

INTERVIEWING SKILLS

Well done – you have passed the first test of your job application and been invited to an interview! That means your application or CV matches up with the job role on paper. Now it's your opportunity to convince the employer that you are the best candidate for the role.

Here we offer some advice on how to prepare for and 'manage' your interview. Although not exhaustive the tips below may help to guide you through this important part of the recruitment process.

1. PREPARING

Preparation is the most important part of the interview process. Go in unprepared and you will almost certainly fail to convince the employer that you are the best person for the role.

The more time you invest in preparing, the more confident you will feel during your interview. Here are our top tips:

- Make sure you know what is expected of you beforehand. Is the interview an informal chat with one person, or more formal with multiple interviewers or a panel interview? Will it involve other elements such as psychometric testing, a lunch with other staff members or a presentation?
- Revisit the job requirements – read the job advertisement, job description and person specification. How do you meet the requirements? Look at each element and try to answer this out loud.
- Do your research. Look at the company's website as a minimum
- – make sure you understand what they do, what they make or what research they do and where they are based/how many employees they have. Google them to see if they have been in the news recently. Look at their competitors and the market place in general – the more you know about them and their industry the better.
- Prepare for commonly asked questions, these might include:
 - Tell me about yourself.
 - Why are you leaving your current job?
 - Why do you want to work for us?
- What can you bring to the role?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?
- Have a friend or relative practice interviewing you. Sometimes saying your answers out loud (however silly it may feel) can help you articulate what you are trying to get across. You can also correct any mistakes in this stress-free situation before you have to face the real interview reliable.

2. ARRIVING

- Travel arrangements – ensure you have accurate maps and directions, or if it's not too far, travel to the company a few days beforehand to check where they are. Arriving late is one of the most common ways to ruin your chances – even if you do a great interview once you get there.
- Aim to arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of your interview time. Companies often have security lodges you have to get through - then there's parking your car and getting to the reception area. Have you calculated how long it will take to get there? If they have a big campus, do you know which building you are going to and where to park nearby?
- If you are going by public transport – where's the nearest station, how far is the station from the company, can you walk or get a taxi? Do you have walking maps?
- Make sure you have a charged mobile with you so you can phone ahead if you do run into any problems.
- If you are waiting in reception, chat to the receptionist or other staff sent to greet you – often a good impression created with people not involved in the interview can be just as important.
- Make sure your mobile is switched off during the interview.

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3. INTERVIEWING

- Take a deep breath and relax – the interviewers will understand you are nervous.
- Engage with the interviewers in a friendly way and smile every now and again.
- Listen to the question being asked - it's OK to say you would like just a moment to think about your answer before talking.
- Take your cues from the interviewer on your lengths of answer and try not to waffle on for too long. Where possible try to have an example to back up any claims you make e.g. when you have worked effectively in a team.
- Answer as accurately and honestly as you can. The temptation may be there to embellish but it will always come back to haunt you – whether now in the interview, or later if you do actually get the job.
- Think about your body language – try not to sit with your arms folded, or slouched down.
- Don't criticise your current or past employers.
- Use it as an opportunity to ask questions for example:
 - Why is the role available?
 - What are the company's expectations?
 - What will the priorities be in the first few months?
 - Do you think I'm the right person for the role?
 - What training and development is available?
- Above all – be yourself.

4. LEAVING

- Ask about the next step in the recruitment process, when you can expect to hear back and who from – and take a business card if appropriate.
- Thank the interviewer(s) for their time.
- If it seems appropriate, you can also email or send a short note thanking the company for meeting with you and you look forward to hearing the outcome.

Well done, you have successfully completed your interview! Now you just have to wait for the outcome. Whilst waiting, why not have a think about how you felt things went? Don't beat yourself up if you didn't answer some of the questions very well but see it as an opportunity to learn from any mistakes for future interviews.