



TIP SHEET

FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

By the time you're in the first round of interviews, things should be looking up. Getting to this point means that you've done something right. You have written a great resume and cover letter that checks all the boxes. So, what happens now? To get your foot through the door, you must present yourself in a way that is not only professional but also personable.

A first-round interview is usually a screen that you need to pass to be considered for the job. If you pass the first round, you are over fifty percent of the way there! The first interview has its own set of goals and best practices that should be acknowledged to make sure that you're putting your best foot forward. A preliminary interview typically lasts about thirty minutes (or less) and is usually carried out by the Human Resources team via video chat or over a phone call.

The purpose of the first-round interview is to get some basic information about your skills, qualifications, and interest in the position. The first round interview is all about exploring your strengths and the opportunities that you present to the organization, it is your first opportunity to demonstrate your personal SWOT analysis. The interviewer also uses this kind of interview to learn more about your personality and determine if you are qualified enough to meet for an in-person interview.

To make a good first impression, it's important to be honest and confident when answering questions. You should come prepared with answers that are specific and relevant to the job description, but don't over-prepare! It's best if you can think on your feet a little bit to show that you're quick-witted and passionate about what you do.

**ON AVERAGE, A RECRUITER WILL INTERVIEW
TWENTY-FIVE CANDIDATES IN THE FIRST ROUND.**



FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

Let's take a moment to consider the SWOT elements that the interviewer is looking for...

STRENGTHS

- Good communication skills
- Motivation and excitement for the role
- Demonstration of close cultural fit and values

The interviewer will be looking for key characteristics from the candidates during the interview:

WEAKNESSES

- You don't have the required qualifications (or you didn't show them)
- You did not demonstrate that you can do the job effectively
- You come off as a poor cultural fit
- You are an interrupter, demonstrating poor listening skills
- You reek of neediness or desperation (this is a deal breaker)
- You give off a vibe that onboarding you will be extensive (you won't be an easy hire)
- You are a WIFM (what's in it for me?) candidate and have no care for the organization's needs or values

This round is a screening process, and several behaviors will get you knocked out of the process.



FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

1. Walk me through your resume

The first question is often “walk me through your resume” or “bring your resume to life for me” and “talk me through your most recent experiences.” The recruiter is trying to connect the dots and marry what is on your resume with what you highlight as important parts of your career. They also want to see if you can succinctly give a positive overview of your fit for the role.

Some key points to remember:

- Keep your answer quick and concise. 5–7 minutes in a 30-minute interview is more than enough. Stick to explaining the most relevant and recent experiences.
- Acknowledge any gaps in your resume. Transparency is important to demonstrate; avoiding the topic might lead to red flags for the interviewer. Keep it positive and brief. If it is an interesting story, share it!

To get prepared for “Walk me through your resume” complete the following sentences

“I started in this field because...”

List your motivations and passions for the field or industry.

“My experience is...”

Explain what your strengths are and what you have achieved in your previous roles.

“I am looking for a role which....”

Explain why you are looking for a new role. For example, “looking for a new growth opportunity”.



FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

2. How does your experience and skills make you the best person for the job?

This is where you explain why your personal set of skills and experiences are unique and perfect for the role. The second reason that interviewers are asking you this question is that they want to gauge whether you understand what the job entails. The key here is to demonstrate confidence that you can carry out the responsibilities of the job easily.

Some key points to remember:

- Tailor your answer to the job description. Which skills and experiences do you have that are most relevant to it?
- If you don't have relevant experiences, be sure to highlight transferable skills that will be invaluable to the role. Don't be afraid to use the statement "the transferable skills I have are..."
- Go beyond the headline title and role responsibilities. Explain a key achievement from each job and link it back to the needs of the role they are hiring for.

To get prepared for "How does your experience and skills make you the best person for the job?" complete the following sentences

"My skillset matches perfectly with this role because..."

Explain the power skills you have that align with the job description.

"My recent experience aligns with the job requirements..."

State points from the job description and describe your previous experiences that align with them. For example, if they are looking for someone who can build a high-performing team, explain how you have done so in the past.

"I have accomplished several key achievements in my career which would make me perfect for this role. These are..."

Highlight achievements that align with the top three needs of the job description. Explain the impact of your achievements on the intended audience.



FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

3. Why do you want to work for our organization?

Here is a great place to share your learning from your SWOT analysis. Share what you have learned about where the company is going and what its focus is for the coming months and years.

Some key points to remember:

- Talk about your future plans for your career and how the role fits into your potential long-term plans at this organization
- Share previous career successes that you could potentially replicate here
- Demonstrate that you have researched the organization and talk about its values and how they align with your own
- Show passion for the job and your craft. Demonstrate that you are excited by what the role has to offer

To get prepared for “Why do you want to work for our organization?” complete the following sentences

“I want to work here because my personal passions align with what you are trying to achieve. These are...”

Explain whether your passions align with their brand values, mission, values, goals and why.

“My long-term goal in my career is X and this aligns with your goals because...”

Explain why your goals align with the organization, what value that will bring them and how your experience and growth potential will lead to success.



FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

What questions should you ask at the end of a first-round interview?

1. How has the role come about and what does the team look like?
2. What is the culture like? What are the company values? (only ask this if this information is not found online)
3. What will my first challenges and projects be?
4. What does the interview process look like? How quickly are you looking to fill the role?
5. What do you like about the organization?

Try to find out as much “inside” information as you about the role, particularly:

- The challenges the team is facing
- What the first 60-90 days will involve
- Any major changes to the team or direction
- The key characteristics or style of the hiring manager
- What the team culture is like

This will line you up perfectly for preparing for your second interview.

