

Interview Preparation

Before the interview...

Find out exactly where the Company are based.

- Is there parking available?
- Do you need to call ahead in order to get past security for the building?
- Do a trial run to ensure you leave in plenty of time to get to your interview at least 15 minutes before the time stated. More importantly, this will give you an indication of how long you will be travelling on a daily basis and if this will fit with your personal circumstances.

Find out exactly who you will be meeting and their position within the Company.

Find out if they are on LinkedIn/ Facebook so you have an advantage over other candidates and know what to expect.

Do your research on the Company!

- Get as much information as you can from your consultant; previous candidates they may have placed at the Company, their background, what is good about the working environment etc.
- Take a look at the Company website, particularly the "About Us" and "Careers" pages.
- Make sure you have some information so that you are able to demonstrate your interest in the Company.
- Research the Companies competitors.
- If you already work in the industry speak to existing employees and ask them why they like working for the Company.

Go through the job specification with a fine tooth comb!

- Pick out the key words in the specification and prepare examples of when you are demonstrating these skills in your current role.
- Are there any points in the specification that you have not covered before or do not have experience of?
- Be prepared to answer questions related to this in your interview.

Know your CV!

- Make sure you know your CV inside out; dates, reasons for leaving each role and most importantly your achievements in each position.
- Be prepared that if you felt it important enough to put in your CV- they will find it important enough to ask you about it at interview!!

Find out the structure of the interview:

- Will it be an informal chat with the line manager?
- Will you be meeting the Director if you are successful?
- Will the interview contain Competency based questions?
- Are there any tests involved?

Do you need to prepare anything specifically for the interview? And are there any materials you use in your current role which you could present in your interview to demonstrate your skill set?

Ensure you have prepared answers to all standard interview questions. Think of some questions to ask them.

On the day of the Interview...

- Make sure you arrive 15 minutes early.
- Ensure you go suited and booted to your interview; white shirt, tie, jacket, polished shoes, tights for ladies!!
- Turn your mobile phone off!
- Feel free to take in any notes and a paper and pen- this will make you appear prepared and will help you along if nerves get the better of you.
- Speak clearly and make sure you actually answer the question that has been asked.
- If asked about your weaknesses do your best to turn these in to a strength.
- Maintain eye contact with your Interviewer.
- Make sure you build up a good rapport with your Interviewer.
- Unless you are going for a sales based role, try not to discuss salary or benefits at the interview.
- Never ask about sick/maternity/dependent benefits.
- Be confident but ensure you listen to the Interviewer and do not appear conceited.
- However badly you may have been treated, try to give justified reasons for leaving previous roles and do not say anything detrimental about your previous employers.



Questions for you to ask...

- Why is the position currently available?
- Are induction and training programs available?
- What would my day to day duties involved?
- What are the main objectives of the position? What support will the Company give me to enable me to achieve these objectives?
- What is the setup of the current team?
- How long has the company been established, any company growth or expansion plans?
- Are there any opportunities to progress for the right candidate?
- Who are your main competitors?
- What is the turnover of staff like throughout the Company?
- How long have you (interviewer) been with the Company? What do you particularly like about working here?
- Do you have any reservations about myself?

Questions the Interviewer may ask you...

- Strengths & Weaknesses
- Why do they want the job?
- What do they know about the company?
- Examples of Customer Service and how they have handled situations
- Aspirations / Where do they see themselves in 5 years?
- If they were an animal what would they be and why?
- What do you want to achieve in life?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- What did you learn most in your last job?
- If I obtained a reference from your last employer what would it say?
- How do you spend your free time?
- Of all the jobs you have done, which did you enjoy the most and why?
- What has been the most difficult career decision you have had to make?
- What is your greatest achievement to date?
- What motivates / de motivates you?
- What makes you angry / frustrated?
- Tell me about yourself
- How would you deal with an irate customer?
- How would you persuade your current Manager to spend money on new equipment?
- What major challenges did you face in your previous role? And how did you overcome them?
- What are your salary requirements?
- Tell me about any issues you've had with a previous boss?

Competency Based Questions...

Some interviewers will conduct a competency based interview. During this process they will be testing you on the main competencies of the job, and many will even score your answers out of 5 or 10.

Make sure that when answering competency based questions you follow the below structure:-

Situation: Describe the situation you found yourself in at the time, be informative and do not waffle!

Action: What action did you take to solve/ overcome the problem/ situation?

Result: What was the outcome of your actions? Did this solve a problem? Or leave you with a happy customer? Did this save or make the Company any money? The "Result" element is the one usually forgotten by candidates and can mean that you lose out on crucial points.

Examples of Competency Questions:-

Resilience: What have been the principle challenges you have faced at work? How did you handle them?

Customer Orientation: Describe a time when you have gone above and beyond to deliver an exceptional level of customer service.

Team working: Describe a time where you have had to influence or support others in your team.

Flexibility: Describe a time you have been given a new responsibility at work. How did you adapt to this?

Problem Solving: Give an example of a difficult situation you have been faced with at work. How did you overcome this?

Results focused: How successful were you in your previous role? How was this measured?

Planning: Tell me how you cope with a heavy workload.

Self-Motivation: What motivates you? Do you set yourself personal targets at work