

INTERVIEW TIPS

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

These pre-interview essentials could make the difference between your next career step or a career full stop!

- Make sure you know the exact address and time of the interview. Find out if you need to go to a specific department.
- Know the interviewer's name and their title. Ask your consultant about your interviewer's background and personality.
- Ask your consultant for a description of the position. Discuss the position with your consultant to get a better insight into the role for which you are applying.
- Refresh your thoughts on your own background, particularly on the positions you have held.
- Think about what's important to you in a role. Be clear about what your career goals are, what environment you would like to work in, what motivates you and what doesn't.
- Find out information about the company - such as its size and location, approximate staff numbers, branch outlets, products and services, recent growth and growth potential. Also do some homework on their product range, client base and market share. (The Internet has a wealth of information!)
- Always dress conservatively unless you are absolutely certain the image required is something different. Wear a business suit, preferably dark. Pay attention to all aspects of your grooming. Dressing in a professional and respectful manner is an effective way to show your potential employer that being appointed to this position is important to you.
- Prepare a list of questions you want to ask, such as:
 - Why is the position available?
 - How would you describe your company culture?
 - What challenges does this position have?
 - What training programmes or incentive schemes are available?
 - What are the promotional opportunities?
 - Ask about company growth plans - new products/services etc
 - What is the staff turnover like?

COMMITTED AND ENTHUSIASTIC

Completed all your research and preparation for the interview, but still feel unsure about the job? Then call your consultant and talk about it. After all, they want to put the right person into the position and you should feel comfortable and excited about the prospect of working in the role you are being interviewed for.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT AT THE INTERVIEW

Each interviewer has their own style of questioning - some interviewers will be quite formal and structured in their approach and others will be quite casual. Ask your consultant what to expect at your interview.

The interviewer's objective is to see if you are suitable for the job, so they will be interested in your qualifications, skills, attitude, aptitude, stability, motivation, flexibility/adaptability, maturity and appearance.

A big part of the interview will be getting to know you, your personality and, most importantly, whether you fit in with the team. So it's important to be open and honest about who you are. Let's face it, you want to work with people who you enjoy being around too!

ON THE DAY - THE ETIQUETTE OF INTERVIEWS

Always arrive a few minutes early for your interview. If you are running late, phone and notify the receptionist and apologise. Also apologise to the interviewer on your arrival.

If you're given an application form, fill it out neatly and completely. Take your time and get it right.

Greet the interviewer by name and shake hands firmly. Don't greet your potential employer with a limp fish, nor with a grip of iron.

Wait till the interviewer is seated before sitting yourself or until you are asked.

If you are nervous, take 3 deep breaths. Don't be afraid to tell the interviewer you are a bit nervous - we're all human and they will probably appreciate your honesty.

Listen carefully to **all** questions and answer them clearly and honestly. Give examples of your previous experience that relate to the questions.

Speak clearly, concisely and professionally.

Think before you speak - it is better to have a few moments silence than to regret what you have said.

Look the interviewer in the eye while you are talking to them and also while they are talking to you.

Try not to answer questions with a simple 'yes' or 'no' - elaborate but stick to the point. Don't 'over answer' questions or sideline the conversation into irrelevant topics. Again, keep to the point. Most importantly:

- Make the interviewer realise you will be useful to their organisation.
- Be truthful and frank. (Anything else may return to haunt you.)
- Never make derogatory remarks about present or past employers.

- Do not discuss salary unless specifically asked. (You should, however, have an idea of your market value and required salary range – you can also ask your consultant for advice on this.)

QUESTIONS LIKELY TO BE ASKED

Why do you want to work for this company?

What interests you about this position?

Out of all the companies or environments you have been in which one have you enjoyed the most?

What do you really want to do in life?

What are the things you would like to achieve in your life?

Where do you see yourself in your career in 5 years time - 10 years time?

Will your previous employers act as your referees?

What skills have you learnt from your previous employers?

Out of all the managers you have had, which have you enjoyed working for and why? Which have you most disliked working for and why?

What did you enjoy most about your previous/current position - what did you least like?

What are your major weaknesses (personal and work)?

What do you do to overcome these weaknesses? (Remember, we all have weaknesses: it is what we are doing about them that "makes" you)

What are your major strengths?

What style of management do you prefer?

Tell me the things you most enjoy doing outside of work? (Explain why)

Do you prefer to work on your own or as part of a team? Why?

What motivates you?

What achievements are you most proud of, and why?

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

If you are interested in the position, you should say so.

If you are offered the position and want it, accept it with thanks.

However, if you want to think about it, ask for a period of time to make your decision.

Don't be discouraged if no specific offer has been made. The interviewer probably has to see other applicants before making any decision.

Don't be discouraged if an interview seems unnaturally brief. Sometimes employers arrange short initial interviews to sort potential applicants.

Thank the interviewer for his or her time and for their consideration of you.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Call your consultant and tell them how it went and whether you are interested in the position. It is important that you give the consultant some feedback and any queries that you may have before the employer calls so they can present your point of view.