

# PREPARATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS!

## RESEARCH

Ensure you research the company you are interviewing with fully.

- Visit the company website
- Ask for a company brochure
- Review the press for any relevant articles

## JOB DESCRIPTION

Ensure you have read the description and understand it! Discuss any points you don't understand with your consultant. Consider the key skills required and any relevant experience you may have.

## PRESENTATION

Always wear your best suit to interview, polish your shoes, comb your hair, etc. Wear minimal make-up and jewellery. Don't overdo the perfume / aftershave, take out any visible piercings and make sure earrings are small. Make sure you are clean shaven and don't chew gum!

## BODY LANGUAGE

- Greet your interviewer with a firm handshake. This shows you are confident.
- Smile to show enthusiasm
- Keep regular eye contact
- Be confident and alert
- Avoid folding your arms and fidgeting
- Undo your jacket - you will feel more comfortable
- Maintain positive facial and hand-movement cues i.e. a tilt of the head shows interest

## YOU!

- Make sure you've read through your CV and reviewed your career history thoroughly.
- Know your strengths and weaknesses
- Be prepared to answer questions about anything you have mentioned on your CV.
- Think of specific examples to demonstrate key skills and responsibilities.

## INTERVIEW DO'S AND DON'TS

### Do

- Answer all questions to the point. Don't ramble!
- Represent yourself honestly.
- Take time to formulate answers
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Listen and don't get distracted
- Thank the interviewer and express your interest in the role

### Don't

- Be late
- Waffle!
- Make derogatory remarks about previous or present employers
- Mention salary, bonuses or holiday entitlement at the first interview
- Leave your mobile phone switched on

## ARRIVAL

Make sure you know where you're going and leave in plenty of time to get there! Do a dummy run if you're not sure of where to go! **Aim to arrive at least 10 minutes early.**

## CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

Some people find it quite difficult to know how to finish an interview properly.

### The important points to remember are:

- Ask a closing question such as "What is the next step following your interview?"
- Express your interest in the position
- Thank the interviewer for their time
- Shake the interviewers hand with a firm handshake!

## REMEMBER, THE PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER WILL MAKE HIS/HER HIRING DECISION BASED ON:

- Attitude
- Presentation and Communication Skills
- Experience
- Education

# HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS AND QUESTIONS

## **WHY DO YOU WANT THIS JOB?**

Think carefully about this question. Stress the positive aspects which have attracted you to applying for this position. Do not mention the negative aspects of your current job or the job in question.

## **WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU THINK WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THIS JOB?**

- The job spec should help you a little bit, but you should also think of the other qualities that may be required. These may include leadership ability, supervisory skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving, analytical skills, etc.
- What can you contribute?
- This is your chance to shine. Tell them about your achievements in your previous position(s) which are relevant to the new position you are applying for.

## **WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK FOR THIS COMPANY?**

Emphasise the positive reasons why you want to join their company, but avoid aspects such as more money or shorter hours. These would not endear you to a prospective employer.

## **WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS COMPANY?**

This is your chance to impress the interviewer with your knowledge of their company. Give them a run down of their products/services, sales figures, news, company figures, customers, etc.

## **WHAT INTERESTS YOU ABOUT OUR PRODUCT (OR SERVICE)?**

Again, your research into the company should aid you in answering this question.

## **WHAT CAN WE (THE NEW COMPANY) OFFER THAT YOUR PREVIOUS COMPANY CANNOT OFFER?**

Tread carefully here! Again do not mention money. Stress opportunities for personal growth, new challenges, etc.

## **HAVE SOME PERTINENT QUESTIONS PREPARED TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER, FOR EXAMPLE:**

- What will be my responsibilities?
- Where will I fit into the overall organisational structure?
- Who will I report to?
- Where do you fit in the company structure?
- What do you expect me to do in the first 6 months?
- What level of performance do you expect from me?
- Who are your customers?
- Where is the company going? Upwards? Expansion plans?
- What are the chances of advancement/promotion in this position? When?
- What training do you provide?
- Is there an induction?
- How do you monitor and measure your staff?
- When will you decide on the appointment?
- What is the next step?

## **NEGOTIATING**

Salary and benefit packages are often a difficult issue to approach and require extended negotiations to ensure an amount is agreed that is acceptable to both you as an individual and the company concerned.

### **There are a few key points which mustn't be forgotten when entering into negotiations:**

- Firstly it isn't all about the money - No amount of money will make a bad job good so make sure you consider the position and opportunity as well.
- It is in an employers interest to offer a fair package. They need to make sure that the salary on offer is sufficient to incentivise you to change jobs and also sufficient to keep you. They also need to ensure that it is in line with the company's existing salary structure.
- Be realistic about your demands! Make sure that if there is a big difference between what you are currently earning and what you are asking for, you can explain it.
- Be flexible. Some companies offer lower basic salaries but great benefit packages which could well suit your needs perfectly.
- Keep your recruiter involved. They are experienced in contract and salary negotiations and want to ensure that they come to an agreement which is fair for both parties.
- If you are asked about your salary expectations in the interview, make sure you quote the rate that you have agreed with your consultant. Any disparity here doesn't look very good on your or your consultants part!

**COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEWS**

Competency-based interviews (also called structured interviews) are interviews where each question is designed to test one or more specific skills. The answer is then matched against pre-decided criteria and marked

accordingly. For example, the interviewers may want to test the candidate's ability to deal with stress by asking first how the candidate generally handles stress and then asking the candidate to provide an example of a situation where he worked under pressure.

# EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**PEOPLE****ENERGY**

- Describe a time when you have been particularly motivated to achieve a goal? What happened? How did you remain committed?
- Tell me about a time when you went an extra mile for an employer?
- Can you give me a recent example of when you have experienced a setback?

**INITIATIVE**

- Give me an example of where you have improved existing systems/procedures at work? How was this received by colleagues/ manager?
- Can you give me an example of when your manager was absent and you were forced to make a decision? What did you take into consideration? What was the effect of your decision?

**TEAM SKILLS**

- Give me an example of how you have responded to a colleague who seemed overworked or stressed?
- Give me an example of when you have had to support others in a team?
- Describe a time when you worked in an unsuccessful team? Why was it unsuccessful? What did you personally do to help the situation?

**TASK MANAGEMENT**

- Describe a time when you were faced with a number of tasks, all of which had to be completed in a short period. How did you tackle these tasks? How did you prioritise?
- Did you meet the deadlines?
- Describe a piece of work you have been responsible for from start to finish. How did you plan? What were your deadlines? How did you ensure you met your deadlines?
- Tell me how you prioritise your day?

**ANALYSING AND PROBLEM SOLVING**

- Give me an example of a poor decision you have made in the past? What happened? What did you learn from the experience?
- Give me an example of when you have questioned the validity of information given to you? What did you do to check the facts?
- What has been the most intellectually/technically demanding task that you have undertaken recently – how did you approach it and what was the outcome?

**RESILIENCE**

- Give me an example of a task that you found particularly challenging? What was difficult? What did you do to overcome the obstacles?

**CLIENTS**

- Tell me about a successful client relationship you had with a client/ customer? Why was it successful?
- Give me an example of a time when you exceeded customer expectations? What did you do? How did you know that you exceeded customer expectations?
- Tell me about a particularly difficult situation with a client/ customer. What did you find difficult to handle? How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?
- Can you give me an example of when you have received good customer service? Why was the service good?
- Can you give me an example of when you have received bad customer service? How did it make you feel?

**KNOWLEDGE****INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING**

- Tell me about a time when you put forward ideas to your team / client. How did you do this? What was acted on?
- Give me an example of a situation where you have thought of a new or creative way of dealing with a problem within work? What did you do?