

Interview Advice

Interviews are two-way meetings. They come in many forms and each interviewer will have their own personal style. Here are some general pointers:

Before

- Research the organisation thoroughly – website, press releases, brochures. Talk to people. Look for current news. Show you are up to date.
- Know where you are going and be there on time, allowing extra time for transport if it's not a remote interview. If this is a video meeting, log in 10 minutes early just to check you can get into the system. In the eventuality you are running late, please message us or the client to apologise in advance.
- Make sure you know the name of the interviewer, what position they hold (check them out on LinkedIn beforehand) and the form the interview will take.
- Dress appropriately (even on a video call!). We will brief you on dress code. Ensure you are well groomed with tidy hair, clean shoes and clothing.
- Nerves are good as they show you care and adrenalin, believe it or not actually raises your game. Control your last-minute nerves by shaking off any negative or insecure thoughts and replacing it with positives e.g. "I might get the job, or I might not. Either way this is a valuable experience I can learn from". Repeat this to yourself and then re-examine the emotion. It should be gone. Practise breathing deeply and slowly and get some fresh air. Avoid caffeine as it will intensify your anxiety.
- To dispel your interview nerves practise peripheral vision as soon as you enter the room. Focus on an object and then make a mental note of what else you can see in other parts of the room without moving your eyes from the spot. It sounds a bit odd but it really works! It is impossible to feel anxiety when you are using peripheral vision so it's an excellent technique to use.
- Greet the interviewer with warmth and confidence – you've got this!

During

- Get into rapport by matching and mirroring the body language of the interviewer and maintain eye contact.
- Don't stare, equally, don't let your eyes gaze around the room. In a panel situation maintain eye contact with the whole panel.
- Think before you speak. If a question "throws" you, don't panic! Make a commonsense, imaginative, honest reply.
- It's impossible to over emphasise the importance of sounding enthusiastic and interested in the organisation. Nothing is more off putting than a candidate who lacks spark.

- Try not to be negative about a present or past employer. You may have had a bad experience but appearing bitter about your experiences will convey the view that you may be awkward and not a good team player.
- Create conversation rather than a question and answer situation. Don't answer a question with another question and don't answer a question with a 'Yes' or 'No' without expanding on the point.
- We advise you to avoid asking questions about salary, holidays or bonuses at the initial interview. However, be aware of your market value (we will help you) and be prepared to specify your required package if asked. We will negotiate a package on your behalf.
- At the end of the interview, if you are interested in the position, do tell the interviewer.
- Even if you anticipate (or conclude) that the position is unsuitable, maintain a positive attitude.

Typical Questions

Give a variety of relevant examples by briefly describing the situation and task you were faced with, the action you took and the results you achieved or conclusions you reached.

e.g.: Describe how your personal planning and organisation resulted in the successful achievement of the task.

- (Put your answer in context) - Whilst employed at ABC Company I was given the responsibility for organising the Company Christmas Do for 500 people.
- (What action did you take?) - I agreed a budget from the Finance Director,
- organised a date suitable to all, conducted research into what people wanted to do, sourced venues, priced them up, planned the menus, entertainment, transport, and project managed the Event.
- (What was the result? What action did you take?) - The Party was a huge success and came in under budget which pleased the FD. The Managing Director said it was the best Christmas Do the Company had ever had!

10 Deadly Questions (and ways to prepare for them)

Tell us about yourself.

This is a classic opener. Plan a short presentation statement to cover this.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?

Talk about career plans and what you want to learn and achieve in relation to this job or department.

Why do you want this job?

Have a clear answer to this question, even if privately you're not sure.

What kind of person are you?

Handle questions re personality carefully. Don't give statements about what a positive person you are. Talk about a time when your positivity changed your working environment.

Why did you leave...?

Rehearse short, simple, positive "stories" to cover these points.

How will you cope in a crisis?

Have a couple of good examples of past triumphs up your sleeve.

How will you ...?

These questions include you as part of the Company's future. Talk as though you are part of the team – if you create the right picture your potential interviewer will not be able to imagine you not being there!

What would you do if...?

You can't prepare for this question. Think on your feet! What do you need to earn? Don't answer this question with a figure. Focus instead on the value you can add to the employer, not your basic needs. Deflect the question by finding out what the company is willing to pay.

What are your weaknesses?

Remember employers latch onto negative messages so don't give them any! Talk about weaknesses which are also strengths e.g. pushing hard to get things done.

Questions you may want to ask if appropriate

What is the company culture?

What are the opportunities for training and development?

What attracted you to the Company?

What are the next steps in the interview process?

After

Tell us how the interview went and ask us for feedback from the client.

Be prepared for rejection. On balance you will be rejected more times than accepted. Even if you don't get the job, you can learn a huge amount about your perceived market value and the experience will help you focus further on your perfect job.