

On-site Interview Guide

Full-day interviews – how to prepare, show up, and follow through

Working with KOB Solutions is free for candidates. We are paid by the hiring company. Kerry is here to help you prepare at every step.

THE CORE MINDSET: BE A PAIN DETECTIVE

Before any preparation checklist, go into every interview as a pain detective. Most companies don't hire to train you. They hire because they have a problem they need solved.

*Employers are looking to upgrade their organizations.
How will hiring you make their business better?*

This means every interview interaction (company research, question prep, the presentation, follow-up) should be framed around: what are their challenges? How does my background solve them? Personalize your approach to address their pain points specifically.

PREPARATION: WEEK BEFORE

☐	Deep-dive the company	Website, pipeline, technologies, clinical trial status, financials, recent M&A, press releases, quarterly reports.
☐	Know their competitors	Understand the landscape. Being able to reference a competitor by name signals serious preparation.
☐	Research every interviewer	LinkedIn, PubMed, Google Scholar, mutual connections, patents, publications. Note commonalities with each person.
☐	Prepare questions per interviewer	Ask each person: "Where are you seeing the most friction right now?" If possible, connect your background to their answer.
☐	Practice your presentation	Give your talk a few times with friends and check the timing. Prepare for deep technical questions with backup slides.
☐	Prepare backup copies	Flash drive, laptop, email to yourself the night before, and a hard copy.
☐	Print your schedule	Names, titles, and times for every interviewer don't rely solely on your phone.

MORNING OF: WHAT TO BRING

☐	Interview schedule	Printed, with names and titles of each person you're meeting.
☐	Multiple resume copies	Bring 5-6. Some interviewers won't have one in front of them.

☐	Research notes	Your notes on the company, interviewers, and questions you want to ask each person.
☐	Required forms	NDA, application, or any paperwork that the company sent in advance.
☐	Presentation backups	Flash drive, laptop, hard copy. All three even if they have a setup for you.
☐	Laptop + charger	Bring both even if you don't plan to use them.
☐	Snacks + water	Full-day interviews are physically and mentally demanding. Eat before you go and accept any refreshments offered.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

☐	Arrive 15 minutes early	Check your appearance before entering. Take a breath and center yourself.
☐	Turn off your phone	Leave it in your bag. Your full attention belongs to the people in the room.
☐	Greet everyone warmly	Firm handshake, eye contact, genuine smile (including admins and coordinators). Everyone you meet is evaluating you.
☐	Collect business cards	Or note names and titles to make personalized thank you emails easier later.
☐	Take notes between meetings	Brief notes on key topics discussed. Use these in your follow-up emails.
☐	Reset between interviews	A few deep breaths between sessions. Start each interview fresh, even late in the day.
☐	Accept breaks + refreshments	Stay hydrated. The energy management matters for all-day interviews.
☐	Stay genuine	Be yourself. Show enthusiasm. People hire those they like and trust.

PRESENTATION GUIDANCE

For most biotech and pharma firms, the presentation is the most important part of the interview process. It deserves the most preparation. Here's exactly how Kerry coaches candidates to approach it:

- **Ask the hiring manager for expectations upfront:** before the day, ask what format they prefer, how long, and what level of technical depth. This shows professionalism and saves you from preparing the wrong thing.
- **Tell a great story:** the audience wants to hear what YOU did. Structure it as a narrative. "Here was the problem, here's what I tried, here's where I failed, here's how I was victorious in the end".
- **One slide on background:** keep context brief. The rest should be about your work, your contributions, your results.
- **Use 'I' statements, not 'we':** the committee wants to understand what you specifically did. "We showed that..." tells them nothing. "I developed the assay that showed..." is what they're listening for.
- **Explain the problem clearly:** what was the scientific or business challenge? Make sure a non-expert in your exact area can follow along.

- **Detail ALL the pitfalls:** don't hide the failures or dead ends. Walking through what went wrong and how you responded is one of the most compelling things you can show a hiring committee.
- **Focus on public work only:** do not share confidential or unpublished data that your current institution or company considers proprietary.
- **Manage your time:** know your time slot and practice stopping on time. Bring backup slides for deep technical questions.
- **Practice, practice, practice:** candidates who practice their talk out loud multiple times are remembered. They get hired.

DURING THE INTERVIEWS

☐	Ask about current technical challenges	"What are the biggest challenges your team is working through?" Then connect your background to what they describe.
☐	Listen actively	"Tell me more about that" is one of the most powerful things you can say in an interview.
☐	Show genuine enthusiasm	People hire those they like and trust. Let your interest in their work come through naturally.
☐	Be present and empathetic	Acknowledge what they're working on. Ask follow-up questions. Show you're engaged.
☐	If you don't know, say so	"I don't know, but I'd find out by..." Is a strong answer. Never guess on a technical question.

AFTER THE INTERVIEWS

☐	Debrief with Kerry right away	Call or text her the same day. Share highlights, concerns, and your interest level.
☐	Send thank-you emails within 24 hours	Personalized to each person. Reference something specific from your conversation with them.
☐	Contact your references	Give them a heads up. Share the company name, role and key points to highlight.
☐	Follow up every Friday morning	Check in weekly until you hear back. If you're about to receive another offer, let the company and Kerry know immediately.
☐	Practice patience	Decisions take time. Companies may be interviewing other candidates simultaneously.
☐	Keep other options active	Don't pause your search until an offer is signed.

Remember: every person you meet during the day is part of the evaluation – from the receptionist to the CEO. Be genuinely warm, curious, and professional with everyone.

Ready to explore opportunities? Schedule a 10 min call with Kerry!

<https://calendly.com/kerryboehner/discussion>