

ADVICE ON HOW TO GET THAT PERFECT JOB!

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Preparation is the first essential step towards conducting a successful interview.

This may sound obvious but make sure you know where you are supposed to be going, how to get there, what time you should be there and who you are going to meet (including the correct name pronunciation), is there any parking etc. Have the company's and your consultant's telephone number in case you are delayed.

Spend time researching the company. Before your interview, you'll be fully briefed by your consultant who gives you an idea of the company culture and their expectations, but you also need to do some of your own preparation. Company websites are packed with information and a prospective employer will expect you to have familiarised yourself with their site. Be aware that you may seriously compromise your chances if it becomes apparent you have not taken time to research it.

Get hold of a copy of their corporate brochure or annual report and read the business press for any articles about them. If you're knowledgeable about and interested in the company, you'll come across as proactive and committed.

If the company website does not have a press area, access information on line through search engines such as google or MSN.

Re-familiarise yourself with your CV and make sure you're familiar with the job description. What key skills and experience are they looking for? Think of examples of projects, which demonstrate your strengths in the areas they are looking. For all the examples you give, consider the situation, the action you took, and the effect it had.

All this will give you a sound basis, which will enable you to ask intelligent questions at interview.

It is also worth refreshing your memory on the facts and figures about your present or former employer as you may be asked questions about your previous companies.

THE INTERVIEW

Your impression on your prospective employer can begin the moment you step foot in the company. Be courteous to the receptionist and any other people you meet prior to your interview. Their opinion of you is often sought and may even have some influence on the final selection. **Don't forget to turn off your mobile phone before you arrive.**

According to research, the interviewer will decide within just four to nine minutes whether to consider you seriously for the job. So making a good first impression is vital. Throughout the interview process you will be assessed for your skills, strengths and weaknesses plus personal characteristics such as attitude, stability, motivation and maturity.

In interview your personality and presentation can be the deciding factor in how successful you are, no matter how well qualified you may seem 'on paper' for a job, when recruiting, an employer will still be looking for the all round 'right fit', therefore the more prepared you are the more confident, relaxed and impressive you will be. Listen carefully make sure you are answering the question asked and not just telling them what you think is relevant

Bear in mind that the interviewer may be just as nervous as you: they want to select the best person for the job.

As you will almost certainly be given the opportunity to ask questions be prepared, this is where you will be given the opportunity to discover if the job is the right one for you and impress the interviewer with your interest.

Enjoy the opportunity – make the most of this time – make sure you find out what you need to know – remember – it's a two way match

Some helpful tips

- If you're nervous, take a few deep breaths before you go in
- Don't smoke just before interview, there is nothing worse than the smell of stale cigarette smoke and make sure you have clean teeth
- Give a firm handshake, confident smile and maintain eye contact
- Be confident in yourself – remember it's a two way street
- Respond honestly to questions, make your answers concise and relevant
- Think carefully before answering
- Ask questions if there's anything you don't understand
- Listen to the interviewer and show interest by looking them in the eye
- Relate your own experience and skills to the position, be prepared to explain the roles you have done, and have examples prepared to illustrate the things that are important for the role

- Don't fidget or interrupt the interviewer
- Never speak in a derogative way of other people or companies. It makes you look unprofessional.
- Leave questions about salary, holidays, bonuses etc to a later date or better still ask your consultant to handle them for you.

Make a note of any difficult questions and what you have learned from them. Stay cool and calm, especially if the interview is tough – they will want to see how you act under pressure, resist being over familiar. If you are not experienced, perhaps get a friend/colleague/family member to do some sort of interview role-play/mock.

Examples of questions by the prospective employer Be prepared to answer questions such as:

- Why did you choose a career in?
- What kind of job are you seeking?
- Why would you like to work for our company?
- What do you want to be doing in your career five years from now?
- When was your last salary review?
- What style of management gets the best from you?
- What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?
- Which job did you enjoy the most and why?
- What have you done that shows initiative in your career? Be ready with case studies
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
- What are your hobbies and interests?
- Tell me about yourself? Give a short summary of your qualifications, career history, skills and what you will bring to the role.
- Why do you want to leave your current employer?"
- Why do you think you are suitable for this position? Try to focus on things that will be part of the job you're applying for.
- How would you describe your management style?
- How do you react under pressure?
- How would your colleague/friends describe you?
- What have been your main achievements so far? Think about recent work achievements, such as projects you've been involved with. What were the results, how did they impact the business?
- Have you ever come across a difficult situation at work and how did you handle it? Make sure it's a work-based problem that didn't originate with you.
- How do you cope when your work is criticised?
- Do you like to work in a team or by yourself, and why?
- What are you looking for in a company?

- What can you bring to this organisation?
- How do you work under pressure, and how do you deal with pressure?
- How would you react if you were asked to work late at short notice and How do you feel about working long hours and/or weekends?
- When you're not busy, what do you do?
- Why should you get this job over other candidates?
- Are you a self-starter? Give me examples to demonstrate this?
- What do you enjoy about this industry?
- Give me an example of when you have been out of your depth?
- What do you like and dislike about your present job?

Some Questions for you to ask

Having a few well-thought out questions shows you are interested and that you are taking the interview seriously. It's also your chance to assess the company. Even if the interview has already answered most of them, prepare a few to ask at the end. Here is an expel of some of the questions you could ask:

- How does the department fit into the company?
- What are the personalities of the team or manager?
- What sort of person is the team looking for?
- How long was the last post-holder in the position?
- Are any internal candidates interested in the position?
- What's the company culture?
- What sort of induction and training programme do you offer?
- Why does the interviewer think it's a good company to work for?
- How does the interviewer feel that your skill set meets the requirements of the role?
- Why has the position become available?
- What is the culture of the company?
- What kinds of people have previously been successful in the company?
- What plans has the company for future development?
- What would you see as my first priority if I am appointed to this position?
- Who would I report to?
- What promotional opportunities are there?
- Why has the job become available?
- What is the next step?

Unless you're specifically asked, don't talk about salary at a first interview.

Closing

End up a positive note – check they have found out all they need about you or if there are any areas they feel you haven't covered (this gives you a chance to cover any vital ground you/they may have missed) and re-state your interest in the role, enquire about the next step say that you look forward to getting their feedback.

In some circumstances you may be offered a position on the spot, it is perfectly acceptable to request for some time to think it over, in fact it could be pointed out that this is of benefit to the prospective employer as would be a well thought out decision

If you feel that the interview did not go well, never let discouragement show. There have been many occasions where candidates have done much better than they have thought or it may be a way to test your reaction.

Thank the interviewer for the time spent with you.