

ZERO TO ONE SEARCH

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES

SIMPLE TIPS TO GET
YOUR DREAM JOB

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WHY DOES IT MATTER TO PREPARE?

An interview is a key step in getting your dream job. It's the only chance for you and your potential employer to get to know each other and see whether there is a professional and personal fit.

MAIN TYPES OF AN INTERVIEW

HR INTERVIEW

A candidate is asked about personal information such as family status and motivation, and his soft competences get assessed to the extent of how much of a fit they are with the company and team.

TECHNICAL INTERVIEW

It can be more than one interview and can consist of an online or offline coding challenge, or a verbal set of questions a candidate must answer.



HR INTERVIEW

The key goal of an in-house recruiter is to save the technical team's time. You'd better be prepared to explain why you want to join this particular company, what is your career plan, what stuff you like to work with, whether you have worked with technologies mentioned in a job description, whether you are a team player or a self-starter, etc.

Our general advice here – preparation before an interview is never a waste. Look the company up online and prepare questions you may have about the organization (technical questions must be saved for the technical interview stage).

While being interviewed, try to focus on the position you are actually applying to. To illustrate, there is no point talking about your ambitions to set up own startup or to become a manager if you are applying for an engineering position.

As recruiters are typically not going deep into technical aspects of a position, they will **unlikely understand things based on a specialized context.** If you are asked whether you have worked with a particular technology, be short and specific. Start your answer with “Yes” or “No” and, if you have, elaborate depending on how deep your expertise is, and in case you haven't, tell about your experience with alternative technologies.

Ensure a quiet environment during an interview. This may sound obvious, but candidates often ignore this aspect. If a recruiter called you without prior notice and you are in a noisy place, just reschedule the call for a better time. Recall last time you had to speak to someone who was on a noisy street, it's quite annoying, isn't it?

And one more thing: before an interview make sure that your phone and headset are working properly!

TECHNICAL INTERVIEW

This type of interview aims to assess your technical competences and skills for a particular vacancy.

Generally, a technical interview is conducted by **a hiring manager of your future team**, and in most cases, these guys are on your side since they have already green-lighted your CV earlier.

An approach to a technical interview varies depending on a company and interviewer. However, it is always **worth to PREPARE for it**, regardless of your level of professional experience. This is particularly important for those who don't speak English daily.

We highly recommend you check out a set of useful materials prepared by one of our successful candidates, as you will likely learn lots of valuable tips about interviews! Use the link to find out more! <https://github.com/andreis/interview>.

Of course, you don't need to pull an all-nighter before an interview, rereading a ginormous pile of books. However, let's consider some **important aspects, which should be paid attention to**.

SOME RULES IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND

RULE #1

You should understand what company you are talking to

Maybe it sounds ridiculous, but many interviewers note that sometimes candidates are not able to say what company they are interviewing for. Therefore, make sure you asked a recruiter to tell you more about a company, team, product. You can also google this information and maybe some additional questions will pop into your head – you can ask them during an interview. You can always follow up an interviewer with a question you accidentally forgot to ask during a call.

Note that it's very important to show your interest in a particular company and position, not only in some aspects of a vacancy – for example, an opportunity to relocate to another country. If you only mention relocation as a motivation to take the job, it may sound like you are just using this job as a means to another end and will leave as soon as something better comes along in the destination country.

RULE #2

Take it easy, no one's going to bombard you with questions impossible to answer

Stay calm. You were chosen from many, you're a valuable candidate already.

The best way to stay calm is to do your homework, think about things you have done, your approach to challenges, questions you would ask yourself. Brush up algorithms (you can check out some links to the introduction to algorithms in **Resources** section). Although most of the time you don't need it, it could be useful in case of a coding task.

RULE #3

Know your resume

If you put there that you have worked with a certain technology, be ready to answer several questions about this experience. Be also ready to explain your role in a project, tell what you've learned from it, what you've contributed and why you've left. You can go beyond the questions and talk about why you have chosen a particular design or data structure, helping an interviewer to understand your train of thought. It also makes sense to prepare a 5-minute pitch about yourself and your experience.

RULE #4

Smile

Although no one sees your smile (or they do if you have a video call) from the psychological perspective, your communicator can feel your intonation. Try to be friendly but in a natural way, it's easy to define whether you're faking it or you're real with your interlocutor. By the way, in case you're applying for a position in a German company, you'd better keep in mind that Germans are quite straightforward and direct, but don't be frustrated about that. That does not necessarily mean that they do not like you, so be polite and keep smiling 😊

RULE #5

Be professional

If a vacancy requires well-spoken English, this means no slang or jargon should be used in your communication. Try to pay attention to vocabulary, even to seemingly simple concepts. Your speech should be clear, precise and confident. If you are not fluent enough in English or if you have not used your English for a while and it's a little rusty, practice speaking to yourself or your friends before an interview just to get used to a foreign language. You can also write down the most common questions and answers or have roleplay with your friend or family members before an interview.

RULE #7

We're all human beings

You shouldn't worry too much if you made a mistake during an interview. Nobody's perfect, everybody makes mistakes, so try not to let it baffle you!

RULE #8

Communicate

If you haven't got a question or have been stuck, ask an interviewer for help, for example, to repeat a question, or give you a hint. Everyone gets stuck, even successful candidates. And, of course, ask questions! This will express your interest in a position and provide you with additional details about a company, potential tasks, and career prospects. Remember, you won't help yourself by being silent.

...AND LAST FEW TIPS

- **Be nice!**
- **Try to distance yourself from a process and don't judge yourself**
- **Even if you don't get the job, you should consider this as a motivation to improve your skills and move forward**

WHO WE ARE?

Zero to One Search is a Germany-based international recruitment agency with a focus on connecting IT professionals with tech companies. Our mission is to help tech players to find candidates in accordance with their businesses' needs, and IT specialists to get the right jobs with interesting challenges and opportunity to relocate to Europe. The company was established in 2017 as a remote agency with a team of recruiters from all over the world.

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!

Are you looking for an IT job in Germany and keen to relocate?

We are here to assist you with the best recruitment practices! We speak 7+ languages and will be happy to help with your next career move in Germany.

Check out available jobs on our Job Board or contact us via email and social media:

<https://jobs.zerotoonesearch.com>

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RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION TO ALGORITHMS BY MIT

<https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/electrical-engineering-and-computer-science/6-006-introduction-to-algorithms-fall-2011/>

<https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/electrical-engineering-and-computer-science/6-046j-introduction-to-algorithms-sma-5503-fall-2005/>

<https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/electrical-engineering-and-computer-science/6-046j-design-and-analysis-of-algorithms-spring-2015/>

OTHER LINKS

<https://dandreamsofcoding.com/2012/11/25/how-to-prepare-for-technical-interviews/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qc1owf2-220>