

Interview Tips

Being successful at the interview

An interview is a discussion between you and an employer to find out if you can do the job. However, there are certain rules and conventions to follow in interviews. We all know that the interview can be a daunting experience, but with our help and your determination the interview process can be a positive experience.

Remember that you are being interviewed because the employer wants to hire people – not because he/she wants to trip you up or embarrass you.

Through the interaction which will take place during the interview, the employer will be searching out your strong and weak points, evaluating you on your qualifications, skills, and intellectual qualities. The employer will also probe deeply to determine your attitudes, aptitudes, motivation and maturity.

There are specific key elements to the interview process:

- Preparation
- Questions you will be asked & to ask
- Attitude
- Positive & negatives
- Dress code
- Closing the interview
- After the interview

Preparation

Preparation is essential. Potential employers are frequently astounded by the high number of candidates who are not prepared for the interview and have no information about the company with them.

- Be punctual, don't turn up at the door at the time of your interview. Give yourself time to arrive at the interviewer's office. Know the interviewer's full name and their position within the company.
- Make sure that you know the company's precise location. Perhaps do a dummy run the day before so you know exactly how long it will take to get there. Account for traffic at certain times of the day.
- Understand the position you are applying for, take a detailed job specification with you if possible.
- Research the company: obtain a brochure, look at their website, evaluate what services they provide, what products they offer and which markets they target.
- Be ready for questions regarding your present employer, turnover, work ethic, your role in the company etc. Never criticise or talk negatively about your current employer. Speak positively about your reasons for moving on.

Questions

Asking questions at an interview works both ways. The interviewer will endeavour to evaluate through questioning whether you have got what it takes to carry out the position available. You should ask questions of your own to help you decide whether the intended career move meets your expectations.

Possible points you could raise are:

- What is the reason for the vacancy?
- Could you detail description of the position?
- What introduction training will be provided?
- Are there any plans for expansions?

When answering questions do not 'waffle', be clear and to the point.

Avoid discussing the salary, holiday and benefits etc. at the first meeting unless the interviewer gives out highly positive 'employment' vibes. In which cases do not be caught off guard, be ready to specify your requirements.

According to research, the following questions are most frequently asked by recruiters. Be ready for:

- Why would you like to work for our company?
- Why do you want to leave your present employer?
- What do you want to be doing in your career 5 years from now?
- What interests you about our specific services to the industry?
- How does this differ from your current employer's services?
- What have you learnt from your previous employer?
- What aspects did you enjoy most and why?
- What are your major weaknesses and what are your strengths?
- What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
- What do you do when you're not working?

Positives

- Application form- fill it out neatly and completely
- Address the interviewer by their surname. If you are not sure of the pronunciation, ask the interviewer to repeat it.
- Shake hands firmly.
- Wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright in your chair, look alert and interested at all times. Be a good listener as well as a good talker.
- Look the interviewer in the eye during discussions
- Follow the interviewer's leads but try to obtain a full description of the position and duties expected early so that you can relate your appropriate background skills.
- Conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are discussing. Never close the door on an opportunity. It is better to be in the position where you can choose a number of jobs – rather than only one.
- Answer questions truthfully, frankly and as succinctly as possible.

Negatives

- Avoid answering question with a simple 'yes' or 'no'.
- Provide an explanation whenever possible and describe your skills and experience which relate to the position.
- Never make derogatory remarks about your present or former employers

Dress code for your interview

It is important to look the part on your interview day. More than 50% of another person's perception of you is based on how you look and therefore your appearance is crucial to making a good impression. Be conservative. Conservative is best for the interview regardless of the dress code at the organization.

Closing an interview

There are many ways to finish an interview - many are good and are directly dependent on the nature of the person. However, the best ways to finish an interview is by some of the following:

- **Summing up:** The most important aspect of the exit line of the candidate is summing up. When you sum up, you highlight what you want the interviewer to remember about you after you have gone. List a few of your best traits and how these would really add value to the job at hand.
- **Show interest:** The best time to really show how interested you are to join the company is the time at the end of the interview; however remember not to go overboard about it or it will backfire
- **Ask follow-up questions:** The questions should aim at finding out information about when best to follow-up for the results, whom to get in touch with, or where to check for the decision/ status of the interview. Be sure you know the next step in the interview.

Summary when attending an interview

DO'S

- Dress smartly, look bright and attentive, and speak clearly and confidently.
- Find out where the venue is beforehand, how to get there and how long it takes
- Get your outfit ready the night before
- Prepare answers for the main questions - for example, why do you want the job, what are your strengths and weaknesses, what are the main tasks in this job
- Quote real examples of when you've used certain skills - just saying you've got a skill isn't enough
- Take your time when answering the questions. Make sure you understand the question and take your time if you need to think
- Sell yourself. No-one else is going to! Be positive about yourself and your experiences
- Turn off your mobile! Treat the interviewers with respect and give them your undivided attention

DONT'S

- Don't be late!
- Don't swear or use slang words
- Don't slouch in your seat or do anything else that makes you look disinterested
- Don't smoke
- Don't lie! The interviewer may see through you. Even if you get the job, your employer can dismiss you if they find out
- Don't criticise former employers or colleagues. Interviewers may mark you down as a troublemaker and a gossip.
- Slouch, fold your arms or adopt a posture which is defensive or aggressive
- Interrupt the interviewer.