

*“Very pleased to say that I have this afternoon been offered the job.
Thanks for your help, it really was invaluable!”*

General Counsel - U.K. National Regulatory Agency

HOW TO INTERVIEW THE INTERVIEWER

Top
Executive
Coach

A portrait of Peter Botting, a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, smiling broadly. He is wearing a dark blue collared shirt under a dark grey or black blazer. The background behind him is a stylized, abstract map of the world with vibrant colors: blue for the oceans, yellow for the northern landmasses, and purple for the southern landmasses.

Peter Botting



HOW TO INTERVIEW THE INTERVIEWER

TURN INTERVIEWS INTO
INSIGHT, INFLUENCE, AND
STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE

Interviews are no longer one-sided evaluations.

The best candidates don't just answer questions - they ask strategic questions to understand the company, assess cultural fit, and position themselves as the solution the organisation needs.

Learning to interview the interviewer transforms a stressful experience into an opportunity for clarity, connection, and influence.



PREPARE YOUR OWN GOALS

Know what you need from the interview.

Is it understanding the team, the company's growth strategy, or the role's expectations?

Tip: Write down your top three priorities for the conversation.



RESEARCH THE INTERVIEWER

Understand their role, background, and priorities. LinkedIn, company blogs, and press releases can reveal their perspective and help tailor your questions.

Example: If they are a project manager, focus on operational challenges; if they are in HR, focus on culture and development.



OBSERVE BEFORE YOU ASK

Pay attention to tone, body language, and phrasing of questions.

This gives clues about what matters most to the interviewer.

Tip: Take mental notes on recurring themes—they often reveal the company's priorities.



ASK INSIGHTFUL, OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Move beyond surface-level inquiries. Ask questions that provoke insight:

- “What keeps your team up at night?”
- “How do you measure success in this role?”
- “What has surprised you most about working here?”



LISTEN ACTIVELY

The goal is to gather information, not just impress. Take notes, paraphrase, and confirm understanding. (They usually like it when you take notes, ask if they mind. Better than a dumb nodding head!)

- Tip: Show engagement with subtle nods, follow-up questions, and reflections.



EXPLORE CULTURE AND DYNAMICS

Assess whether the organisation's values and working style align with your preferences:

“How do teams collaborate across departments?”

“What's the approach to professional development here?”



TEST FOR CHALLENGES AND PAIN POINTS

Your questions can reveal opportunities where you can add value.

Example: “What’s the biggest challenge the team has faced in the last six months?”



WATCH FOR RED FLAGS

The interviewer's answers can reveal potential issues, from high turnover to unclear expectations.

Tip: Follow up gently if something feels inconsistent: "Could you expand on that?"



DEMONSTRATE STRATEGIC THINKING

Frame questions that show your insight and experience.


Example: “Given your expansion plans, how do you see this role contributing to scaling operations effectively?”



BALANCE PROFESSIONAL CURIOSITY WITH RESPECT

Asking probing questions is powerful, but avoid appearing confrontational.

Keep your tone curious, collaborative, and solution-oriented.



USE QUESTIONS TO UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS AND TIMELINE

“What are the next steps after today’s conversation?”

“How does the team make final hiring decisions?”



REFLECT THEIR PRIORITIES

Reframe what you hear to show alignment.

Example: “You mentioned team collaboration is key. Here’s how I’ve successfully built cross-functional initiatives in the past...”



DOCUMENT INSIGHTS

After the interview, write down your observations. This helps in evaluating fit and preparing for follow-ups or offers.



BUILD A DIALOGUE, NOT AN INTERROGATION

Engage in a two-way conversation. Share insights about yourself while learning about the company.

This positions you as an active contributor, not a passive respondent.



TURN QUESTIONS INTO VALUE

Frame questions in a way that highlights your potential contributions:

Example: “You mentioned efficiency challenges - here’s an approach I used that increased throughput by 30%...”



USE STORIES STRATEGICALLY

Answer questions with concise, relevant stories that demonstrate skills and results.

Stories make your insights memorable, reelable, and show practical experience.



EVALUATE CULTURAL FIT

Listen not only to what is said but also how it is said.

Culture often shows through communication style, enthusiasm, and transparency.



MANAGE TIME WISELY

Prioritise your most important questions early in the conversation.

Respect the interviewer's schedule while ensuring you get the information you need.



FOLLOW UP THOUGHTFULLY

After the interview, send a message that reflects on your key learnings and reinforces alignment with the role or organisation.



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Each interview is a learning experience. Reflect on what worked, what didn't, and how you can refine your approach for the next opportunity.



FINAL THOUGHT

Interviewing the interviewer is about curiosity, strategy, and alignment.

By asking smart, thoughtful questions and listening actively, you will gain clarity about the role, demonstrate your value, and create a memorable impression that can open doors.

The best candidates leave every interview better informed, more connected, and ready to contribute meaningfully.

EXECUTIVE INTERVIEW COACHING
FROM **6-TIME TEDMED**
AND SXSW
SPEAKER COACH

Peter Botting



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