

Interview Skills – A Step by Step Guide



PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW:

- Research extensive information about the company/group. Finding out some key facts such as its set-up, history, values, reputation, achievements and culture, will give a good impression. It is also important that you research the services that the company provides. Telling the interviewers that you know these facts shows your interest in and dedication to the company.
- You should also research the staff who will be interviewing you. Use LinkedIn to search for their profiles.
- Ensure you have studied the job description for the role you are being interviewed for. You will be asked questions about specific parts of the role, what attracted you to the job and maybe if there are any aspects of the role that you are worried about.
- It is also a great idea to prepare some useful questions. You can find out more information on page 2 of this leaflet.
- Think of your USP's (unique selling points). Ask yourself: "What can I offer this employer that makes me special and stand out?"
- Be positive. Remember that you have achieved an interview, so the company already believes you can do the job.

GIVING A GOOD IMPRESSION AND SHOWING CONFIDENCE:

- First impressions have a huge impact on your chances of getting the job. Before your interview, find out what you are expected to wear. This is usually smart office attire e.g. a suit/smart dress, but if different it will be noted in the interview information you are sent. There are many options, but the most important thing is that you are dressed as smartly as possible from top to toe (if required) and are comfortable.
- Ensure to arrive at your interview at least 10 minutes early with the correct paperwork.
- At the beginning of your interview, when you arrive and meet your interviewers, introduce yourself using your full name and ensure that you offer them all a firm handshake. Make sure that you maintain good posture throughout, smile and use open body language, which shows active listening.

- Strong eye contact with the interviewer is always an easy way to show them that you are listening to them, and that you are confident and approachable.

PROFESSIONAL LEVEL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Your potential employer wants to get to know you and your previous experience to see if you're the right fit for their role. Interviewers have 3 basic queries:
 - Can this person do the job?
 - Will this person do the job?
 - Will this person fit in?
- Researching some commonly asked questions is always a sensible idea, as you will feel more confident and prepared. Be ready for competency/situational questions, e.g. describe a time where things went well/not so well and how you handled it. Here are some common questions that may be asked during an interview:

1. *What is the best work environment that you have worked in and why?*

When talking about experience in a previous company, mention the positives and what you enjoyed about working with them. Was it the team you were surrounded by? Or was it the fast-paced environment that you enjoyed? If so, what was the result for you? Speak positively about how this motivated you to work hard and progress.

2. *What are your weaknesses and how could you improve on them?*

When it comes to your weaknesses, don't be too negative. Choose something minor, put it back in the past and explain what you have done/are doing to overcome it.

3. *Describe a time when you led and motivated others.*

If you get asked a question like this, think about your previous experiences when you have encouraged or helped someone to find the motivation to complete a task. Explain how you personally advised this individual and the support you gave them.

- If you're not sure of an answer, it's fine to take some thinking time. Maybe say: "that's a good question, let me think".
- As well as answering the interviewers' questions, it is extremely professional for you to ask some questions yourself, e.g. Who will I report to? / What training do you provide? / Will travel be required for this role? This shows extra interest in not just the role, but the company too. Always wait until the end of the interview as your question may be answered during the meeting.

GOOD LUCK!