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INTERVIEW GUIDE

A Successful Interview

Your performance at any interview could have a significant impact on your career progression and long term career goals.

You can never know how an interview will go, however there are a number of things that you can do to ensure that you are as prepared as possible.

For many, job interviews can be a daunting experience yet, with the right preparation and planning, you can stand out from the crowd and secure that new role. An interview provides an opportunity to present yourself to a potential employer in the best possible light as well as a chance to see if this is the best role and organisation for you.

A good recruiter will want to discuss your CV with you and will be able to give more specific advice in terms of aligning you to the roles that you are looking to pursue. Your consultant will also be able to help you when preparing for an interview and will be able to offer insight in to what key competencies the agency is looking for and the best way to approach it. They are also there to discuss salary negotiations and at what stage this should be discussed during the process.

This guide covers the various areas you should look at before you go, what to do once you are in an interview and includes some example questions as well as information on competency based interviews.

Preparation

It is important to prepare before your interview, completing the necessary research prior to attending the interview to ensure you make the most of the opportunity and make sure the client knows you are serious about the role.

You should approach each job interview as a business meeting where you are presenting a product (yourself) to a prospective buyer; someone who is interested in meeting you and keen to understand you and your skill set. Many people fail due to nerves and lack of preparation so having a positive attitude and, where possible, trying to enjoy the process can often be the difference between success and failure.



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Below are some aspects that are important to get right.

Research the company and the industry – this is essential to complete prior to the interview. There is an enormous amount of information available to be found on your potential employer online and through other forms of media.

Know your CV – read through your CV and know it inside out so you can answer in depth questions about your work history. Many times we have seen candidates fail on the basis of a piece of information on their CV which they cannot back up in interview; if you claim an expertise on a certain subject or that you played a key role in a specific project you should expect to be able to discuss this in detail with your interviewer. Be prepared to provide examples.

Prepare interview questions – think about what questions potential employers may ask you and think about your answers in advance. Think about times when you have demonstrated skills relevant to the role as employers will almost definitely ask you about these.

Know where you are going – understand how long it will take you to get to your interview and aim to arrive at least 15 minutes before it starts.

Make sure you know who you are meeting – this includes knowing their correct job title and how to pronounce their name.

Dress appropriately – regardless of whether the client is dress down you should always be smart in appearance.



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During the Interview

Think about your body language - you should aim to impress immediately, make eye contact. Throughout the interview maintain good eye contact, be enthusiastic and open in your body language and remember to smile. If there is more than one interviewer present make sure that you engage all of them even if only one is asking questions.

Compose yourself - do not interrupt questions, think first about what the interviewer has asked and take time before you answer. Interviewers prefer to hear a well-thought out answer after a pause rather than the first thing that comes into a candidate's head.

Give examples - simply saying you have that experience isn't enough; think about strong examples that you can talk the interviewer through to back up your point. This should relate directly back to your CV experience.

Be honest - if you don't know the answer to something, simply state that you are unsure, rather than guessing, or ask to come back to it.

Enthusiasm - showing desire and enthusiasm for the role will put you above your competitors. After all, you will be up against your peers for the role.

The interviewer(s) - Different interviewers have different styles. It is important that you adapt your interview style to meet the demands of your meeting.

Ask questions - show that you have thought about the role, the company and how it fits with what you are looking for. Make sure you have a list of them with you. Example questions you could ask include:

- What is the culture of the company?
- What is the structure of the team?
- What sort of training/induction would be provided?
- What work does the team mainly focus on?
- What are the company's future plans?



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Questions

While we can never predict the questions that an employer will ask, below are some questions to give you an idea of what you should be prepared to answer. Make sure you take time to read though and prepare answers with appropriate examples.

- What made you apply for this role?
- What are your career aspirations?
- What appeals to you about the company?
- What do you want from this role?
- What do you enjoy most about your role? What do you enjoy the least?
- What do you see as your major strength?
- What is your main weakness?
- What were the main skills you took from your last role?
- Do you work best in a team or as an individual?
- What are your personal and professional motivations?
- What do you enjoy to do outside of work? (this question gives the employer an opportunity to get to know you)

What to look out for

In addition to why you are suited to the role, interviewers will also be assessing why you are not suited to the role. Below are some elements that may be evaluated and could impact negatively on the interview:

- Lack of confidence or nervousness
- Making critical remarks about former/current employers
- Arrogance
- Poor communication
- Lack of interest in the role/company
- Lack of knowledge of the company/industry



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Closing the Interview

It is important to end the interview on a positive note. If you are still interested in the role you should make this clear. Always thank the interviewer for their time and let them know that you have enjoyed meeting them.

Even if the interview has not gone well you should still remain positive. The interviewer may have an interview style you are not used to or they may be testing you. In addition you may meet them later on in your career and want them to have a positive image of you in their mind.

