

your career matters.

career advice guide



randstad

human forward.

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# welcome to randstad.

The world is fast-changing and somewhat unpredictable, but what remains constant is how important it is to find meaningful work that sets you on a path to achieving your career goals.

We are in the middle of a profound shift in how we work, and the relationship between you and your employer is no longer the same. Through research and interviews, we know that your expectation for an ideal employer goes beyond the paycheck itself.

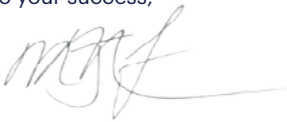
As the world's largest talent company, it is our responsibility to help you navigate the job search landscape and connect you with a job with a company that supports your career growth. We also strive to stand with you to provide you with support and resources throughout your work life.

Living by our Human Forward brand promise, we make sure to take the time to understand your career needs, so that we can find you a job in a place where you belong and can fulfil your work purpose.

Some of the most innovative and attractive employers in Singapore partner with us to find great talent like you. Whether you're just starting out, looking to return to work, or finding a job that can fulfil your personal and career aspirations, we are confident that we can find the right job for you. Within this guide, you can read more about the important and must-know tips and advice from our specialist recruiters to help prepare you for your job search.

If you need more support in your job search, please visit our website to learn more about our full scope of recruitment and HR services or to connect with one of our specialised consultants at [randstad.com.sg](https://www.randstad.com.sg).

To your success,



Maxim van Damme  
Country Director,  
Randstad Singapore

# what to expect from working with randstad.

## interview & assessment

Our thorough interview and assessment process allows our consultants to fully understand your working experience and skills, as well as your career aspirations in terms of a future role, employer and workplace culture. We can also advise on the best approach for your job search and how you can identify some of the most promising job opportunities in the market.

## job offer

Our specialist consultant will negotiate the most favourable remuneration package achievable in line with your market worth. They are highly-skilled in this process and committed to getting great results while keeping your best interests in mind. When considering a new role, it is critical that you evaluate the entire package and not just the salary. This would include employee benefits, company perks as well as the team and work environments that you'll be a part of.

## matching you to your new employer

Our True-Fit® hiring approach allows us to probe deeper and provide the most accurate match to a potential employer by assessing you on the job, boss and company fit.

## interview with our client

### schedule the interview

Once your consultant has identified a potential job opportunity, it will be presented to you and if acceptable, an interview will be scheduled immediately.

### prepare for the interview

Together, you and your recruitment consultant will prepare for your interview. Besides going through the skills and experience in your resume, we will help you prepare for anticipated questions and answers to ensure you present yourself in the best light. Interviews can take many forms, such as face-to-face, panel and even pre-assessment tests. In recent years, it has also become increasingly common for candidates to go on a phone or video interview. Regardless of the interview format, our recruiters are here to assist you.

### debrief

After the interview, it is important that you call your consultant within the hour to debrief them on how it went and discuss next steps.

# writing a great cover letter.

A well-drafted cover letter shows an employer that you have read the job description thoroughly and thoughtfully considered the role before applying for it.

As with all emails and messages, every cover letter you send with your CV should be specially crafted for the person you're sending it to and the job that you're applying for.

## hints & tips

- The length of your cover letter should be less than one A4 page.
- Where possible, personally address the cover letter rather than 'To Whom It May Concern'.
- Include an introductory paragraph that says your name and the position applying for.
- Be concise. Explain how your experience meets the key criteria of the position.
- Tailor the tone of the letter based on the culture of the organisation. Always be positive and confident.
- Avoid listing all your skills and talents on one page. You don't want to appear overconfident.
- Thank them for taking the time to read your application and close it with a call to action. For example, ask for contact details or an interview opportunity at the employer's convenience.



# writing a winning resume.

A well-written resume will help you create a personal brand and it is the first door opener to getting the interview.

You don't get a second chance to make a first impression so it's important to put the effort into creating a winning resume. It should showcase your achievements and value to the organisation in a short, sharp and proactive way. Recruiters and employers often receive hundreds and thousands of resumes a week, and they usually only take a few seconds to look at each one of them. To ensure that your CV does not drown in the pile, make sure it clearly shows all key information and that your contact details are well displayed.

In a candidate-short market, it is also worth considering how you can enhance your resume creatively through the use of various digital tools. Professionally-designed CVs, video resumes and web portfolios stand out more than just a black-and-white CV.

And remember, never ever lie or embellish your skills and experience on your resume. If you're caught doing so, it could do real damage to your credibility and reputation.

## 10 tips to writing a good resume

### 1. personal information

This should include your name, home address, mobile number, e-mail address and URL of your business networking profile.

### 2. write a resume summary statement

It is good practice to write a brief summary (no more than 50 words) highlighting your qualifications and key achievements at the top of your resume. This helps the hiring manager decide quickly if they should continue reading more about you.

### 3. tailor your resume for each position you apply for

Demonstrate clearly and concisely that you're qualified for the position you're applying for, by describing your relevant qualifications and skills. Always link them back to the key criteria listed in the job advertisement.

### 4. provide details of your work history and experience

One of the first things recruiters and employers look for is your employment history. The details in this section help them ascertain whether your professional experience is relevant to the position. Include the job titles, specific responsibilities and accomplishments for all your key roles in your career to date. These should appear in descending order, with your most recent experience right on top.

### 5. outline your education

A proactive and positive attitude towards lifelong learning is always an advantage. Therefore, include all details of your completed degrees/diplomas, professional qualifications, training seminars as well as any other relevant courses you've attended.

### 6. note your relevant personal accomplishments

What you do outside of work tells the recruiter a little bit about your personality, which would help them determine if you can fit in to the company's culture. We recommend these achievements to be included in the "interests, voluntary activities or awards" section of your resume.

### 7 state that references are available upon request

Make sure you have collected the full contact details of your references prior to submitting your CV so that you can share them upon request.

### 8. review, review, review

Spell check your resume! This is your one opportunity to make a great first impression so be sure to present your resume with no grammatical or spelling errors. Using a professionally designed template, different colours and bullet points will allow key information to stand out and be easily read.

### 9. focus on quality, not quantity

The length of the resume should not exceed two pages in length. Keep it short and simple.

### 10. always get a second opinion

It's important to carefully proofread your resume before sending it out as spelling or grammatical errors can make you look sloppy and unprofessional. Get your resume vetted by a friend or family member to get an objective opinion on the content, format and design.



# preparing for your interview.

Preparing yourself for an interview is key to a successful interview outcome. Interviews can be nerve-wrecking. By preparing yourself well, you'll feel more confident and be more likely to perform at your best.

Our specialist consultants work closely with our clients and have an in-depth knowledge of the interview process. They can share with you additional tips on what type of questions to prepare for and the specific skills and experience that the employer is looking for. As part of our recruitment service, we help all our candidates prepare for the interview beforehand.

## 5 tips to prepare for your interview

### 1. research the company

Go through the company's website and social media accounts to learn more about its history, mission and values, products and services, as well as market position and growth plans. Through the company's website and social media channels, you can also gain a better understanding of its employer brand and workplace culture.

You should also perform a quick Google search and read what the media, industry experts and ex-employees are saying about the company. This is also a good opportunity for you to learn more about new industry trends and challenges, which you can bring up during the interview to show that you have done your research.

### 2. prepare yourself for behavioural-based questions

During the interview you may be asked some behavioural-based questions, which would require you to provide some real examples of situations you've faced in your previous jobs and how you've dealt with them.

The objective of these questions is to help the interviewer assess your skills, experience and ability to think on your feet. How you've acted in the past can also determine the way you will act in the future. You can see some examples of behavioural-based questions on page 14 of this guide.

A quick and easy tip to help you with behavioural-based questions is 'SAO' — Situation, Action, Outcome. Start by describing the situation you were in, the action you took and the positive outcome you were able to achieve





### 3. think about your strengths

It's important to sell yourself in an interview, especially if you're interviewing for a sales position. Not everyone feels comfortable talking about themselves in a positive light but it is important to demonstrate why you're the best person for the job. Share real examples which can showcase your competencies.

### 4. think about your weaknesses

Probably one of the most common, yet trickiest questions to handle in an interview is talking about your weaknesses. The best way to approach this is to be open about the areas you feel you could develop further or improve on. For example, "Speaking in front of a large audience isn't something I feel particularly confident about, but I've been trying to speak up more in team meetings to overcome this weakness."

### 5. know your career highlights & achievements

It's very important to have specific examples of your career highlights and achievements so make sure you know exactly which examples are relevant for sharing before the interview.

# interview hints and tips.

You only have 30 seconds to make a good first impression, so make the most of it. Here are some great tips to help you prepare and get you through the interview process.

## dress smart

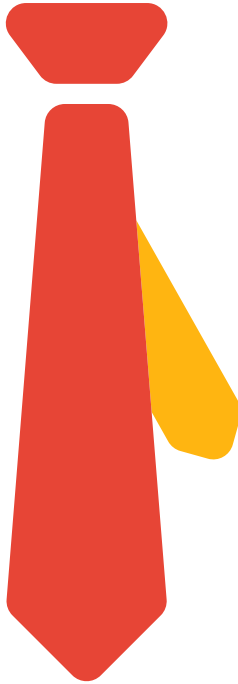
When in doubt, always go with business attire when attending a job interview. For men, that would be a blazer, long-sleeve buttoned shirt, long trousers and dress shoes. For ladies, choose an appropriate shift dress; or a high-cut top with long pants or a skirt that covers your knees, and dress shoes or heels. The same dress code should apply even if you're interviewing with a start-up.

## look smart

Greet your interviewer by their last name with a firm handshake and a smile. Maintain a comfortable level of eye contact throughout the whole interview. Keep both your feet on the floor and both your hands visible to the interviewer so it doesn't look like you're nervous or hiding something. Don't forget to be polite to the receptionist too.

## be smart

Always listen to the whole question and think before you speak. You should also share examples of how you have overcome the challenges and the key learnings you have taken with you. If you do not understand the question fully, be sure to clarify with the interviewer. Besides your talking points, you should also prepare some questions for the interviewer. These could be about their work culture, opportunities to grow professionally or the team dynamics, just to name a few.



## dos

- Arrive 10 minutes earlier.
- Shake hands firmly and maintain eye contact.
- Prepare for the anticipated questions.
- Listen to the whole question before you start to answer.
- Be clear and answer the question in full with examples.
- Put your phone away (and on silent mode) during the interview.
- Don't forget to smile – it helps to ease the tension.

## don'ts

- Be late for the interview.
- Come unprepared for the interview.
- Give one-word answers.
- Forget to bring a copy of your resume.
- Be too familiar, chatty or aggressive.
- Speak negatively of a past employer.
- Interrupt the interviewer.
- Wear slacks or informal clothing to an interview.
- Ask about salary unless prompted.
- Forget to thank the interviewer before you leave.

# interview questions worth preparing for.

## your qualifications

describe an example when you had suggested a new way of working that improved the outcome.

A: If you can't think about an example in a working environment, you can share one of your past experiences from outside of the workplace, such as from your personal or academic past. The objective of this question is to evaluate some of your soft skills, such as problem-solving, troubleshooting, creative and critical thinking, and the ability to voice feedback and challenge the status quo.

other questions about your qualifications:

- Why did you pursue this career?
- Have you ever led a team or coached someone in school or at work? Explain your role and responsibilities.
- Since you graduated from school, how have you upskilled yourself?
- How do you keep up-to-date with the changes that are happening in your industry?

## your career goals

why are you interested in this role and our company?

A: The interviewer wants to know your motivation to better understand if the role that is on offer can help you achieve your career goals. This assures them that you're in for the long-haul. Your research about the company and the role would be useful in helping you answer this question. Showcase that you've done your homework about the company, and use this as an opportunity to align your interests with the needs and requirements of the role.

why do you want to leave your current job?

A: Whether it's career progression, developing new skills, or simply looking for a platform that can meet your career aspirations, it's important to be honest about what motivates you to look for a new opportunity. However, try to avoid talking negatively about your previous employers or colleagues, as it reflects poorly on your personality. The industry you work in could be very small and there may be a chance that your interviewer knows your ex-employer on a personal level.

other questions about your career goals:

- What would you like to be doing five years from now?
- How will this job fit in your career plans?
- What do you expect to do or learn from this job?

## your work experience

what specific skills have you acquired or used in previous roles that you can apply to this position?

A: This is an opportunity to articulate your value to the team by drawing from previous work experience to highlight key selling points about your expertise and profile. It's also a good time to speak about your transferable skills that you may have acquired from experiences from your personal life and in school.

other questions about your work experience:

- Tell us about a project that you've either led or participated in that you're proud of.
- Tell us about a past experience about how you have overcome a challenge at work.
- Have you ever participated in an activity that is outside of your primary responsibilities?
- Share with us an incident where you took responsibility to analyse a problem and found a viable solution.
- What are your strengths?
- What is your biggest weakness?



## behavioural-based questions

tell us about a time when you entered a new environment and how you have adapted to it.

A: The business environment is always changing and priorities can shift. It is also not uncommon for employees to be working in different teams within the same organisation these days. This is why employers want to hire people who are agile, can adapt easily with a good attitude and are resilient. Take this opportunity to share a past experience and how you've overcome differences and challenges in times of change or adversity.

have you ever dealt with a difficult situation with a client or colleague? How did you manage and respond to it?

A: Conflicts happen in the workplace. The most critical thing that matters is how you react and respond to them. It is important to always be objective when faced with a challenge, look at the facts and listen to all the different perspectives before you come to a decision. This is an excellent chance to highlight your interpersonal communication skills and your personal approach to working in a diverse and inclusive environment.



in a scenario where your colleague is facing a challenge at work, what do you do?

A: The interviewer is trying to ascertain if you're a good team player. It is also good to describe the various technical and soft skills you've applied to help your colleague overcome the challenge.

describe a decision you made that wasn't popular and how you handled implementing it.

A: Unless you're a person who agrees with everyone during a meeting, you will definitely find yourself in a situation where you would need to voice a different and unpopular opinion.

Explain that it is essential for every business-decision making process to consider all different perspectives and options. You can also share how you've explained your opinion to help others understand your viewpoint.

other behavioural-based questions:

- What type of workplace culture are you most productive in?
- Describe the type of manager you're most inspired by / most want to work for?
- Tell me about the time when you have worked effectively under pressure.
- Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
- What do you do if you disagree with someone or when someone disagrees with you at work?
- Share a recent example of how you were able to motivate your colleagues.
- What qualities do you find important in a co-worker?

In addition to the above questions, professional contractors should also be prepared to answer questions about their career plans during the interview. Here's how you can respond for the two most frequently asked interview questions:

why did you choose to interview for a contract role?

A: Many people think that job seekers choose to interview for a contract role because they are left with no choice. Rather than go down that road, talk about how the role piqued your interest and that you do not want to deny yourself of any opportunity to learn.

if you're offered a permanent role while you're still on contract, what would you do?

A: This is one of the most frequently asked questions during a job interview. Reiterate your commitment to the job and that you're looking forward to an opportunity to contribute and learn with them. You can also share some of the employee anecdotes that you've found in your research which had motivated you to apply for the job.

# questions to ask your interviewer.

Don't forget, an interview is a two-way conversation. You're allowed to ask questions that you can't find in your research prior to the interview. This is your opportunity to learn more about the company, the people you would be working with as well as the organisation's values and goals, and find out if you're a good fit for them.

## questions you can ask

- Are you hiring for a recently-vacant position or is this a new role?
- How will the person contribute to the team and the department?
- What are the reporting lines in the team?
- What are the short and long-term expectations for this position?
- Will there be career development and advancement opportunities?
- What are the team and organisational cultures like?
- How long is your tenure, and what makes you stay?
- What do you think differentiates you from your competitors?
- What are some of the employee benefits you offer and how do they help your staff?
- When should I expect to hear back about the interview and any next steps?
- Is there an opportunity for this contract role to be converted to a permanent one in the future?

## questions you should not ask

- How much will I get paid for the role?
- What type of bonus do you pay out and am I entitled to them?
- What does your company do?
- May I arrive early or leave late as long as I get my hours in?
- Can I do this job from home?
- Was the previous person fired from the job?
- How many warnings do you get before I get fired?
- Is there job sharing?
- Can I take a look at the pantry and break areas in your office?
- What does this company consider a good absenteeism record?
- When can I start to take annual leave?



# what happens after the interview?

Thank them for their time and leave the building right after the interview. Do not call your family or friends to discuss your interview experience while you're still in the same building, as you won't know who may be listening in on those conversations.

Even if you had a negative interview experience, don't ever show it. You never know if they may be your stakeholder or client in the future.

You should also follow up on your performance with the interviewer or recruiter. Even if you did not get the job, ask for their feedback so that you can improve on your interviewing skills. If you have not heard back after two days, connect with the interviewer or recruiter via an email to follow-up on the outcomes of the interview.



# 8 tips to survive your probation or contracting period.

Congratulations on passing the job interview. Now that you have a new job with a new team and employer, it will take some time to adjust to a brand new environment. You'll need to learn how to fit into the office dynamics, use new digital tools, as well as show how your skills and experience can add value to the business.

## 1. make it a point to introduce yourself

Take the initiative to meet new colleagues. Say "hello" in the elevator, pantry or along the corridor. These interactions will pay off in the end. If the company has a fast-paced culture, your new colleagues may not have time to introduce themselves to you on your first week, so start with the group of people you're directly working with. It will be in their best interest to get you started on the right foot, so that they know how to work and collaborate with you for better efficiency and productivity.

## 2. befriend a veteran who can help you navigate the ins-and-outs of the company

Learn who the key influencers are, and who's been at your company for a while. Reach out to the veteran who has a good handle on what works and doesn't, and is happy to show you around. Plus, you'll need someone to go to for "important insights" like where the stationery is or where good lunch hideouts are!

## 3. set expectations with your boss and colleagues

Make sure to set up a kick-off meeting with your boss on the first day of work to thank them for giving you the opportunity. This is also a good time to establish and align what they would be expecting from you in your first week and month. If you're in a managerial position, it's important to begin setting expectations with your direct reports by the first month. We don't recommend setting your expectations with the team in your first week, as it may look like you're doing too much to gain control.

## 4. get organised to set good habits

You should expect to receive a lot of new information in your first month. It would be easier in the long-run if you set up good habits and get organised right at the beginning. If you start to face challenges with time management, take some extra time to map out how you'll spend each day and begin putting your plan into practice.

## 5. ask questions

No one will fault you for asking questions. As the new kid on the block, it's pretty much expected of you to ask questions. Never make assumptions that your colleagues will tell you everything you need to know. They are humans too and may miss out on sharing a couple of small details with you. Be open and curious, and adopt a lifelong learning mindset.

## 6. get in the game

If you don't have enough work on your plate, take the initiative and offer your help to take some tasks off your manager's or teammates' hands. Likewise, when attending your first meeting, try to get involved immediately. Be prepared to join the discussion, ask questions and share your opinions (or at the very least, introduce yourself and convey your excitement about joining the team). Be mindful that you don't hog the floor or you could come off as a know-it-all.

## 7. start demonstrating the attributes and capabilities you were hired for

As the saying goes, "Action speaks louder than words". Whatever you said about yourself during the interview, make it your mission to do it. If you said that you're a social media whiz, start by sharing ideas about how to promote the brand or campaigns on the company's social media accounts. Keep track of all your major contributions and positive feedback that you've received from your colleagues and customers. You want to get in the habit of collecting such feedback earlier so that you can be ready to share them during your probation review, as well as in future performance appraisals and salary negotiations.

## 8. admit mistakes

Own up to your mistakes – immediately. Do not wait to see if your boss has noticed – most bosses are more observant than you may think! Instead of worrying about the mistake made and trying to find a way to wiggle out of it, admit that you've made a mistake to your boss and work together to find a viable solution. Doing so shows integrity and an ability to troubleshoot.





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[www.randstad.com.sg](http://www.randstad.com.sg)

+65 6510 1350



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