

INTERVIEW TIPS

You are being interviewed because the employer wants to hire someone – not to trip you up or embarrass you. The employer will be evaluating your strong and weak points – your qualifications, skills, intellectual qualities, attitude, aptitudes, stability, motivation and maturity.

Preparing for the Interview

Preparation is the first essential step towards a successful interview. It is important to: Know the exact time and place of the interview, the employer's full name and correct pronunciation and the employers job title.

Do some research on the company. It will be helpful to know how old the company is, what its products or services are, where its plants offices or stores are located, what its growth has been and what its growth potential is for the future.

Prepare the questions you will ask during the interview. Remember that the interview is a "two way street". The employer will try to determine through questioning if you have the qualifications, experience and personality necessary to do the job. You must determine through questioning whether the company will give you the opportunity for the growth and development that you seek.

Some probing questions you may ask include:-

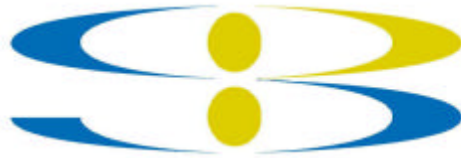
- What does the position involve? Obtain a detailed description.
- Why is the position available?
- What induction and training programmes do the company provide?
- Are there advanced training programmes available for those who demonstrate outstanding ability?
- What plans does the company have for growth over the next five years?
- What is the next step in the hiring process?

Men should dress in a business suit (not a blazer or jacket), conservative tie, dark socks a, shoes well shined and a neat haircut. Women should dress in a well-tailored and conservative fashion.

Making Your Job Interview Successful

The interview is one of the most important events in your experience because the time spent with the interviewer may determine your future.

Interviewers are continually amazed at the number of candidates who come to interviews without any apparent preparation and only the vaguest idea of what they are going to say.



Some candidates create an impression of indifference by acting too casually while others work themselves into a state of nervous fright.

These marks of inexperience can be avoided by knowing a little of what is actually expected of you and by making a few simple preparations before the interview.

With the guidance provided by your SPRL consultant, we will show you the best way to get the position you want.

Research, Rehearse & Relax

No matter how qualified you are for a job or how articulate you are about your strengths and experience, there is nothing that can replace preparation. Once you have practised asking and answering questions, the next step is to relax and remind yourself that: -

- There Is **No Question You Cannot Answer**
- You are well suited to the position, and
- You would be an asset to the company.

Visualise yourself sitting in the interview feeling serene and confident. Get a good nights sleep before the interview and arrive a few minutes early, take a few deep breaths and seize the day.

Tough Interview Questions

Tell me about you

Keep your answer to one or two minutes; don't ramble. Use your CV summary as a base to start.

What do you know about our company?

Do your homework before the interview! Spend some time online at the library researching the company. Find out as much as you can, including products, size, income, reputation, image, management talent, people, skills, history and philosophy. Project an informed interest; let the interviewer tell you about the company.

Always look at their website.

Why do you want to work for us?

Don't talk about what you want; first, talk about their needs: You would like to be part of a specific company project; you would like to solve a company problem; you can make a definite contribution to specific company goals.

What would you do for us? What can you do for us that someone else can't?

Relate past experiences that show you've had success in solving previous employer problem (s) that may be similar to those of the prospective employer.



What about the job offered do you find the most attractive? Least attractive?

List three or more attractive and only one minor unattractive factor

Why should we hire you?

Because of your knowledge, experience and skills

What do you look for in a job?

An opportunity to use your skills, to perform and be recognised.

Please give me a definition of a (the position for which you are being interviewed).

Keep it brief – give an actions – and results-orientated definition.

How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our firm?

Not long at all – you expect only a brief period of adjustment to the learning curve.

Have you helped increase sales? Profits? How?

Describe in detail

Have you helped reduce costs? How?

Describe in some detail

How much money did you account for?

Be specific

How many people did you supervise on your last job?

Be specific

Do you like working with figures more than words?

Be honest but positive.

In your current or last position, what are or were your five most significant accomplishments?

Refer to the key accomplishments already identified on your resume.



Your Career Goals

If you could start your career again, what would you do differently?

Nothing.... I am happy today, so I don't want to change my past.

What career options do you have at the moment?

"I see three areas of interest" Relate those to the position and industry.

How would you describe the essence of success? According to your definition of success, how successful have you been so far?

Think carefully about your answer and relate it to your career accomplishments

Personality Questions

Do you generally speak to people before they speak to you?

Depends on the circumstances.

What was the last book you read? movie you saw? Sporting event you attended?

Talk about books, sports or films to show that you have balance in your life.

What is the toughest part of the job for you?

Be honest; remember, not everyone can do everything

Are you creative?

Yes. Give examples

How would you describe your own personality?

Balanced

Are you a leader?

Yes. Give examples.

What are your future goals?

Avoid "I would like the job you advertised". Instead, give long-range goals.

What are your strong points?

Don't say you have none. Try not to cite personal characteristics as weaknesses, but to be ready to have one if the interviewer presses. Turn a negative into a positive answer: "I



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am sometimes intent on completing an assignment and get too deeply involved when we are late.”

Salary Questions

How much are you looking for?

Answer with a question, ie., “what is the salary range for similar jobs in your company?” If they don’t answer, then give a range of what you understand you are worth in the marketplace.

How much do you expect, if we offer this position to you?

Be careful; the market value of the job may be the key answer, eg., “my understanding is that a job like the one you’re describing may be in the range of £___.”

What kind of salary are you worth?

Have a specific figure in mind.... Don’t be hesitant

Your Work Habits and Style

If I spoke with your previous boss, what would he say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

Emphasis skills – don’t be overly negative about your weaknesses; it’s always safer to identify a lack of skill as an areas for improvement rather than a shortcoming.

Can you work under pressures, deadlines, etc.?

Yes, it’s a way of life in business.

How have you changed the nature of your job?

Improved itof course.

In your present position, what problems have you identified that had been previously overlooked?

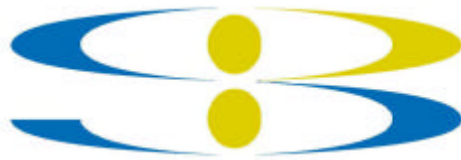
Keep it brief and don’t brag.

Do you feel you may be better off in a different size company? Different type of company?

Depends on the job – elaborate slightly.

How do you resolve conflict on a project team?

First you discuss to issues privately.



What was the most difficult decision you ever had to make?

Try to relate your response to the prospective employment situation.

How long would you stay with us?

As long as we both feel I'm contributing, achieving, growing, etc.

Some do's and don'ts concerning the interview:-

DO

Plan to arrive on time or a few minutes early. Late arrival for a job interview is never excusable.

Create a positive first impression by giving the appearance of energy as you walk, smiling and shaking his hand firmly.

Wait until you offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright in your chair. Look alert and interested at all times. Be a good listener as well as a good talker. Smile.

Look at the employer in the eye whilst you talk to them

Follow the employers leads, but try to get them to describe the position and duties to you early in the interview so that you can relate your background, skills and achievements to the position.

Always conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job. Never close the door on an opportunity. It is better to be in a position where you can choose from a number of offers rather than only one.

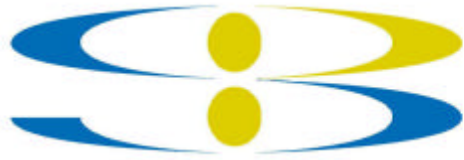
DON'T

Smoke even if the employer smokes and offers you a cigarette,

Answer questions with a simple yes or know. Explain wherever possible.

Never make derogatory comments about you present or former employers or companies
Never over-answer questions. The employer may steer the conversation towards politics or economics. Since this is a ticklish situation it is best to answer the question honestly, trying to say any more than is necessary.

Don't enquire about salary, holidays, bonuses or other benefits at the initial interview unless you are positive the employer is interested in hiring you. If the employer asks what salary you want, indicate what you have earned but that you are more interested in the opportunity than in a specific amount at the present.



Closing the interview

If you are interested in the position, enquire about the next interview stage if applicable. If the interviewer offers the position to you and you want it, accept it on the spot. If you need some time to think it over, be courteous and tactful in asking for that time. Set a definite date when you can provide the answer.

Don't be too discouraged if no definite offer is made or specific salary discussed. The interviewer will probably want to consult with colleagues first or interview other candidates before making a decision.

If you get the impression that the interview is not going well and that you have already been rejected, don't let your discouragement show. Sometimes an interviewer who is genuinely interested in your possibilities may seem to discourage you in order to test your reaction.

THANK the interviewer for the time spent with you.