What's Next for Maya?
Part 3: The Interview

Warm up



- Have you ever been asked a difficult or unexpected question in an interview? How did you respond?
- Would you rather be interviewed by one person or a panel of five people? Why?
- What makes a stronger impression in an interview: confidence, experience or personality?
- If you were interviewing someone, what would make you decide not to hire them within the first five minutes?
- Do you think job interviews are a fair way to choose employees?
- Would you prefer a traditional interview or a practical task that allows you to demonstrate your skills?

1. Two weeks after submitting her CV and cover letter, Maya receives an email from *Nexora International*. Read it and answer the following questions.

Gmail

Compose

Inbox 3

Starred

Snoozed

Sent

Drafts

More

Interview Invitation – Senior Project Coordinator

Nexora International <recruitment@nexora.com>
to me

Tue, 1 Oct, 16:24

NEXORA
INTERNATIONAL

Dear Maya,

Thank you for your application for the position of Senior Project Coordinator at Nexora International.

We were impressed by your experience and would like to invite you to an online interview with our HR Manager and a member of our Project Management team.

The interview will last approximately 45 minutes and will focus on your professional experience, your approach to project coordination and your motivation for joining Nexora.

We would like to suggest Thursday, 15 October, at 10:00 a.m. UK time (11:00 a.m. German time). Please let us know if this is convenient for you.

We look forward to speaking with you.

Kind regards,

Recruitment Team
Nexora International

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a. What does the email suggest about Nexora's first impression of Maya, and how do you know? *Nexora has a positive first impression of Maya. They say they were impressed by her experience and have invited her to an interview, which suggests they see her as a strong candidate.*

b. Why do you think Nexora wants to discuss Maya's motivation for joining the company, rather than just her professional experience? *They want to understand why Maya is interested in working for Nexora and whether her goals and values match the company's. They also want to see if she is genuinely interested in the position.*

c. What important information is missing from the invitation that Maya might need before the interview? *The email doesn't include a video meeting link or specify which platform will be used (e.g. Zoom or Microsoft Teams). It also doesn't give the names of the interviewers or explain whether Maya needs to prepare anything in advance.*

2. Maya finds some interview advice online. Do you agree, disagree or think it depends? Compare your answers with a partner and discuss the questions below.

	Agree	Disagree	It depends
a. Memorise answers to common interview questions.	☐	☐	☐
b. Research the company before the interview.	☐	☐	☐
c. Keep your answers short unless asked for more detail.	☐	☐	☐
d. Mention your achievements without sounding too proud.	☐	☐	☐
e. It's better to admit you don't know than to guess.	☐	☐	☐
f. Don't mention skills you lack unless you're asked.	☐	☐	☐
g. A little nervousness can make you seem more genuine.	☐	☐	☐
h. Disagree politely if you think the interviewer is wrong.	☐	☐	☐
i. Ask about salary and benefits during the first interview.	☐	☐	☐
j. Ask the interviewer why the previous employee left.	☐	☐	☐
k. Never reveal your current salary to a potential employer.	☐	☐	☐
l. Be yourself rather than trying to impress the interviewer.	☐	☐	☐
m. Treat the interview as a conversation, not an examination.	☐	☐	☐
n. If you're overqualified, play down some of your experience.	☐	☐	☐
o. Use personal examples if you lack work experience.	☐	☐	☐
p. Avoid speaking negatively about previous employers.	☐	☐	☐
q. It's better to be memorable than to give perfect answers.	☐	☐	☐

1. Which advice caused the most disagreement between you and your partner? Why?
2. Is there a difference between presenting yourself positively and being dishonest in an interview? Where would you draw the line?
3. Can following too much interview advice make someone seem less genuine?
4. Is there any interview advice that might work well in one country but badly in another?

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3. Maya prepares for her interview by reviewing the job advert. Match the interview questions (a–f) with what the interviewer wants to find out (1–6). Then answer the question that follows.

Interview questions



a. Could you tell us a little about yourself and your professional background?
b. Why are you interested in working for Nexora International?
c. Can you describe a time when you had to deal with a difficult deadline?
d. How do you manage several projects at the same time?
e. Have you had any experience leading or supervising other people?
f. What would you say is an area you still need to develop?

What the interviewer wants to know

1. Whether she has the potential to take on more responsibility.
2. Whether she understands the company and has a genuine reason for applying.
3. How she responds to pressure and solves problems.
4. Whether she can recognise her limitations and learn from them.
5. Whether she has the organisational skills needed for the role.
6. Whether she can summarise her relevant experience clearly.

Answers: a *6* b *2* c *3* d *5* e *1* f *4*

Which question might be most challenging for Maya? Discuss how she could answer it convincingly, using examples from her CV.

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Giving Strong Interview Answers

Interviewers often ask candidates to describe situations from their previous jobs. A useful way to organise an answer is the STAR method.

S	T
Situation	Task
What was happening?	*What did you need to do?*
A	R
Action	Result
What steps did you take?	*What happened in the end?*

4. Maya prepares an answer to the following interview question: *Can you tell us about a time when you had to deal with a difficult deadline?* Put the four parts of her answer in the correct order.

a. "I reviewed the schedule, spoke to the team and reorganised our priorities."

b. "In the end, we delivered the project two weeks ahead of the original deadline."

c. "Last year, I was coordinating a major client project when we realised that some important tasks were taking longer than expected."

d. "I needed to make sure we could still meet the client's requirements without putting too much pressure on the team."

Correct order: *c* → *d* → *a* → *b*

5. Think of a time when you had to deal with a difficult deadline, either at work or during your studies. How would you answer the interviewer's question? Use the STAR method to structure your answer.

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6. It's time for Maya's interview. Listen to her six answers and match them (1–6) with the interviewer's questions (a–f).



a. Why do you want to leave your current company?

b. Can you tell us about a time when something went wrong at work?

c. What interests you most about this position?

d. How would you describe your management experience?

e. What do you consider your greatest professional achievement?

f. How do you deal with competing priorities?

Answers: 1 *b* 2 *c* 3 *e* 4 *f* 5 *a* 6 *d*

7. Listen again and discuss the questions.

a. Which answer do you think was Maya's strongest? Why?

b. Did Maya sound confident without exaggerating her abilities?

c. Was there an answer where she could have given a more specific example?

d. Did Maya handle the question about her management experience well?

e. Based on her answers, would you invite Maya to a second interview? Explain your decision.

8. Work with a partner. Choose two of the questions below. Prepare a short answer using an example from your own experience.

1. Tell me about a time when you solved a problem at work or during your studies.
2. Describe a situation where you had to work under pressure.
3. Tell me about something you achieved that you're particularly proud of.
4. Can you describe a time when you had to learn something new?

Take turns being the interviewer and the candidate. Try to use the STAR method to organise your answers.

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Audio

1. Yes, of course. Last year, we were working on an important project when one of our suppliers told us they couldn't deliver on time. This meant we might miss our deadline. I contacted the supplier to discuss our options and worked with my colleagues to adjust the schedule. We also kept the client informed. In the end, we finished the project two days late, but the client appreciated how we handled the situation.

2. I think it's the opportunity to work on larger, more international projects. I've enjoyed coordinating projects in my current role, but I'd like to be involved in more complex work. I also noticed that Nexora places a lot of importance on teamwork and communication, which are two things I really enjoy. So, yes, I think it would be a great opportunity for me.

3. That's a difficult one! I'd probably say a project I worked on about two years ago. We had to introduce a new system across several departments, and at first, people weren't very enthusiastic about the change. I was responsible for coordinating the training and communication between the teams. I organised workshops, collected feedback and helped solve problems as they came up. Within three months, all the departments were using the new system. I was really proud of that because it showed me how important good communication is.

4. Well, I usually try to deal with the most urgent tasks first. I make a list of everything I need to do and work through it. Sometimes it can be quite stressful, especially when several people need something at the same time. But I think I'm quite good at staying organised, and usually manage to get everything done.

5. I've been with my current company for six years, and I've learned a lot during that time. I've worked on different projects and taken on more responsibility. But recently, I've felt that there aren't many opportunities for me to develop further. I'm ready for a new challenge, and I'd really like to use my experience in a more senior role.

6. I haven't officially managed a team before, but I've often taken the lead on projects. For example, I've organised meetings, divided tasks between colleagues and made sure everyone knew what they needed to do. I know managing people involves more than that, and it's definitely an area I'd like to develop. But I think my coordination experience has given me a good starting point.

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