



Interview Tips

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Interviews take many forms, from more formal, panel style interviews to an informal conversation over coffee. Either way, you are being assessed for the role. The interviewer also has a varying style and different drivers; HR or the Recruiter is benchmarking you against an “ideal” candidate they have created. This will lead to a more fact based interview to assess your competencies. The decision maker, who is rarely a trained interviewer, will be more focused on how you can help them and how you will fit into their team and the organisation.

Either way, preparation is key so take an hour or two and do your homework. Start with the company website, an absolute must to obtain relevant information to work into the interview. Refer to online news and industry websites as well as ‘Googling’ the company name for news articles that may have been published recently about the company. LinkedIn is also a must as your interviewer should have a profile for you to understand their path in the company and stimulate questions for you around why they work there. At the same time, you can review your future colleagues profiles and identify the relatable traits in those who have held the role you are applying for. There should also be a Company Page here and some of the insights statistics can be beneficial to ascertain where their exiting employees go to or who their primary competitors are. Many companies also have Facebook, Twitter, Instagram pages so check them out as they can be quite insightful when it comes to understanding their culture. All of this makes for some very targeted questions on your part and shows the interviewer you are interesting, and interested.

Key areas to familiarise yourself with include:

- * The company’s mission (e.g. To be a market leader in telecommunications)
- * The market in which it operates (e.g. consumer market, business to business, institutional investment)
- * Its competitors
- * Its products and services
- * Its recent business growth
- * Its growth potential for the future
- * Countries the company operates in
- * Other companies within the group

Keeping in mind who is interviewing you, prepare some questions you can ask the interviewer. Remember that an interview is a two-way street. In the same way that the interviewer is trying to gauge your suitability for a particular role, you want to be sure that the company and the role is a good match to your own goals and preferences.

Referring to the research you have done in preparation for your interview, skew some good questions around that to include:

- * Can you expand in more detail the description of the position?
- * Why has the position become available?
- * How would they describe the culture of the company?
- * What induction programme is there?
- * What kinds of people have previously been successful in the company?
- * What potential for development is there for someone who demonstrates ability and achievement in this role?
- * What plans does the company have for future development?
- * Which are the company’s best selling products or services?
- * What is the next step in the process?

How do I look?



Being well researched gets you off to a great start, but how you present yourself is often a deciding factor in a successful interview. Being on time, well groomed and “present” in the interview go a long way in securing you the dream role. Here are some practical “Do’s and Don’ts” that may sound obvious, but hold the most of amount of weight when it comes to making a positive first impression.

- * **DO** know the exact place and time of the interview and be on time.
- * **DO** spend some time before the interview reviewing your resume. Review specific examples in your background that are directly related to the position and that demonstrate your ability to do the position. It is vital that you always provide real examples of experience to validate what you say you can do.
- * **DO** refresh your memory on details of present and past employers. You will be expected to know a lot about a company for which you have previously worked.

Relax and take in the environment of your prospective employers’ organisation

- * **DO** shake hands firmly, always look the interviewer in the eye and greet the interviewer by his or her first name
- * **DO** be as charismatic as possible; it is very important that you demonstrate your interpersonal skills during the interview
- * **DO** be a good listener as well as a good talker and remember to smile
- * **DO** pause a moment after the interviewer asks a question. When you are nervous, it is easy to ‘jump’ in too early to answer a question. This is often perceived as not listening properly / thoroughly and not being considered enough in your response
- * **DON’T** just answer questions, respond to them. Be careful not to ‘over answer’ questions. Be as concise as possible and don’t keep talking if you can’t answer the question. If you think you are rambling, you probably are.
- * **DON’T** enquire about salary, holidays, bonuses etc at the initial interview unless you are positive that the interviewer wants to hire you. You should, however, know your market value and be prepared to specify your required salary or range. Discuss this with your Consultant before the interview, as they will have specified a salary expectation.

Expect relevant questions to the position you are interviewing for

- * Why do you want to work here?
- * How do you feel you can help or add value to our company / organisation?
- * What do you expect in this position that you were not getting in your past positions?
- * Are there any questions you would like to ask about the position / company?
- * Are you considering any other positions?
- * How do you think you would fit in with our firm? Why?
- * How much do you know about our company?

With questions about your current or previous position

- * How did / do you like working at ... (last company)? Why?
- * In your last position, how much of the work did you do on your own, and how much as part of a team? Which did you enjoy more?
- * Why do you want to leave your present company?
- * Does your present employer know you are planning to leave?
- * What did you like best about your last / present position?

And questions about yourself



- * Are you considering other positions at this time? How does this one compare with them?
- * What does success mean to you? How do you judge it?
- * What are the things that motivate you?
- * What do you feel is your greatest strength?
- * What are some of your weaknesses / areas for development?
- * What do you think management could do to make you function more effectively as an employee?
- * What else do you think I should know about you?
- * What are your financial needs? What is the minimum salary you would accept? What salary do you feel you are worth? What is your salary history?
- * What are you looking for in a position?
- * Do you enjoy working independently or as a member of a team?
- * Are you creative? Give an example
- * Are you analytical? Give an example
- * How would you describe your personality?
- * Do you think your status and salary reflect your true abilities?
- * How would you describe your ideal boss?

Including about your past

- * What have you done to improve yourself during the last year?
- * Tell me about your greatest achievement / disappointment in life
- * What are some of the more difficult problems you have encountered in your past positions? How did you solve them?
- * Tell me about the worst boss you have ever had
- * If you were starting all over again, which field would you choose?

And how you see your future

- * What are your short / long range goals?
- * How long would you expect to stay with us?
- * What do you need from us to be successful in this role but to also stay

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'VE MADE IT TO THE SECOND INTERVIEW!

The second interview often comes with a sense of comfort as you know your interviewers better or if with another, you know you have been recommended internally. The focus is often on different areas to the first and preparation should be adapted accordingly. Below are some examples of questions that you could be asked:

- * Why would joining us be a good move for you?
- * Why should I take you on?
- * What can you bring to our company?
- * Why should we offer you the position and not the other candidate?
- * What have you found out about our company since our initial meeting?
- * If I were to offer you this position, what would you say?



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

You've just met, you get along and you know this is a fantastic opportunity for you. Do not leave the interview until you know what happens next and when it is likely to happen. Not only does this show you are interested and motivated, it may also enable you to get that essential information for the next stage. Do ask who will you be seeing, what is their name and position title, how do they fit into the selection process.

INTERVIEW CLOSURE

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

If you are interested in the position, make sure you tell this to the interviewer.

THANK the interviewer for the time spent with you.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Lastly, and most importantly, call your Consultant immediately after the interview to explain what happened. The Consultant will want to speak with you before the interviewer calls.

Relax – the interview is over and you have done your best!

LEARNING FROM THE INTERVIEW

Even if you don't get the position you can treat the interview as a learning opportunity. Ask yourself the following questions:

- * How did it go?
- * What went well?
- * What did not go well?
- * What was difficult?
- * What did I learn?
- * What will I do differently next time?
- * How can I follow up?