it articulate? Are you making eye contact? Do you smile once in a while? You're just observing. Just note that going into this lesson right here.

Here's another myth. I don't want to sound scripted. You won't. You'll still use tone and inflection to say all the words, but you are going to be more relaxed when you are scripted since you're going to know the content, right? We do so much better when we're presenting when we know the content versus when we don't. You will sound self-aware; you'll sound confident and thoughtful. I would love you have to the problem that you sound too scripted, but most people are winging it. I want you to err on the other side.

Here's another myth. I should really wait to see what they ask and then think about it in the moment, so I can then tailor my answer to that hiring manager. Yeah, but that's really complicated, super hard, and incredibly unnecessary. Things like your skills, your history, your experiences, your strengths, your weaknesses, they're already done. There's no reason to make that up on the fly. Yes, you are going to be tailoring messages



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to the specific interviewer, but that will be accomplished in the stories that you tell and in the answers that you prepared for that interview.

They love this myth. Interviews are all about the interviewer's question, not the questions I ask them at the end. Did you know that often the hiring decision is made based on the conversation that takes place during your question and answer session, during the time you ask the questions? As a hiring manager, I had to clear a whole bunch of questions. Yes, I need to do some check boxes and understand your level of understanding in this area and that area, but the real differentiator between candidates was the time when I would ask what are your questions. As a matter of fact, sometimes in my interviews I would start off, "Hey, before I just start with my questions, do you have any for me?" I really wanted to see how the dialog went.

You must prepare your questions. You can do this in advance as well, not the night before. Are you ready for the solution to pre-prepare your interview? In the next lesson, we will talk about the night before and the week before to really customize to that interview, but right now, stay with me on learning how to prep for your interviews now so you can ace them. The solution, I want you to create 2 separate documents well in advance of any interviews. One is in the handouts and it's your interview answers to the interview prep guide in the handout section. I not only have the guide that will coach you how to answer every question, but I put a blank in there so you're ready to fill it in after you follow the guide.

Of course, another word document that you're going to create, which is simply the list of questions you will ask during an interview. I'm going to help you with those, too. Let's start with number 1, the interview questions and your answers. The key is that you understand now the interviewer's intent. I mean any interviewer's intent. Following listening, a huge part of answering interview questions well is to understand why the interviewer is asking this question. I want you to think about that for every question. Once you put yourself in their shoes and understand their intent, you'll be able to provide answers that are truthful yet formulated to perform successfully. That's what I want you to do, a successful answer.

Don't under estimate the intent. For example, a commonly asked question that is commonly failed by most candidates is, tell me about yourself. I know, I know, it's not a question, but it is. Tell me about yourself. Their intent is to really learn are you concise, clear, and can you stay at the right level versus too much detail? Is what you're providing relevant to me and my job description? Finally, are you senior enough? This is the content and what you say. The answering tips are on the far right. The law of 3's for all of these answers will come into play. I want your first to be summarize at a high level your education, then summarize at a high level your career. The third is bring it home, your current situation and why you're here today. All of that and examples are going to be in your interview guide.

Here's another one, sounds so basic. What are your strengths? It's commonly disguised as what would your coworkers say are your strengths. Don't get caught up on that. Just use the same strengths for either questions. The interviewer's intent is to find out if you're confident but not too cocky. Are these strengths matching what I'm looking for? Are they powerful enough and relevant? As an executive, are your strengths big enough to be successful in this big job? The answering tips are as follows. I want you to provide work



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related strengths, not too personal. Be prepared to give an example of each one and only select 3 strengths that are relevant to the position.

Your answer is going to sound something like, "Thank you for asking. There are 3 main strengths that I'd like to highlight today." Number 1, boom, Number 2, boom, Number 3, boom, and then you smile and you stop talking. The most tricky one yet most candidates just bomb on this question, what are your weaknesses? Disguised as what would your coworkers say are your weaknesses. This one is clear what the interviewer's intent is. They want to know if you're self-aware and self-critical. Everybody has weaknesses. Now, they're also going to watch which weaknesses you choose to disclose because you don't want to mention a weakness that is huge in terms of this particular role. Don't throw yourself under the bus.

You have at least 3 or are you too cocky to think that you have that many if not more? The danger is that you only say you have 1 weakness. Your answering tip is I want you to have 3 weaknesses, all work related, not too personal. Be prepared to give an example of each one, but you're not going to share a weakness that is in bold letters on their job description. You want to pick and choose those weaknesses that are meaty enough, but don't just throw yourself under the bus and sabotage all of your great efforts.

The last question example I'll give you, although you have many more in the handout, is why did you leave your company? As a matter of fact, the interviewer may ask you to walk through your resume and explain this for every position. What they're looking for is can you be concise and summarize this? Are you taking responsibility and accountability? Most important, are you positive versus negative about a prior company, boss, or strategy? The answering tips are numerous. You'll see many more, but some examples are, "I'm pursuing a new direction in my career." "The company downsized and had a reduction in force." If you were fired, have a solid explanation staying very positive. I know it's hard, but I've scripted some examples in your handout.

What I've prepared over the years, and after interviewing other hiring managers and including my key questions, I've prepared an interview prep guide just for you. You'll download it at the end and there's both a guide and a blank. I want you to follow the guide, study it, read it, print it, and then fill out your own. Let's move onto number 2, the second document that you need to do, which is a list of the questions you're going to ask during an interview. These questions can help you or knock you completely out of the running. Mistake number 1, not having any. It's horrible and it's commonplace. Prepare your questions; write them down; bring in that piece of paper in with you to the interview.

It looks right when they say, "Hey, you have any questions for me?" Assuming you're face-to-face, of course. Then, you reach into your nice portfolio and you bring out your pre-prepared questions. Remember, you're sampling how you'll be on the job and showing them that you've prepared. Mistake number 2, asking any question about anything financial is a big mistake, not just salary but even what are the ranges, what is the bonus, will I get stock, nothing, withhold. Not even to a recruiter, not to a human resources person, you never go off script and you don't go in this direction. You will find all of this out once you get the offer. You don't have an offer yet. This could end that possibility. Don't go there for any reason under any circumstances.



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Now, clearly, if they ask you a salary related question, that's in your interview guide, how to handle those. Mistake number 3, is there a training program or structured onboarding process? Think about the perception the other person is gleaning when you ask any question at all. What are the bad things that can happen? I know this question sounds innocent, but you don't need to ask it in an interview question. You'll find out the training in enough time. What the perception is that they could create is that you're needy, that you're going to need training. You're not self-motivated or can't learn on your own. Don't go there.

Another mistake, what is your division or company do? Laughable, right? It's shocking how many, at all levels, senior, they come in and come into my division at Microsoft, interviewing for a role and ask, "What does OEM do?" "What does OEM stand for?" There no excuse like, "I didn't have time to research." You've got your local business journal subscription to learn more. You should know exactly what they do or find out with all the tools that you have. What makes a great question? The 2 criteria for a great question, 1) that you're showing strength. You're actually boasting through the question, and 2) you're conveying something new to the interviewer that you haven't before, but it's important for them to know about you.

Let's go back to some irrelevant questions. Let's say you're interviewing at Boeing. What are Boeing's top challenges as a company? What's the culture at Boeing? What is your management style? I know these 3 are very common, but throw them out. Be different; they're too big and enormous. They're not relevant to the job your interviewing for. You're actually wasting real estate, if you will, on asking these questions versus asking other questions. I am just lukewarm on questions like culture and management style. Why? Because you'll never hear the real truth, ever. What company is going to say, "Oh, our culture is really bad. We don't talk to one another and we expect that people work all hours of the day." No, they're going to tell you all the good stuff.

Same with management style. Have you ever heard a manager respond in an interview and say, "Oh, I'm a micro-manager. I yell at my people very Thursday at 3." No, do don't bother with those questions. You can read some results on GlassDoor.doc that has a Yelp of companies written by employees. That's about it. You're still selling yourself and going for the offer. Yes, I know interviews should be a 2-way street, but they're just too short. You want to get to the next level of interviews and get to the offer. Guess what? You can ask as many questions as you want after you receive an offer and before you've accepted it. Just don't waste some real estate in your precious interview time.

Here are some great questions to ask in an interview and you'll see why. Remember the rules of thumb. You're either boasting or sharing something new. Number 1, I'm very self-motivated, boast, boast. How will you measure my success in this position? Another one boasting, the first 30 days are very important to me to meet as many team members as possible. How will you recommend I do that? Notice there's a little presumptive close in these questions. How will you recommend I do that? You don't end it with if I got the job. It's all hypothetical anyway. You don't have the job.

Number 3 is really an interesting one because you're interviewing and you want to understand what's important to them. Although you have a job description, what are the top 3 skills or experiences you're looking



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for that may not be mentioned in the job description? You're going to be able to steal all of these. Would you like some more? Of all the people that have worked for you, what are the characteristics of those who have stood out as great performers? Here's one where you're boasting but being modest. I have to admit I'm a perfectionist in some areas. You go on with a question. Some other good ones are asking them what do you find most blank about what you do? I put the word creative in here, but it could be anything. The most analytical, the most challenging, that would have a challenging aspect for me.

Then, you can also ask them to stack rank. Frankly, in number 7, in any question, I'd like you to limit it to ask them what are 3 things that ... Don't ask, "Hey, what are the challenges you're facing?" and leave it unnumbered. The law of 3's also comes into play to help you with asking questions. Now, the most important question of your career is coming. It's the last question. You usually know when it's last. Either the interviewer will say, "Oh, sorry, we only have time for 1 more," or you won't know and they'll say, "Oh, we ran out of time. I'm sorry. We need to wrap up." You're still going to chime in and try to get in the last word.

Even if they're packing up or you're standing up, "You know, Sally, I just want to share with you the position we're discussing is something I'm very excited about. Can you give me feedback on how I'm meeting your qualifications and if I'll proceed to the next level of the hiring process?" Now, this is called asking for the order or going for the close for those of you who have a sales background. No matter if you're interviewing for an engineer job, a VP of operations, I want you to send these 2 messages that you're very interested in it and you'd like to proceed to the next step. Don't forget, this is your last question and/or it's getting the last word in.

Here are some tricks for preparing in advance. First, I'm giving you the trick right in the handout. It's the only trick is complete your Job Search Master Class Interview Guide and do the video interview role play. What? This was your bonus number one. I can't wait to show it to you. You have unlimited access to do an unlimited number of interview role plays. Your homework is to complete that interview prep guide, the handout in this lesson, prepare the 6 to 8 questions you will use consistently in all of your interviews, and then practice both using your amazing video based interview role play technology that I brought to you. It's so fantastic and I'm so excited that this company interview stream has allowed us to practice through their technology.

Now, the next lesson we'll dive into the day of the interview. I'll review some basic principles of job interviews, ensure that you bring the right stuff. I've got to talk a little bit about interview attire. You know it, and of course those dreaded tricks and mistakes to avoid. Okay, see you there.

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