



What to Do In a Panel Interview

Job interviews are stressful enough, but what happens when you're told you'll be doing a panel interview? Many job seekers would likely panic and let their nerves get the best of them. Panel interviews can be difficult to navigate, but it is possible to ace a panel interview and demonstrate that you're a good fit for both the role and the hiring organization.

The first thing to remember is that you shouldn't stress over your panel interview. In fact, a panel interview can be a blessing - you are able to give the interview your best shot on the first try, without having to repeat yourself about the same questions over and over with different managers or department heads. Panel interviews are great opportunities to streamline the interview process.

A panel interview might be a nerve-wracking experience, but building rapport with multiple interviewers is within reach of most job seekers.

Here are a few tips on passing any panel interview with flying colors.

Prepare as thoroughly as you would for any interview.

You might think that preparing for a panel interview is too enormous of a task and decide that you're just going to fly by the seat of your pants on the day of. Don't do this! You should prepare for a panel interview with the same dedication as you would for a one-on-one interview. Thoroughly research the job and the company, practice your responses to common interview questions, prepare your follow-up questions, and do everything else that you would for any other interview. Don't let your nerves get the best of you. Being prepared will allow you to shine during the interview.

Always visit your interviewers' LinkedIn profiles before an interview. With a panel interview, visiting LinkedIn will help you remember each person as an individual and create a connection in your mind that keeps things moving.



Learn who your interviewers are.

If possible, find out who your interviewers will be and do some research on what they do for the company. In a panel interview, you will probably find that each interviewer represents a different department of the company that the person in the position will interact with. You should be prepared to speak with team leads from across the company. As soon as you find out you will be having a panel interview, try to get a list of their names from your company contact.

Pay attention to each person on the panel.

Introduce yourself and learn each person's name. Make eye contact with each person you are talking to and don't spend too much time focused on one individual. Use names when answering questions and try to refer back to answers you gave to different panel members. Speak to everyone and don't just focus on the interviewers that seem to be "on your side."

Stay mindful of your body language.

You won't just be communicating with your words. Shift the upper half of your body so that you're facing the person you are speaking to and make regular eye contact.

Control the pace of the interview.

Take a moment and pause before you answer each question. Doing this will help keep you in control of the interview and avoid a "firing squad" situation where questions and comments are flying at you from every angle. If an interviewer interrupts your answer to ask a different question, think about your answers. If the new question is more important, sum up your current answer quickly and move on to the new topic. You can also bring a pen and notepad to the interview to make notes and keep track of what's being discussed. It's important to remember not to be writing too much, but you can say, "I would like to write down your questions so I can address everyone's priorities."

If you feel that questions are being fired at you at a rapid pace, you might write down the questions that are being asked and say, "I'm writing your questions down so I can answer them in an organized format."



When it comes to the end of the interview, it's customary for the interviewee to ask questions to the panel. Make sure you have your questions written down in advance. If you feel that the interview has answered all of your questions, you can look at your list of questions and tell the panel, "From checking my list, it seems we covered everything I was curious about." By having the questions already written down, you'll show the panel that you came prepared.

Even though panel interviews can be stressful, proper preparation and practice beforehand can really pay off and help you feel more comfortable in the room. ■