



**EQUIPPED
TO WIN**

PREPARE. POSITION. GET CHOSEN.

The INTERVIEW PREPARATION STARTER KIT

Walk In Prepared, Not Panicked —
For When the Recruiters Start Calling.



Mindset
Preparation



Common
Questions



Smart
Answers



Confident
Presence



Standout
Strategies



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Before You Go In

Why you are here and what this kit will do for you

Getting called for an interview is the result of everything you built in the main guide.

Now the profile has done its job. The next part is yours.

Most people prepare for interviews by memorising answers. That produces answers that sound rehearsed, because they are. Interviewers notice. What works better is understanding what each question is actually trying to establish, and preparing your own honest, specific answers around that.

This kit covers five things: the five questions behind every interview, how to tell your career story in two minutes, how to use the STAR method to answer story-based questions, how to handle the salary conversation, and what to do in the 24 hours after the interview.

Section 1 — The Five Questions Behind Every Interview

Most professional interviews cover the same ground regardless of sector. The specific questions change. The underlying concerns do not.

Every interviewer is trying to establish four things: can this person do the job, will they fit the team, will they stay, and does their track record actually match what they have written.

THE FIVE QUESTIONS — WHAT THEY MEAN AND HOW TO HANDLE THEM

The Question	What They Are Actually Asking	The Common Trap	How to Approach It
Tell me about yourself.	<i>Can this person present themselves clearly? Do they know what matters to this panel?</i>	Starting from childhood, summarising the entire CV, talking for five minutes.	Two minutes. Current role or most recent relevant experience, one key result, why you are in this room.
Why do you want this role?	<i>Have they researched us? Do they actually want this specific job?</i>	Generic answers: 'I want to grow', 'Your organisation is reputable'.	Name something specific about the organisation's work. Connect it to something you have already done.

The Question	What They Are Actually Asking	The Common Trap	How to Approach It
What is your greatest weakness?	<i>Are they self-aware? Can they speak honestly without performing?</i>	Fake weaknesses: 'I work too hard', 'I am a perfectionist'.	Name a real, manageable weakness. Show you know it and are addressing it. Keep it short.
Describe a challenge you faced and how you handled it.	<i>How do they think under pressure? Do they take ownership?</i>	Vague stories with no specifics and no result.	Use the STAR framework from this guide. One clear situation, task, action, measurable result.
Where do you see yourself in five years?	<i>Is this person serious about their career? Will they stay long enough to develop?</i>	Too ambitious or too uncertain: 'I want to be a director' or 'I am not sure'.	Show a direction that follows logically from this role. Sound like someone with a plan.

Nigerian interviewers, particularly at INGOs, large corporates, and government-linked organisations, often probe for loyalty and long-term commitment. Be ready to explain specifically why you want this organisation, not just this type of role.

Section 2 — Your Two-Minute Career Introduction

Tell me about yourself is almost always the first thing you hear. The interviewer already has your CV. What they want to know is whether you can speak about yourself clearly, whether you know what is relevant for this role, and whether you are the same person your documents describe.

Two minutes is the right length. Less and you seem unprepared. More and you lose the room.

The Structure

- One sentence on your background: sector and how long you have worked in it.
- One or two sentences on your most relevant experience for this specific role.
- One specific result: a number, a scale, or an outcome that shows what you deliver.
- One sentence on why you are in this room: what about this role or organisation drew your attention.

Write it out in full before the interview.

Practice it out loud. Time yourself. The goal is fluency, not memorisation.

Do not open with "My name is [name] and I am a [title]." The panel already knows your name. Start with something that tells them what you do and what you have delivered.

Two-Minute Introduction Examples — By Sector

Find the sector closest to yours. Study the structure, not the exact words.

BANKING / FINANCE — Senior Relationship Manager applying for a Corporate Banking Team Lead

I have spent nine years in commercial banking, the last five focused on corporate relationship management across manufacturing and FMCG clients. In my current role I manage a portfolio of 34 corporate accounts with a combined facility exposure of N18bn. Last year my team grew the book by 22% while keeping non-performing loans below the bank's 3% threshold.

I am here because your bank's expansion into the mid-market corporate segment is exactly the space I have been working in, and I want to be part of building that capability from the inside.

[Approximately 75 seconds. Specific, grounded, forward-looking.]

HEALTHCARE — Public Health Officer applying for a State Health Programme Coordinator role

I have worked in public health for seven years, primarily in maternal and child health programming across three states in the North-West. I currently coordinate a primary healthcare strengthening programme covering 42 facilities, where we recorded a 34% increase in skilled birth attendance over an 18-month period.

I am interested in this role specifically because the state government's integrated health systems approach is the model I believe produces durable results, and I want to work at the policy level where those decisions get made.

[Approximately 70 seconds. Names scale, names result, names why.]

TECH / PRODUCT — Product Manager applying for a Senior Product Manager role

I have been in product for six years, across two fintechs and one B2B SaaS company. I currently lead the payments product at [company], where I shipped three major features over the last 12 months that collectively reduced transaction failure rates by 18% and contributed to a 31% increase in monthly active users.

I am drawn to this role because your product is solving a market structure problem in SME lending that I have been thinking about for two years, and I want to work on something where the impact is visible at scale.

[Approximately 80 seconds. Two companies named, two metrics named, clear opinion on the product.]

HR / PEOPLE MANAGEMENT — HR Manager applying for a Head of People role

I have worked in HR for eight years across manufacturing and professional services organisations. For the last three years I have been HR Manager at [company], where I restructured our talent acquisition process and cut average time-to-hire from 11 weeks to 6 weeks. I also led the rollout of our first performance management framework, which was adopted across all four business units.

I am applying because your organisation is at a growth stage where the people infrastructure needs to be built properly, not patched. That is the work I enjoy most.

[Approximately 75 seconds. Two results named. Clear statement of what they want to do.]

NGO / DEVELOPMENT — Senior Programme Manager applying for a Country Director role

I have spent 11 years in programme management in the development sector, working across USAID, EU, and DFID-funded portfolios in Nigeria and West Africa. For the last four years I have been Senior Programme Manager overseeing a portfolio of three concurrent programmes totalling USD 8.2m, with a team of 22 staff across five states.

I am applying for this role because your organisation's work in resilience programming in the North-East aligns closely with the methodology I have spent the last two years developing, and I want to lead at the level where strategy and implementation connect.

[Approximately 85 seconds. Scale stated, team size stated, programme context named, clear personal motivation.]

Section 3 — The STAR Method

STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result. It is the standard framework for answering behavioural interview questions, which start with phrases like 'Tell me about a time when...' or 'Describe a situation where...'

Behavioural interviewing is used because past behaviour is the strongest available predictor of future performance. Research consistently shows that structured behavioural interviews using the STAR method improve hiring prediction accuracy by up to 40% compared to unstructured interviews. 72% of companies now use structured interviews as standard practice. (Metaintro / DDI Research, 2025)

The reason STAR works for candidates is structure. It stops you from rambling, keeps the answer focused, and forces you to name an actual result rather than describing general effort.

THE STAR FRAMEWORK

Part	What to Cover	Tip
S — Situation	Set the scene in one or two sentences. Name the context, the role you were in, and the specific challenge.	<i>Be specific. 'During our Q3 performance review, our team had missed target for two consecutive months' is better than 'at one of my previous jobs'.</i>
T — Task	Describe what was expected of you. What was your responsibility in this situation?	<i>This separates STAR from simpler story formats. The Task makes clear what the stakes were and why your action mattered.</i>
A — Action	Describe what YOU did. Not the team. Not management. What you personally took on.	<i>Use active verbs. Managed, designed, negotiated, rebuilt, resolved. Avoid 'we' when the question is about you.</i>
R — Result	State the outcome. What changed? What was the measurable effect of your action?	<i>If you have a number, use it. 'The donor renewed for a second cycle' is a result. 'Things improved' is not.</i>

STAR Examples Across Sectors

One example per sector. Find yours, study the structure.

BANKING — 'Tell me about a time you managed a difficult client relationship.'

S: One of our largest corporate clients threatened to move their N2bn facility to a competitor after a processing delay caused them to miss a payment window for a key supplier.

T: I was the relationship manager on the account and responsible for retaining the relationship and resolving the underlying issue.

A: I met with the client's CFO within 24 hours, acknowledged the error directly without deflecting, and coordinated with our operations team to expedite a same-day solution. I also worked with my manager to authorise a fee waiver.

R: The client stayed. They increased their facility with us by N500m the following quarter. The CFO specifically mentioned the way the issue was handled when they told me why.

HEALTHCARE — 'Describe a time you worked under significant pressure to deliver a result.'

S: During a meningitis outbreak in our coverage area, our routine health programming came under pressure as staff and resources were redirected to the emergency response.

T: I was responsible for ensuring our antenatal care services continued functioning across 12 facilities while simultaneously supporting the outbreak response.

A: I restructured the duty roster to create two separate response teams, negotiated temporary support from a partner organisation, and moved two ANC clinics to Saturday sessions to maintain coverage.

R: We sustained 90% of our usual ANC attendance through the outbreak period. The partner organisation cited our coordination approach in their own after-action review.

TECH — 'Tell me about a time a product you built did not perform as expected.'

S: We launched a new onboarding flow meant to reduce drop-off at the document verification step. Within two weeks of launch, drop-off had increased by 12% compared to the previous flow.

T: As product manager I was accountable for the decision to ship and for diagnosing what went wrong.

A: I ran session recordings on 200 user journeys, identified that the new UI was unclear on low-end Android devices used by most of our target segment, and worked with engineering to ship a fix within five days.

R: Drop-off returned to baseline within two weeks of the fix. The device testing protocol we introduced has since caught two similar issues before they reached production.

HR — 'Describe a time you had to manage a conflict within your team.'

S: Two senior officers in my department had a deteriorating working relationship following a disagreement over a hiring decision. It was starting to affect the rest of the team.

T: As HR Manager I was responsible for the team's functioning, but I also had to navigate the fact that one of the officers involved was more senior than me in the broader organisation.

A: I held separate structured conversations with each person to understand their concerns, then facilitated a joint session where the specific disagreement was addressed directly with agreed protocols for future decisions.

R: Both officers worked professionally together for the remaining 18 months I was in that role. Two staff members who had been quietly disengaging came back to full participation.

NGO — 'Tell me about a time you had to manage a significant budget challenge mid-project.'

S: In Year 2 of a three-year USAID programme, a currency devaluation reduced the local currency value of our USD grant by approximately 23%, creating a projected shortfall against our operational budget.

T: I was responsible for programme delivery and for maintaining donor compliance while managing the impact of the shortfall.

A: I conducted a rapid prioritisation of activities, identified non-critical line items that could be deferred without affecting core indicators, and drafted a budget realignment request to USAID with full narrative justification. I also renegotiated two supplier contracts at reduced rates.

R: USAID approved the realignment within three weeks. We delivered all Year 2 targets. The donor specifically commended the quality of the budget narrative in their mid-term review.

Section 4 — The Project Closeout Question

For NGO and development professionals, the answer to 'Why did you leave your last role?' is often a project closeout. The funding ended. The contract concluded. You did not choose to leave.

Many candidates answer this apologetically. A project closeout is not a weakness. It is how the sector works. What the interviewer actually wants to know is: did you deliver before you left, and can you speak about it clearly?

Weak	Stronger
<i>"My project ended due to funding closure so unfortunately I had to leave the organisation."</i>	<i>"My programme completed its planned three-year cycle in December 2023. We delivered against all donor targets, received a clean financial audit, and handed over programme assets to the state government counterpart on schedule. The project closing was planned from the start. I used the final quarter to document lessons learned and support the team through the transition."</i>

The stronger version treats the closeout as what it was: a planned conclusion to delivered work. Apply the same approach to redundancy or restructuring. State what you contributed, then state what happened. Contribution first. Departure as context.

Section 5 — The Salary Conversation

Most candidates either name a figure that is too low because they are afraid of being turned down, or they say nothing and let the employer set the number entirely. Both cost money.

Research the market rate before every interview. LinkedIn Jobs, Jobberman, and Glassdoor Nigeria carry salary data. Going in with a number in mind puts you in a far stronger position than going in hoping for something fair.

THE SALARY CONVERSATION — FOUR SCENARIOS

Scenario	How to Respond
They name a figure first	If it is reasonable, work from it. If it is below your range: 'Based on my experience and the scope of this role, I was expecting something closer to [your range]. Is there flexibility?'
They ask you to name a figure first	Name a range, not a single number. Put your target in the lower half of the range. Example: 'I am looking at N450,000 to N550,000 depending on the full package.' The upper figure gives you room to negotiate without losing ground.
They say the budget is fixed	Ask about the full package before accepting or declining. Housing allowance, medical, transport, learning budget, performance review timeline. Total value sometimes exceeds base salary significantly.
You do not know the market rate	Research before the interview. LinkedIn Jobs, Jobberman, and Glassdoor Nigeria carry salary data for Nigerian roles. Going in without a number weakens your position.

For NGO roles, ask specifically about the full package: housing allowance, medical cover, school fees support, transport, and performance review timeline. In some organisations the package adds 30 to 50% above base salary. That changes the calculation.

Section 6 — What to Do After the Interview

Most candidates walk out and wait. That is a mistake.

68% of hiring managers say a thank-you note after an interview impacts their decision. Only 24% of candidates actually send one. When candidates are equally qualified, the one who follows up is more likely to receive the offer. (TopResume / Robert Half, 2025)

THE POST-INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

When	What to Do
Within 2 hours	Send a short thank-you message to the hiring manager or interview coordinator. Two or three sentences. Thank them for the time, mention one specific thing from the conversation, confirm your interest. Under 100 words.

When	What to Do
Same day	Write down every question you were asked and how you answered. Note which answers felt strong and which felt weak. This debrief makes you sharper for the next round.
Same day	If you were asked something you could not answer well, research it now. A second round may include a version of the same question.
Within 24 hours	Connect on LinkedIn with the interviewer if you have not already. Brief note: 'Thank you again for the conversation today. I enjoyed learning more about the team.' Nothing more.
After 5 working days with no response	One short follow-up email. Express that you are still interested. Ask politely for an update on timeline. Send once. If there is still no response after another week, move on.

One more thing: if you did not get the role, ask for feedback. Most organisations will give at least a brief response when asked professionally. That feedback is some of the most useful preparation you can get for the next interview.

Quick Pre-Interview Checklist

Run through this the evening before.

- You have researched the organisation: its programmes, recent work, stated priorities.
- You know who is interviewing you if possible. LinkedIn is useful for this.
- Your two-minute introduction is written out and you have said it out loud at least twice.
- You have two or three STAR stories ready for competency-based questions.
- You know your salary range and have a response ready for how the question might come up.
- You can speak clearly about your project closeout or departure without hesitation.
- You have two or three questions to ask the panel at the end. About the work, the team, or the organisation's direction. Not about salary.
- Interview location, format, and time confirmed. For virtual: connection tested, camera checked.

They called you because your profile worked.

The interview is where you confirm what the profile already told them.

Go in knowing what you have done. Speak about it clearly. Listen well.