



INTERVIEW TIPS

Make First Impressions Count

The moment you enter that interview room can set the scene for the whole interview. Professional interviewers are looking carefully for clues on how you present yourself and the possible future impact you may have on their staff or clients.

Therefore do dress correctly. What you choose to wear when you attend an interview speaks volumes about how seriously you want the job. If it is not appropriate to the role, your chances of being offered the post are greatly reduced.

Here are some pointers:

- Make sure you look smart – this will normally be a suit.
- Long-sleeve shirts look more professional than short-sleeves.
- Ensure shoes are appropriate (ideally closed toe) and are cleaned and polished
- Don't wait until the morning of the interview to check that your suit, shoes is clean.
- If you have to carry anything, use a briefcase or folder not a gym bag or pack.
- Make sure your hair is well groomed and does not cover your face.
- Have clean nails.
- And take an umbrella if there's even the slightest hint of rain!

Remember it really does pay to look the part... and formal is always best.

Interview behaviour

Try the tips listed here:

- Enter the room confidently and quite quickly.
- Look the interviewer in the eye and extend your hand for a positive, but not over-strong, handshake. Keep your hand upright.
- Smile - naturally and when appropriate.
- They will invite you to sit down. Don't slump. Sit up with a straight back and don't lean on the table or desk.
- Don't cross your arms or put your hands in your pockets.
- Look at them, not at the floor, breaking your gaze from time to time.
- When the interviewer is talking appear interested at all times and nod accordingly as they speak.
- Don't interrupt when they are in the middle of a point and keep your hands on your lap.
- When you respond, talk clearly with enthusiasm, If you try to talk slightly slower than normal, your nerves will show less.
- You can emphasise points with hand gestures – but never point or tap on the desk.
- Mirror the interviewer; Laugh when they laugh, lean forward when they do.

Never get your CV out for reference in an interview. You should have an intimate knowledge of your own experience, which you should be able to talk about confidently and knowledgably.



Prepare Your Answers in Advance

One area where you can really prepare yourself in advance is to have some ideas on how you would answer questions you know you're likely to be asked. Interviewers often have a set of stock questions that they ask all candidates. The different responses made by each candidate enable him or her to assess their relative strengths with regulated, comparability.

Many interviewers also like to throw in some quite testing questions to see how you react. If you're ready with a polished answer it will help you shine and make for a more relaxed interview on your part.

Remember:

- There are a number of ways to respond to different questions.
- Each of these questions is an opportunities to highlight specific skills and achievements. Before you reply - think about what the interviewer is asking and why. Then reply accordingly.
- Often the interviewer is looking directly for information, which you need to provide with clarity.
- The interviewer may ask you negative questions such as the disappointments you've had in your career. Always turn these into a positive.
- Behavioural questions may be fired at you to test your response to unexpected questions.
- It looks good if they can see that you are pro-active and have bothered to find out information about them. Visit websites, speak to your recruitment agent – gleaning all you can about the company only serves to make you look interested.

Of course, no one can predict exactly what the interviewer may ask, so you'll have to be ready to think on you feet!

In all answers, it is best to provide a positive response rather than dwell on past negative experiences. And remember, as well as specific skill-sets that the job requires, they'll also be interested in other abilities such as problem-solving, analytical, communication, leadership and interpersonal skills.

Here is our selection of some the most commonly questions. Take time to prepare great answers in advance.

Tell me about yourself - questions where you can sell yourself

- Talk me through your CV.
- Why do you want this job?
- What would you expect to accomplish here?
- Where do you want to be in five years time?
- What attracts you to this role?
- What does success mean to you?
- What are your career aspirations?
- What have been your major accomplishments?
- How would members of your team describe you?
- What really motivates you?
- What special skills do you have?
- What is your greatest strength?



Questions where the interviewer is seeking informative answers:

- What do you know about this firm?
- What is a typical work-week in your current job?
- Describe your greatest challenge so far.
- What are you looking for in your next job?
- How long have you been looking for another position?
- Why do you want to work for this firm?
- What can we offer that your current firm cannot?
- How do you determine priorities?
- Why should I hire you?
- How do you handle criticism?

Questions where you may need to turn a negative into a positive:

- Why do you want to leave your current employer?
- What has been your greatest challenge in business so far?
- What are your key strengths or weaknesses?
- What thing irritates you most in the workplace?
- Describe your toughest client.
- How do you work under pressure?
- Describe a difficult work situation and how you managed it.
- What do you dislike about your current role?
- Which tasks don't you like to do?
- Is there anyone in your current organisation you really don't get on with?
- Do you make your opinions known if you disagree with a more senior member of staff?
- How do you feel about working weekends?
- Why aren't you earning more at this stage of your career?
- Why were you made redundant/fired?

Behavioural questions – where you use past behaviour to show how you deal with certain situations

- Can you tell me of a time when you had to deal with a difficult or angry colleague?
- Can you think of a time recently when you needed to ask someone else's advice before you could complete a piece of work?
- Describe the most important decision you have made recently.
- Talk me through a project which you managed yourself over the past 12 months.
- Can you tell me a time when you had to meet a deadline, what did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you used your problem-solving skills
- Tell me about a time when you were faced with numerous tasks to juggle. How did you cope?

Remember, you could be asked any of these questions at any time of the interview. If you don't have a good answer you could significantly reduce your chances of being selected for the position.

Our recommendation is that, using our guidelines, you develop first-class answers and rehearse them. Of course, your answers need to reflect your experience and own personality and should appear a perfectly natural, non-rehearsed response.



Effective Questions to Ask

In the final stages of the interview the interviewer will probably ask you if you have any questions. By preparing some questions that you'd like to ask in advance, you will be able to add to an already impressive performance.

Here are some great ones to ask. They will demonstrate that you have an enquiring mind and an interest in the firm. Don't ask questions to which they have already given answers and make sure the question is relevant to the specific role for which you're being interviewed.

- Why has this vacancy arisen?
- How do you review performance?
- How was the job handled in the past?
- What would you expect of me in the first six months?
- What do you see as my key long-term challenges?
- What is the expected career path for this position?
- Do you expect me to develop new expertise in any areas?
- What are the characteristics of successful people in this firm?
- Where would I fit into the overall structure?
- Will anyone report into me?
- Who would I report to and what is the line of authority?
- Is any training required as part of this job?
- What are the opportunities for advancement/promotion?
- What is the firm's long-term strategy?
- Is the firm looking to expand into new areas?
- What is the largest challenge facing the firm at the moment?
- How would you describe the firm's values?
- Is there likely to be any relocation in the future?

And remember . . . **NEVER, EVER initiate salary discussion.**

Timing

You've made it onto the short list and have a date for the interview. You've completed all your preparations. Now all you need do is get it right on the day.

But first things first. One factor you must bear in mind above all else is that you can *never, never be late*.

- If possible, aim to arrive 30 minutes early. You can always find somewhere to wait.
- If you're travelling some distance allow for every eventuality.
- As soon as you've reached your destination, physically locate the office. Then find somewhere to wait.
- Arriving to the interview too early or using firm's reception area to wait in, will only make the interviewer feel pressured to see you earlier. They probably have a very busy schedule themselves. It's best not to arrive any more 5 minutes before the scheduled time.



Interview Styles

There are various different types of interview. Your job search could consist of a one-off interview, or a series of interviews conducted either by an individual or by a panel, it could also include testing or form filling. You will find that people have different styles. Some stick formally to a script, whilst others appear to be selling the job to you!

The rule is – expect anything and adapt accordingly.

If you do find yourself attending a panel interview:

- Give each person present attention as you respond to a question. You may be responding to the person who directly asked the question, but bring other members of the panel into your eye-line during your answer. Try to connect them all with your response.
- Try and assess the dynamics of a team. Then adapt your approach to the type of people they are.
- You may not know the role of each person, and who the real decision-maker is, so treat everyone with equal respect. If they are present at the interview, regardless of their position in the company, it's very likely they have some say over the recruitment process
- Whatever their style, you'll find what you are learning here of immense value in helping you win that coveted job.

And Finally . . .

You've entered the interview room, met your interviewer(s) and sat down. Remember what we said about body language and presentation!

Some further tips:

- If you're asked if you would like a drink, settle for water. You never know if you might get a frog in your throat and a burning hot cup of coffee won't help.
- A reminder again about how you sit, without slouching. Look enthusiastic, friendly and attentive.
- By preparing an armoury of answers to many key questions, you will have answers to questions on the tip of your tongue. Therefore never take out your notes during an interview; your answers should not seem prepared. If you get asked a question you're really not prepared for, take it slowly and clearly.
- Remember to give positive answers without any negatives attached.
- Stay away from personal information
- Avoid derogatory remarks about your existing employer.
- The overall effect should be one of someone who is professional, positive, and approachable, with good judgement and an effective business-like manner.
- It's also an opportunity to demonstrate your enthusiasm for the role – but don't look desperate.
- Keep your answers concise and don't ramble. Try to give the interviewer the information that they are asking for and not wander off the point.
- When the interviewer has finished asking you questions, demonstrate your knowledge and interest in their firm by asking a few appropriate questions.



Never forget throughout the whole interview process, you need to convince them you are the best person for the job. Make them believe that:

- It's a role you would handle very capably
- You would be a real asset to their firm

When you stand up to leave, look them in the eye, smile, shake hands with them again, and thank them for their time.

If you really feel the job is right for you, tell them!

Follow-Up Can Pay Dividends

As soon as you finished your interview, call your consultant. It's an opportunity to provide early feedback to them on how you felt it went. Mention where you felt it went particularly well, as these can be strengths you can build on.

It's also worth making notes to remind you of any aspects that could have been dealt with better. Your consultant can address these concerns on your behalf – Remember most jobs require a second interview!

Sometimes, it can be worth writing to or emailing the person who interviewed you. You can thank them for the opportunity and confirm that you have a real interest in the position. Discuss this with your consultant as to whether it is advisable in this particular case.

Importantly, don't let any failure deter you. There can be a host of unrelated reasons as to why you weren't chosen for that vacancy. Instead look on it as an opportunity to hone your interview techniques and skills. Practice makes perfect, and it shouldn't take too long before you land the job you really want.

**GOOD LUCK
AND HAPPY JOB-HUNTING!**