

# Virtual Mock Interview with Upwardly Global – A Guide for Volunteers

A mock interview emulates a real job interview and increases our candidates' confidence, skills and interview techniques. For many of the participants, this is the first time the job seeker participates in a professional job interview in the U.S. You will also practice and enhance your own cross-cultural communication skills. This interview can take place by phone or an online virtual platform (Google Hangouts, Skype, Zoom, Teams, etc).

## First, prepare for the mock interview

- ✓ Review jobseeker's resume and job description
- ✓ Prepare a list of questions to ask
- ✓ Review the feedback form in advance to know what you need to assess from the mock experience
- ✓ Decide over email with your jobseeker what the best date, time, and platform to complete the Mock Interview

## Mock Interview Process:

		Time
<b>Opening</b>	Introductions and ice breaker: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Briefly discuss past interviewing experience</li> <li>▪ Briefly confirm industry &amp; career target(s)</li> <li>▪ Any upcoming interviews (to role play)?</li> </ul>	5 minutes
<b>Interview</b>	Target 5 questions: Choose from list of questions, OR Develop your own targeted questions that follow up on the answers given	25 minutes
<i>“Okay, the mock interview is officially over, let’s talk about how that went for you...”</i>		
<b>Feedback</b>	Ask for <b>self-assessment</b> . For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “So how do you think that went?”</li> <li>▪ “What do you feel you did well?”</li> <li>▪ “What do you think you could have done better?”</li> </ul>	10 minutes
	General thoughts (positive points first). For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “In general, I thought you did well...(discuss few positive things)...“Now I’d like to give you my perceptions and suggestions on how you could improve/become more effective...”</li> </ul>	
	Specific feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Content feedback</li> <li>▪ Delivery feedback</li> </ul>	
	End with positive reinforcement!	
<b>Total: 40 minutes</b>		

## Additional Questions for Mock Interview

Start with open-ended question, like: *“Tell me a little about yourself”*

### List of Questions

1. *Why are you interested in (this industry/profession/company)?*
2. *Describe your perfect job for me- what are you doing, with whom, etc. Why?*
3. *What one single event has been your biggest accomplishment? What has been the most challenging experience? Why?*
4. *What do you think are your strengths? (i.e. what do you do better than most people?)  
What item on your resume are you most proud of?*
5. *What do you feel are the most relevant skills or experiences from your past working experience?*
6. *What do you think are the most important qualities of a successful (accountant, banker, auditor, project manager etc)?*
7. *Give me an example of a time when you demonstrated your creative problem-solving skills. Describe a complex problem you solved.*
8. *Tell me about a mistake you made at work, what would you have done differently? What did you learn from this mistake?*
9. *Tell me about the most difficult person you've had to work with. What was the situation and how did you address and resolve it? OR  
Describe a conflict with an employee and how you handled it.*
10. *Tell me about the toughest decision you've had to make in your work or life.*
11. *What unique skills and experiences can you bring to us?*
12. *What are your goals (short, medium and long term)? How does our firm fit within these goals?*
13. *Describe how you have been able to apply something you learned from your academic training to a real-life or work-related situation.*
14. *Describe a (recent) situation in which you asked for advice or help.*
15. *Describe a situation in which you had to quickly establish your credibility and gain the confidence of others. What did you do?*
16. *Describe a situation when miscommunication created a problem on the job.*
17. *Describe a situation when you were confronted by a difficult problem and how you solved it. Describe a time when you accomplished a challenging goal.*
18. *Describe a time when you had to take on something very new or different and you had little or no guidance and support in doing so. How did you handle it?*

19. *Describe how you work under pressure. Do you anticipate problems effectively or just react to them?*

20. *Describe how you have handled rude, difficult or impatient people.*

21. *Given a situation when you disagree with your supervisor, how would you deal with it?*

*Looking back now, is there anything that you could have done to improve your relationship with that manager/supervisor?*

**END with:** *We have a lot of qualified applicants- why do you think we should hire you?*

# Upwardly Global - Guidelines for Effective Interviewing

Interviewing is a science as much as an art! It is a skill useful in every industry. Upwardly Global values the feedback we get from our volunteers at Mock Interviews, and we want to make sure that every one of them has the tools to interview effectively and to evaluate their interviewees comprehensively.

This document covers:

- The P-A-R Example
- The Interview Process
  - Specific questions to ask your jobseeker during Mock Interviews
  - Specific content you should be listening for in your jobseeker's answers
- When evaluating your jobseeker, please consider...

## The P-A-R Example: What is it?

The formula we give our jobseekers for how to answer behavioral interview & technical interview questions. The ideal P-A-R Example does not force the interviewer to dig much deeper for more information, but it is still focused; with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

**Problem:** A challenge the jobseeker faced in that industry, from the company itself, from a particular project, or with the economy at the time. Not a personal problem with a coworker or boss,

- Explain the Problem quickly and clearly, don't ramble or lose focus.
- Spend most of the interview answer talking about Actions and Results.

**Action:** Specific steps the jobseeker took to deal with the particular challenge.  
-- If the jobseeker was part of a team, what was his/her role on the team?

**Result:** Specific short-term and long-term achievements the organization enjoyed as a result of the action taken. Quantify the achievements as much as possible!

### The P-A-R Example in Action:

**Interviewer:** *"Tell me about your management experience."*

**Jobseeker:** *"I have 4 years of management experience from my previous position as Warehouse and Logistics Coordinator at ACME Imports in Bogota, Colombia. I managed 40 people tracking shipments and maintaining documentation for up to 20 tons of material weekly. When I started in this position, we had a real problem with people not showing up for work. I looked in to it and discovered that people were unsatisfied with their jobs. I learned they wanted more flexible hours and professional development opportunities, so I changed the work schedule to incorporate 3 shifts instead of 2 and added special classes for staff who wanted to expand their skills. We're able to handle almost double the shipments more efficiently in the same amount of time. It's less stressful for everyone now and a nicer place to work."*

# The Interview Process

## The Opener

### **“Tell me a little about yourself” or “Walk me through your resume”**

- Don't take 30 minutes to recount your whole family story and all of your hobbies. This is a short autobiography of yourself as a professional. How do your all of your previous jobs fit together? Stress your experience and achievements that most relate to the position. If you have current professional development or an internship or volunteer position in your field, mention it!

## The Usual Suspects: Common Interview Questions in Every Industry

### **“What are your strengths?”**

- Choose carefully! Pick strengths that directly relate to the position.

### **“What are your weaknesses?”**

- A trick question. Pick a weakness that you've identified and that you're working on overcoming now.
- Do NOT pick a weakness that is central to the job you're interviewing for. For example, if it's an Event Planner position. Don't say “*I'm not detail oriented.*”
- Do NOT say your English skills are poor!

A good example:

*When I first arrived in New York I couldn't become an accountant right away because I didn't know with US accounting regulations and my computer skills were not up to date. I knew I had to work on those areas if I was ever going to restart my professional career in the US. I started studying US GAAP online right away. I was a very quick study because it is very similar to the regulations that we use in Nigeria. I already knew Excel, so I taught myself the newest version at home in my free time. I took classes in QuickBooks, Peachtree, and SAGE software. I also took a tax course through Jackson Hewitt who hired me to work for them during tax season. At this point, I feel like I've really done a lot to become more competitive in my field, but I still want to do more. Now I'm working towards my C.P.A.*

### **“Why do you want to work here?”**

- The answer should reflect that the jobseeker has done extensive research about the company and its competitors. This is important. Don't go easy in your evaluation of your interviewees skills in this area!

### **“Where do you see yourself in 5 years?”**

- Do NOT say that you want to go back to school. Companies don't want to spend time & money training new hires who will leave after only a short time.
- You're looking for a company you can grow with. You expect to be at the same company then & to have become known as a dependable contributor who meets deadlines and is easy to work with. You expect to have taken on many more responsibilities by then.

## The Technical Questions

- Pick 3-4 bullet points directly from the job description and ask the jobseeker about their skills in that area. Answers should still be in P-A-R format.

## The Behavioral Question – ask 1-2 questions

- These are “What if...?” questions.
- The interviewer is asking “What would you do (or what did you do) in a certain situation?”
- A common general behavioral question is: “Have you ever worked with difficult clients?”

## The Closers

**“We have a lot of qualified applicants. Why should we hire you?”**

- Go back to the job description. The jobseeker's answer should clearly demonstrate that they researched the company and they clearly understand the job description and what they can bring to the role.
- Talk about experience and achievements in the areas the job description is specifically asking for.
- Stress language skills and international perspective e/she can bring to the team

### ***“Do you have any questions for me?”***

Yes! Always have at least 3 questions. The jobseeker has a few options:

- **Show that s/he has done the research.**
  - “I read online that your company is about to launch a new product. How will the IT department be involved or affected by this?”*
  - “I’ve been reading industry journals that tell me December is the biggest month for Event Planners in New York. With so many nonprofit galas at that same time, what do you do to ensure that your events are at the top of people’s priorities to attend?”*
- **Show that s/he wants to learn something about the company not posted on the website.**
  - “Can you tell me what a regular day is like in the office?”*
  - “What’s the team like to work with?”*
  - “What kind of person does well in this particular environment?”*
- **Show that s/he is interested in doing a good job there.**
  - “How often would my performance be evaluated? Is there a formal process every 6 months?”*
  - “What professional development opportunities does the organization offer?”*
  - “What responsibilities do you expect the person filling this role could grow into over time?”*

## ***When evaluating your jobseeker, please consider***

- Did s/he prepare clear and compelling reasons about why s/he is a great match for the position?
- Did s/he customize his/her resume specifically for this position?
- Did s/he give complete P-A-R examples in the responses or did you have to keep prodding the jobseeker for more information?