

## Interview checklist

This helpful checklist will make you shine before you have even started your interview – and trust us, the employer will notice the effort you have put in.

- Where will the interview take place?
- How do you get there?
- Do you need to bring identification?
- What type of interview will it be?
- What is the name and title of your interviewer/interviewers?
- How long will the interview take?
- Do you need to prepare anything for the interview?
- Will there be any tests involved?
- Will there be further interviews?

Prior to the interview you must have read the job spec and fully understand the role and what the responsibilities are.

You must also research the company, looking at their website and understanding what the company do and where they have come from, every company will ask you what you know about their business. They don't need you to recite their website to them, they just want to know you have prepared for the interview so note down a few facts about them. When you have given the interviewer your understanding of the role and company you can ask them to tell you more, e.g. I would love to hear more about the company and what it is like to work here.

## What not to do at an interview

Firstly congratulations you have an interview! The job could easily be yours, so long as you don't fall at the final hurdles.

Everyone flusters an interview at some stage, but with a little preparation you can avoid falling foul of these common interview blunders:

- Not being prepared – You might have the skills to do the job but do you know the how the company operates? Check the About Us link on the company website and read their mission statement. Find out who the competition and major players in the market are. Find out interesting facts that might not be on their website. Do they have Twitter or Face book page and if so how may followers. When were they last in the news?
- Turning up late – Unless you have a very good excuse and ring ahead to rearrange, turning up late for an appointment will not endear you to any employer.

- First Impressions Count – From the moment you enter the company premises your interview begins. Be professional and friendly to everyone you meet. You may be working with these people shortly.
- Dressing inappropriately – While smart casual might be the current trend, a suit is still proper business dress for interviews. It's all about first impressions. Make sure your suit is clean and you look immaculate. Women should wear a buttoned up blouse, shoes polished and if you smoke avoid having a cigarette before an interview.
- Fidgeting with unnecessary props – Mobile phones, nail files and chewing gum all have one thing in common – they don't belong at the interview table.
- Poor body language - Eye contact, good posture, a cheerful demeanour and a firm handshake will take you far in this world, including at an interview.
- Poor answering and rambling – Take time to think before you answer questions. Avoid bumbling to an uncomfortable halt - it doesn't inspire confidence.
- Being negative about current employer – Never complain about your current employer no matter how despotic or ineffectual they are. Badmouthing won't reflect well on you.
- Not asking questions – Employers want to see you're interested enough to hear more about the post or company and will look kindly on any well placed questions.
- Lying on your CV – Things have a habit of rising to the surface sooner or later. A fabrication about your work or education record could damage your reputation in the long run.
- Getting personal or too familiar – Avoid giving sob stories about how much you need the job due to the mountain of debt you've accrued or a recent personal tragedy.
- Discussing money or time off – Unless an offer is put on the table it's not advisable to discuss money or future working and holiday arrangements.
- Flirting – You're looking for a job not a date. Don't behave in a conceited or over familiar manner, it's not a good look no matter how much you fancy your chances.
- Cursing – Using foul and inappropriate language is generally not acceptable at any time in the workplace, so, at an interview it isn't appropriate
- Cutting the interview short – You may have a busy day planned, but make sure you allocate enough time for an interview to run over.

Every Interview is different however below are some of the most frequently asked questions which it is worth preparing for. Being honest and open is fundamental in any interview situation.

1. Tell me about yourself

The interviewer doesn't want to know if you're a cat person. Talk briefly about your employment history achievements to date.

2. Why do you want to work for us?

A little research and you'll be able to talk compellingly about the business and how you can impact on it and how they can impact your career.

3. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Talk about strengths that satisfy the selection criteria, giving reasons why you have that strength, e.g. I feel I have great communication skills, in my current role I...

Everyone has weaknesses but what they want to hear is how you have overcome your weakness, e.g. I have previously struggled with organising my day, however now I do a day plan to ensure I work effectively and get all tasks completed.

4. What skills do you feel you will bring to the role?

When answering this question ensure you have read the job spec and understand what skills they would like someone to have for the role, think about your own experience and pick 3 relevant skills you feel you have. When giving your answer always give an example of why you have this skill, relating it to your previous experience/role.

5. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Research the company structure and discuss your career aspirations. Be realistic and honest. If you are not looking for progression but simply a steady role that you will enjoy say so.

6. What is your greatest achievement?

Use an example relevant to the role you are interviewing for. I.e.) if a sales role discuss over achieving targets and if a secretarial role discuss how you helped a department reach an important deadline.

7. What are your salary expectations?

Say what you are currently in your present role and within the salary banding you have discussed with your consultant.

8. Do you have any questions for us?

Use this opportunity to build rapport, referring back to a key point in the interview and developing it.

Ask about training and development opportunities.

Ask about the people and team you would be working with, what are they like?

What challenges do think I may face in my first few months in the role?



What is the next stage in the process?

When might I hear some feedback?

Is there anything we have discussed in the interview you would like me to elaborate further on?

Most importantly thank your interviewer/s for their time, tell them that you are interested in the position, giving 3 reasons why you are interested in the opportunity they have on offer and tell them you hope they give you the opportunity to join the business