



INTERVIEW GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES

Employers need to confirm that you have the required knowledge, skills and willingness to contribute and fit into their organisation. They are also interested to see if your career expectations are in line with the opportunities available and whether you'll be a valued, trusted and a productive team member. Preparation is important so to save you time and effort, we have put together some hints and tips on how to approach the interview process.

Be prepared

Your Consultant will be able to give you an overview of the working conditions, company culture and their expectations but you must carry out your own research. This involves researching the company, the industry, the job description and the LinkedIn profiles of the people you'll be meeting.

Presentation

First impressions really count. A company is more likely to hire a person who is well presented as they will be future representatives of their company. Ensure that you look smart (or dress in line with their industry), act in a professional manner throughout the interview and while it may sound obvious it is still worth mentioning the 'No No's'!

- Too much makeup – keep it natural
- Way out hairstyles and unnatural colours
- Loud jewellery such as large hoop earrings, chunky necklaces, lots of rings, etc. No bling!
- We recommend that non-standard piercings are removed before the interview and ideally tattoos are not visible
- Attending an interview with shopping bags
- If you are a smoker it is best not to have one before going into the interview as the smell lingers

On the Day

- Arrive on time! Ensure that you know the exact time and location of the interview and how to get there. Your Consultant will provide you with all of the details you need and it is highly advisable that you allow plenty of time in case of travel delays. Arrive slightly earlier if possible and if you are delayed, apologise and give a reason why. Don't dwell on your lateness. Employers are realistic; they understand that sometimes these things happen!!
- Be ready to ask questions. This will impress the employer. It lets them know you are interested in the job and want to learn more about the company. Remember that you're also interviewing the employer. Create a short list of questions based on your earlier research and any concerns you have.

Interview tips

- Turn off your mobile phone PRIOR to arriving at the interview
- Meet your interviewer standing and maintain strong eye contact. Give a firm handshake and warm smile
- Remember this is a two-way discussion; they want to know about you and you want to know about them.
- Make sure you know your CV inside out and can answer questions without having to refer to it. Interviewers expect you to know your work history completely including companies, dates, job titles, roles, responsibilities and key accomplishments.
- Stop using generalities and clichés such as ‘I’m a problem solver’ and ‘I’m a real team player’. When interviewers evaluate your replies, they prefer for you to provide realistic examples and stories to prove a point. Draw parallels from your experience in relation to the job on offer and show how this can benefit the company
- Give positive examples of your work and avoid waffling giving concise, well rounded responses. The best answers are 1-2 minutes long. If your answers are too short you’re assumed to lack ability, insight or interest and those that talk too much are perceived to be unfocused, self-absorbed and boring!
- Ask questions that demonstrate that you have understood the role and what is expected.
- Demonstrate a willingness to learn and progress.
- Do not discuss salary at first interview unless the client raises it. Achieving a second interview/job offer is the main priority and salary negotiations will follow. Your Consultant can help with this.
- Even if you have reservations about the role, be positive. You never know when another more suitable position may arise with the same company!

A few questions you may want to ask interview (if applicable)

- Can you tell me more about the company culture/work environment?
- Could you explain the company’s organisational structure?
- How does the department fit into the bigger picture of the company?
- What problems (if any) is the department/company facing right now?
- Can you tell me about my day-to-day responsibilities?
- May I ask why the last person left?
- What have you liked most about working here? (a possible question to ask the previous job holder)
- What are some of the skills and abilities you see as essential for this role?
- Can you tell me a little bit about the people I will be working closely with?
- Will there be scope in the future for me to take on more responsibility?
- Are there any opportunities for training?
- How soon are you looking for someone to start?

Strengths and Weaknesses!

Most candidates hate this one but if you really give it some thought its not tricky to deal with! When asked about your strengths and weaknesses, they aren't trying to catch you out. Its simply their attempt to determine your character, honesty and self-awareness. Similarly, what one company would view as a weakness could be viewed as a strength by another.

Saying you don't haven't any weaknesses implies you've stopped growing, can't learn anything new and can't be coached. Openly stating a weakness and describing how

Prove strengths and neutralize weaknesses: Write down all your strengths and weaknesses. For each strength come up with 1 or 2 actual accomplishments you can use as examples to prove the strength. To neutralize a weakness, describe how you converted it into a learning experience or how you managed to deal with it.

Closing the Interview

Towards the end of the interview, ask what the next steps might be and be sure to express your interest in the role. Let them know you are really keen to take it to the next stage - your enthusiasm will be appreciated and could win you brownie points.

Finally, be sure to call or email us with your comprehensive feedback after the interview. We can pass on your positive comments which reinforce your interest in the company and keep you on the short list. If you suddenly remember a question you didn't ask or an example you felt you didn't get across as well as you would have liked, we can cover this on your behalf. Alternatively, if the role is not for you, we can diplomatically handle this too.

Good luck!