



Your Interview. Putting your best foot forward

Purpose of Interviews

Most employers select people for jobs by giving them an interview. An interview enables an employer to decide whether or not you are suitable for the job on offer. It's also the perfect chance for you to ask questions and discover whether or not it is the type of job you think you would like.

Preparation is the key to success

You only get one chance to make a first impression so here are a few useful tips to help you get it right first time.

- Before going for an interview, do your research. Check out the company's website or read relevant industry magazines. Knowing about the company and their business will show that you have initiative, drive and are motivated by the company and the job. It will also help you to feel more confident during the interview.
- Make sure that you are clear about your own interests and goals. Be prepared to explain why you want the job and why you think you would be suitable.
- Prepare and anticipate potential questions. This will help you to organise your thoughts and develop good answers.
- Know your CV inside out and be able to give specific examples to back up the information you have listed.
- Always treat a second interview as you would the first interview.

Don't leave home without:

- A copy of your Curriculum Vitae
- References
- Examination Certificates
- Contact telephone numbers and directions to the company.



The Interview

Remember that it's perfectly normal to be a bit nervous about an interview. A certain amount of nerves can even help you to perform better. Here are a few things you can do to help you feel more confident and improve your interview skills.

- Be well prepared – know who you are meeting and the interviewers' position in the company.
- Research the company – always check the website
- Arrive early to allow time to compose yourself.
- Dress appropriately - smart / professional
- Be polite to support staff
- Create a strong first impression, be polite and self assured.
- Make eye contact immediately when greeted.
- Politely shake your interviewers hand with a firm grip and a warm smile.
- Wait for the interviewer to invite you to sit down.
- Have an easy non work related topic of conversation ready to discuss
- Be relaxed and don't slouch
- Position yourself so that your body is facing the other person.
- Watch your body language – do not cross your arms
- Let the interviewer lead the conversation
- Listen carefully to the questions asked and ask them to repeat or rephrase the question if you are unclear
- Be honest and objective while answering questions and maintain good eye contact throughout the interview.
- Answer what you have been asked and try not to go off on tangents
- Do not interrupt the interviewer
- If you are interested in the position, make sure they know.
- Thank the interviewer again for taking the time to meet with you.

Avoid...

- Answers that are too short
- Being negative
- Providing detail or information other than what is required.
- Becoming frustrated or uneasy when asked stressful questions
- Making derogatory or negative statements about former employers .
- Discussing salary information or benefits at the first interview.
- Misrepresenting your skills, experience or educational background.
- Poor body language.

Questions you may be asked...

- Tell me about yourself?
- What do you do in your present position ie duties and responsibilities
- What do you like about your job?
- Is there anything in your present job you would prefer not to do?
- Why do you want to leave your present position?
- What are your weaknesses/ best qualities?
- How would your immediate supervisor describe you?
- Where do you see yourself in three years time?

- How do you work / interact with others?
- Employers should not ask you what salary you require but if they do ask, your answer should be, "assuming I am the candidate that suits your company, I will need a competitive salary"

Questions you can ask.....

- At the end of the interview, you will be given the opportunity to ask additional questions. Develop some that help you understand the job's parameters and potential. You might ask:
- If I am successful in securing this position what are the 3 most important tasks I need to work on.
- What training opportunities are available?
- Who is the person with whom I should build a bridge with in order to ensure I learn quickly?
- I am interested in what I have heard. Do my skills and experience match the skills and experience needed to fill your vacancy?
- I would love some literature about your company and if you feel there is anything I should do today to help the process I am only too happy to do so.
- How would you describe the culture of your organisation?

After the interview

You may be told straight away whether or not you have got the job. Other applicants may have to be interviewed or the employer may have to consult other people in the firm before reaching a decision. On the other hand, you may have been offered the job on the spot. Do not accept the job if you have no intention of starting it.

Write a thank-you note as soon as possible after the interview. Your letter should express gratitude for the meeting, reinforce your interest in the job and recap the strongest points in recommending you for the position.

Conclusion

While you may think that you are fairly adept at interviews, you will be better with practice. Generally it takes two to three interviews before you become comfortable with answers and you respond in a natural way. It is critical that you are well prepared and practice interviewing skills prior to interviewing for any position that you really want. The more you prepare, the better impression you'll make on the people you meet and the more you will increase your chances of securing the job offer.

If you would like some one-to-one advice before your interview please speak to your Consultant.

Best of Luck!