

# Interview Skills – A Step by Step Guide



## PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW:

- Research extensive information about the company. 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 offers and provides. You can do this by looking on the About page of the company website and searching them on Google. 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. You can do this by once again looking on their About page, and using LinkedIn to search for their profiles.
- Spending at least one hour on research will seriously benefit how you come across at an interview, especially if it's your first one. As soon as you have scheduled your interview, you should be preparing for it. Don't leave it until the day before! This also gives you time to prepare questions that you may wish to ask.
- Ensure you have studied the job description for the job you are interviewing for. You will be asked questions about specific parts of the role, mostly 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 find out some commonly asked questions during an interview. You can find out more information on page 2 of this leaflet.

## LOOKING THE PART AND GIVING A GOOD IMPRESSION:

- Remember that the interview starts when you arrive at the car park or the reception area and finishes when you leave the premises. You should be polite, friendly and formal with all members of staff you meet before and after the interview. The interview is never over until you are out of sight and earshot of all company staff.
- One of the most important parts of preparing for an interview is making sure you look presentable. 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 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 (if required) and are comfortable.

- The most popular choice of outfit is business casual. This includes a shirt with smart trousers or a skirt, or a smart dress. If you own one, you may wish to wear a suit and/or tie. If the attire is specified as casual, a pair of smart jeans and a smart top would be suitable.
- When it comes to hair colour and facial piercings, it is recommended that you present yourself as professionally as possible.
- During your interview, when you arrive and meet your interviewers, ensure to offer them a firm handshake. As well as this, you want to make sure that you hold a good posture throughout. This means sitting up straight and using open body language, which shows active listening.
- Making strong eye contact with the interviewer is always an easy way to show you that you are listening to them, are confident and approachable.

### COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- The obvious reason for an interview is so that the employer can get to know you and your experience to see if you're the right fit for their role and for you to assess if their role is right for you. To do this, they're going to ask you a variety of questions; mostly work related, but maybe some personal. Here are some common questions asked during an interview and some possible ways to answer them.

#### 1. Tell me about yourself

When talking about yourself in an interview, the interviewer likes to know about your previous employment experience and achievements as well as where you studied. If you're asked about your personal life, ensure to talk about hobbies and interests but try to keep it to a minimum and relevant.

#### 2. Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?

This is where you can talk about your goals and expectations for your future career. What title do you want to reach? What experience do you want to gain? Are there any qualifications you want to take? Everyone has different aspirations, and this will stand out to your interviewer.

#### 3. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

In an interview, your strengths should relate specifically to the role. If you're being interviewed for a PA/Secretarial role, maybe you are a fast typist, speedy when taking notes and a good organiser. If you're interviewing for an Administrator role, explain your excellent attention to detail and strong IT skills. These are just some examples of relating your strengths to the role you've applied for. When it comes to your weaknesses, don't be too negative about it. Choose something minor and explain what you intend to do to improve your weakness. How are you going to personally take the time to overcome this weakness? How do you handle a

situation that involves your weakness? Turn it into a positive by explaining how you will improve.

**DOS AND DON'TS AT THE INTERVIEW:**

| <b>DO'S</b>   | <b>DON'TS</b>   |
|---|---|
| Always ensure you arrive 10 minutes early to your interview – give yourself enough time when leaving in case of traffic/hold ups. | Don't smoke before your interview as this will leave an unpleasant smell throughout.    |
| Turn off your phone/ smart watch and ensure your ringer is always off. Never look down at your watch during the interview.        | Don't make negative comments about previous employers/work.                             |
| Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question.   | Don't ask about the salary for the role.<br>Wait to be asked the salary you're seeking. |

**BEST OF LUCK!**

