Interview tips

Job interviews are probably the most significant stage in the job search process. It is your opportunity to demonstrate to the company and its staff, that you are the candidate that best fits the role – not only because of your qualifications, knowledge and previous experience, but also someone who can fit into their team.

**Pre- job interview**

Upon agreeing to your next job interview you should research the business thoroughly – preparation is essential. You can do this by searching for their website, social media and new articles they may feature in.

If you feel as though you need more information about the business you should ask the person organising the interview for it – this will show that you are invested in the opportunity to the interviewer.

Plan your journey – assess where the job interview will take place, and plan your journey. Leave at least 20 minutes as a buffer – it’s better to come early to an interview than arrive late.

Prepare yourself mentally - ask the recruitment consultant or hiring manager for details of the job interview structure, who will be interviewing you, for how long, or how many other candidates are there?

Practice common interview questions. Try to think of examples which describe how you have dealt with different situations in your previous roles.

It can be the difference in moving forward in a process or being eliminated.

If the role you are applying for is being handled by an agency then your initial interview will be the Consultant working on behalf of the client. This interview should be treated no differently as you are sitting in front of the person entrusted by the employer to decide the final shortlist.

**A note about job interview structure**

Most job interviews will begin with the interviewer describing the role and the organisation to you, before asking you to talk about yourself.

This has the advantage of allowing you time to settle down and get a feel for the personality of the interviewer(s).

Be on the alert for new information being offered which you might be expected to answer questions about during the discussion.

Otherwise, the hiring manager may decide to start the job interview by asking you what attracted you to the position and why you would be a suitable candidate.

This requires you to make an immediate impact and to talk without the benefit of an established rapport.

It does offer the benefit of giving you two chances to sell yourself - at the start of the job interview and again at the questions stage.

**During- job interview tips**

Be fluent and confident about describing yourself and your greatest career achievements to date. Be concise and provide quantifiable facts about what you have to offer, based on proven results as well as your future potential.

Memorise your career achievements from your CV and be prepared to elaborate on them, make sure you have all your facts and figures clearly at hand.

Be enthusiastic about your career thus far and what you have achieved, but avoid unnecessary detail. Elaborate only on key points which catch the interest of the interviewer. Otherwise, take care to be brief in your descriptions.

Never interrupt - even where the question is obvious, wait for the interviewer to finish before your reply.

Listen actively - there is always something more to learn about the organisation in a job interview which may assist with your decision making about the role and business culture.

Always use positive language to describe your past career history and never criticise former employers, bosses or colleagues - it will simply mark you down as disloyal.

**At the end of the job interview**

The interviewer will always finish up by asking you if you have any further questions – don’t miss this final opportunity sell yourself to the interviewer(s)

At a minimum, ask more about the organisational structure, your prospective role in it, the nature of the job, the challenge it offers and the career potential. You can also ask about training, as well as the culture of the team.

If you feel that you will not remember all the things you need to ask, write them down and ask if the interviewer minds if you refer to your notes.

**After- job interview follow up**

You may like to write a thank-you letter after your job interview. Re-affirm your continued interest and indicate that you hope you will be called back for a further discussion.

If your application is unsuccessful, do not be afraid to call and ask for feedback. This can provide invaluable post-interview advice to help your personal development and nail your next round of applications.

**Additional job interview tips**

**Do:**

Dress to impress. At a minimum, make sure your clothes are clean, pressed and presentable.

Have a strong hand-shake when you meet the interviewer for the first time.

Make eye contact

Remember your CV details

Make a note of your questions if you feel you might forget them

Remember interviewers have to convince you that you should join a company just as much as you need them to employ you.

**Don't:**

Interrupt the interviewer

Smoke before your interview

Volunteer your weaknesses

A successful job interview relies on thorough preparation and as well as thoughtful responses to questions on the day. In addition, you can demonstrate a lot to your interviewers with your own queries as well as an effective follow-up email.

To ensure that your interviews go well you should

Be punctual

If you are unsure of the location or not familiar with the area then leave plenty of time to find where you going.

If you arrive more than 10 minutes early then go over your notes in the car or nearby coffee shop.

Dress professionally & appropriately

It is best to be conservative even if the company dress code is casual.

Research the business to the best of your ability

Read the website and understand their products and services.

Google the business and see what comes up. They may have been mentioned in recent press or online articles.

Ensure you have thoroughly read the position description and understand what will be expected of you in the role

The interview questions will be based around the position description.

Make sure you are very familiar with your resume

You need to be confident around your dates of employment and capable of talking about your responsibilities and achievements.

Employers value honesty

Do not talk up a particular skill set if you don’t have it. It is better to focus on how you would go about gaining that skill set and what are your transferable skills.

On arrival smile at the receptionist and clearly state your name and who you are meeting

The receptionist will often report back to the hiring manager as to your demeanour and general behaviour.

Turn off your mobile phone prior to entering reception

Never answer a call during an interview.

Greet the interviewer warmly and professionally and shake hands

Sometimes you will be interviewed by an individual with a very relaxed style. Whilst you should mirror the tone of the interview always remember it is an interview and maintain a professional communication style.

Ask questions about the business

Demonstrate your research.

If you decide half way through the interview that the role is not for you then you will need to maintain your professionalism

There may be other opportunities within the business for which you are suited.

Thank the interviewer for their time

Also ask them about the next step in the process.

Job interview tips: Are you ready for your interview?

Job interviews can be daunting, but you don’t have to feel overwhelmed or intimidated – you just have to be prepared to make the right impression. Here’s our advice on how to nail your job interview.

Be prepared: Do your homework

The more confident you are that you understand the role and the company, the more confident you’ll feel about presenting yourself as the ideal candidate for the job, so make time for some research and preparation.

Research the company. Familiarise yourself with their mission, goals and current position.

Practice a few questions. Put yourself in their shoes. What questions would you ask candidates? What’s the clearest and most concise way to answer those questions?

Prepare some questions of your own. Asking questions at an interview shows you’re interested and engaged, so have a few questions prepared to ask your interviewer about the job and the company. Try to show that you are already thinking like someone inside the company by asking questions about:

- What challenges you could face

- What you can do to prepare for success

- What the company is expecting from you

What to do on the day

Dress well. It will make you feel more confident and you will not be penalised for overdressing.

Be punctual. Get to your interview 15 minutes early – it will reflect well on you and you’re more likely to feel calm if you arrive in plenty of time.

Think about your body language. The way you hold yourself can say more than your words in a job interview – you want to look engaged, but not over-eager; calm and relaxed, without being laidback.

Breathe. Stay calm, relax and be yourself.

How to manage a telephone or Skype interview

While it might sound easier, being interviewed on the phone or via Skype throws up different challenges – you still need to be prepared, which means:

Take them seriously. If you’re on Skype, dress appropriately and make sure that the background is modest.

Practice a bit first. You don’t want any technical issues on the day, and you need to feel comfortable communicating, whether it’s on the phone (perhaps using a headset) or on Skype.

Check your connection. Is your internet connection stable? Do you need a back-up option? If you’re talking on the phone, opt for a landline rather than a mobile.

Have a cheat sheet. Write down anything that you definitely want to mention, in case you go blank during the interview.

Assuming your interview is a success, it’s onwards and upwards for your career. Read our tips on how to cultivate your career and make positive career moves.