



INTERVIEW TIPS

Interviews can be daunting for the most experienced of people, but the key to a good interview is in the preparation. Interviews have many different formats, along with different durations, however they all have the same purpose which is to see if BOTH the candidate and employer feel that the position and company is suitable for them. These tips are designed to help across all interview formats, in order to give you the best possible chance of the successful outcome that you are looking for.

BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW:

- Find out the format of the interview, how many people you will meet, who to ask for on arrival and if there are any tests involved. This will allow you to prepare in the right areas and feel more confident on the day, as you will know what to expect.
- Read through the job specification and highlight the areas where you have experience, and the things that you would like to learn.
- Research the company – websites are often the best way to do this, but if they are a larger organisation it is worth looking to see if they have had any recent appearances in the local news.
- Read over your CV, as you are likely to be asked questions based on this.
- Plan your route and always allow for delays. Arriving early will give you time to compose yourself (top tip – if you have time it is always good to do a trial run, so you know exactly where to go. If you are short of time, Google Maps Street View will give you an idea).
- Decide what outfit you will wear. First impressions are very important and you should always wear smart clothing, unless otherwise asked not to, for all levels of positions. Trainers and jeans will not do you justice in an interview!
- Make sure that you have planned a meal before your interview. This may sound strange, but in the rush of getting ready, interview nerves etc. it is important that you eat and drink to keep you focused.
- Write a list of your strengths and weaknesses, things you have achieved, hobbies etc. These will help when you are answering questions about yourself (top tip – if you find it hard to think of your own strengths and weaknesses, it can be useful to ask your friends or family, as they will know you well).
- Read over common interview questions and think how you will answer them. If you are able to, practice with someone, as practice will give you confidence.
- More employers are looking on social media sites, so it is important to check your photos, language and comments.

TYPES OF INTERVIEW:

- 1:1 or 1:2 interview – This is a common format, where you will be interviewed by one or two members of the company and have a questions and answer session.
- Competency based – “Tell me about a time when.....”.
- Group interview – These often include role-play exercises, team-based scenario exercises and involve other interviewees.
- Making a formal presentation.

The format is likely to depend on the type and level of position that you are being interviewed for. However, it is always good to check, so you are fully prepared.

Most interviews now take a two stage format, which allows all questions to be answered and often you will have the opportunity to meet other team members at second stage.

It is also more common for companies to use Psychometric Testing to gain a greater understanding of your personality, strengths etc.

EXAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – ASKED BY THE EMPLOYER:

- First question – This is likely to be “Tell me a bit about yourself”. Have an answer prepared, which gives a general summary.
- Common questions
 - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
 - Why are you interested in working for (company name)?
 - Why does this position interest you?
 - Why do you want to leave your current position?
 - Where do you see yourself in five years?
 - Tell me a time when you handled a difficult situation?
 - Tell me about your biggest accomplishment?

These are a few general examples. However, there are likely to be other questions which will depend on the seniority of the position, experience that you have and sector you are working in. To help prepare for these, do as much research online as possible.

Top tip – Listen to the question and ask them to repeat it if you are not sure. Be honest and if you do not know the answer it is better to say, than to lie.



EXAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – ASKED BY THE INTERVIEWEE

- Last question – This is likely to be the Employer asking the Interviewee if they have any questions. It is good to be prepared and more importantly you will want to find out information too.
- Common questions
 - How would you describe a typical day for the person doing this job?
 - What sort of training will I receive?
 - What are the other members of the team like?
 - Are there any opportunities to progress in the future?
 - What do you like about working here?

Top tip – Do not ask questions about the salary in your interview, unless they bring it up first.

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD NOT BE ASKED:

There are guidelines in place for interviews, which are there to protect candidates from discrimination. These questions are not to be asked:

- Are you from the UK? Is English your first language? (However, they can ask if you are eligible to work within the UK).
- How old are you?
- Do you have any disabilities?
- Do you have any criminal convictions?
- Are you intending to have any children?

WHAT TO TAKE TO YOUR INTERVIEW:

- Take enough copies of your CV and the Job Specification for yourself and the interviewers. It is always good to have these to refer too, but will also look good if the interviewer has not got one with them.
- Print some information on the company, as it proves that you have carried out your research and are interested. It is good to highlight some parts and maybe ask a question about it.
- Notebook – It is useful to have your questions written down and will look good if you need to take any notes.

BODY LANGUAGE:

Body language is especially important in an interview, as you have a short amount of time to make a fantastic impression.

- On arrival and departure always shake hands with a firm handshake.
- Make eye contact, but don't overdo it as this can make the interviewer uncomfortable.
- Sit up straight.
- Do not cross your arms, as you will appear bored.
- Do not fidget too much (This can be hard if you are nervous, but take a few deep breaths).
- Be positive and smile.



EXTRA INFORMATION & TIPS

- Do arrive early, as this gives a good first impression.
- Always say yes if you are offered a glass of water. If you need a few seconds to compose an answer you can take a sip of water before you start.
- Do not become too relaxed, use non-professional language or bad mouth any of your previous companies.
- It is fine to have a bit of casual social discussion, if the interview takes this route, as it is important that you build a connection with the interviewer.
- If you are interviewing for a creative position, it is always good to take examples of your work.
- Thank them for their time at the end of the interview and express an interest in the position, as you want to leave a positive impression.