

MSL Panel Interviews

Standing Out and Mastering the Interview

Panel interviews can feel like a high-pressure arena, especially when you're sitting across from a cross-functional group representing Medical Affairs, Clinical, Commercial, and HR. But they're also a high-leverage moment - an opportunity to show that you're not just qualified, but also adaptable, engaging, and ready to collaborate.

Whether you're a first-time MSL or an experienced field leader, these tips will help you walk into the room with clarity and leave a lasting impression.

Know Your Audience Before You Walk In

Spend time researching your interviewers ahead of time. Look up their roles on LinkedIn, note any publications, past career moves, or therapeutic experience that might inform their point of view. This insight will:

- Help you avoid information overload in the moment
- Allow you to tailor your answers in real time
- Give you opportunities to ask meaningful, specific follow-up questions

Pro tip: Create a simple grid ahead of time with names, titles, functions, and one line of personal context for each person if available.

Answer One, But Engage Them All

Even if one person is asking the question, remember that you're presenting to the entire room. Think of it like a small advisory board - your tone, eye contact, and posture should invite everyone in. Rotate eye contact. React to multiple people's body language. Draw in those who may be quieter or less expressive.

This shows presence, emotional intelligence, and confidence. All qualities that matter in the field.

Expect Behavioral Questions and Bring Receipts

Panel formats often rely on behavioral-based questions (STAR or situational-style) because they're broadly relevant across functions. Expect prompts like:

- "Tell us about a time you navigated a tough KOL interaction."
- "Describe a situation where you had to align cross-functional goals."
- "Give an example of scientific agility in the field."

Come ready with 3–5 strong stories that show adaptability, problem-solving, and KOL acumen, and make sure at least one story touches on a misstep or lesson learned. Vulnerability with reflection reads as maturity, not weakness.

Ask Thoughtful Questions and Invite a Dialogue

This is where panel interviews give you an edge. Your questions can spark real-time discussion and reveal how the team interacts.

Ask at least one broad, cross-functional question (e.g. “How does this team align on field insights?”) and one role-specific question per person, when possible. Don’t overlook non-Medical team members. If someone’s from Marketing or HR, they’re in the room for a reason. Ask about the collaboration touchpoints they anticipate with Medical Affairs.

Take Notes (The Right Way)

Panel interviews can be fast-paced, but brief, strategic note-taking is a good signal. It shows you’re engaged, organized, and genuinely interested in the perspectives being shared.

Jotting down names, key comments, and role-specific insights will also help you craft stronger thank-you notes afterward, and demonstrate you were listening to more than just the hiring manager.

Act Like a Peer, Not a Contestant

In Medical Affairs, confidence is currency. Instead of approaching the panel as a test, frame it as a conversation among equals. You’re exploring fit just as much as they are. That doesn’t mean being overly casual, but it does mean showing up with a point of view, a steady tone, and a collaborative spirit.