

How to Get the Job

What Top Candidates are Doing Differently

Whether you're entering the Medical Affairs space for the first time or looking to step up into a new MSL or leadership role, this guide will help you prepare, present, and follow up in a way that sets you apart. Interview expectations have evolved, especially in Medical Affairs, and hiring teams today are looking for candidates who show readiness, professionalism, curiosity, and strategic thinking. Use this guide to refine your approach, boost your confidence, and walk into every interview with a game plan.

Before the Interview

Preparation goes beyond googling the company or re-reading your resume. A strategic interview kit should include:

- Updated copies of your resume and cover letter
- Company background and product pipeline research
- LinkedIn review of your interviewers (and thoughtful notes)
- A list of smart, tailored questions you plan to ask
- Any tech tools or links needed for virtual interviews

During the Interview

Interview day is about presence, clarity, and connection. Whether virtual or in-person, keep these tips top of mind:

- Arrive 5-10 minutes early (or log in early for virtual calls)
- Greet everyone with confidence and warmth
- Use direct eye contact, good posture, and open body language
- Listen closely, and let your answers reflect thoughtfulness
- Engage the whole room, not just the person asking the question
- Be ready for behavioral (STAR) questions and bring real examples

Behavioral Questions to Prepare For

Today's interviews rely heavily on situational examples. Practice structured responses to questions like:

- Tell me about a time you handled a difficult KOL conversation.
- Describe a situation where you had to collaborate across departments.
- What motivates you in a field-based role?
- Share a time when you received feedback that helped you grow.
- How do you prioritize in a territory with limited access?

Smart Questions to Ask the Interviewer

Strong candidates don't just answer questions - they ask them. Show curiosity and alignment by asking things like:

- What does success in this role look like at 6 and 12 months?
- How does this team share field insights with the broader organization?
- What are some of the challenges you're hoping the next hire will solve?
- How does Medical Affairs interact with Commercial or Clinical in this company?
- Can you tell me more about the training or onboarding process for MSLs?

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Even great candidates can trip up by making simple mistakes. Avoid these missteps:

- Showing up late or unprepared
- Failing to research the company or product pipeline
- Talking too much or giving disorganized answers
- Speaking negatively about past employers or teams
- Answering with only yes/no instead of examples
- Forgetting to follow up with thank-you notes

After the Interview

The interview isn't over when you log off or walk out. Set yourself apart with smart follow-up:

- Send a thank-you email to every person you spoke with, personalizing each one
- Reference something specific from your conversation
- Reinforce your enthusiasm and fit for the role
- If no timeline was given, it's okay to follow up after 5-7 business days