



THE SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

ORGANISE YOURSELF

In most cases you will be notified that you have got through to the interview stage a few days in advance. You can use this time to prepare – and the more prepared you are the fewer nerves you will have. We will give you detailed information on the company, although reference libraries and the Internet are all good sources of information, which we STRONGLY encourage you to investigate. Every company will welcome the fact that you have studied them before attending the interview. Do not be afraid to let them know this, as it shows initiative and your interest in the company.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

It is vital that you find out where the employer is based – it seems obvious but if you can visit their office prior to your interview you will know exactly how long your journey will take and their exact location, particularly if you rely on public transport. Arriving late will give the worst impression possible – better to be 10 minutes early than 5 minutes late. In addition, always ensure that you have enough change for a parking meter (if appropriate), as asking to leave an interview to feed the meter will not create a favourable impression.

CONFIDENCE

Confident people inspire confidence in others. If you appear confident in your ability to do the job, the employer is likely to believe that you can. It is also important not to go to the other extreme and appear over confident, as you will come across as too pushy.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Bear in mind that interviews vary enormously. You may be asked to sit an aptitude test or prove that you have the necessary skills for the job by submitting a relevant example. The interview itself may be a quick, informal chat or it could involve a panel of interviewers all firing questions.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

How you present yourself speaks volumes to the interviewer. You do not have to wear the latest designer suit or the trendiest fashion accessory, but for both men and women smart and clean attire is a pre-requisite. Always try and wear a suit, keeping the colour as neutral as possible. If possible have your suit cleaned prior to your interview. Always polish your shoes and make sure fingernails are clean. Clean and tidy hair is a must, so if you have long hair, tie it back to avoid it flopping in front of your face. Overpowering aftershave and perfume can also be very off putting, so be careful. For women, do not wear too much make up or jewellery. For men that wear jewellery, once again, not too much and select a conservative tie – no bright reds or Disney characters!

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FIRST IMPRESSION

As you'll be waiting in reception prior to your interview, there will more than likely be a selection of company brochures to hand, which we would suggest you read to bring you up to date with any new releases relating to the company. On meeting your interviewer(s) engage a welcoming smile, extending your hand to exchange a formal greeting. In the event they do not offer this gesture, don't be afraid to take control and offer your hand. Remember that 70% of a person's impression is formed within the first 15 seconds.

COMMUNICATION

Speak clearly; look the interviewer(s) in the eye(s). Answer your questions honestly but under NO circumstances say anything detrimental about your current or previous employers. Always be positive and ensure that answers consist of more than a yes or no answer, giving examples where possible.

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Probably the most hated questions at an interview, but also the most effective. Responding to a question about your 'strengths' is quite straight forward; think about all your best qualities (e.g. hard working, conscientious, honest, etc.). If you're still unsure, ask your friends and family what they think are your good points!

With regards to weaknesses, it is human nature that when asked a negative question we all reply with a negative response. However, that is the last thing you should do! Try to briefly explain what you do to overcome this situation.

You will probably have come across a difficult situation at work at some point. Think about how you handled it and how it was resolved. Ensure it was a work-based problem that did not originate with you and keep your answer simple and to the point.

HINTS & TIPS

Be smart and think about why you want to work for this company. Employers want to know that you have thought about why you want to work there so ensure that you do your research and start by looking at their website.

Simple interview pointers:

- Research the company by visiting their website and read about their competitors.
- Write down 5 points you have learnt about the business that you can share to the employer.
- List 3 questions that you would like to ask the employer either about the job itself or their own experiences as this is a personable touch.
- Print your CV and the job description making clear comparisons between your skills/responsibilities and the job you are being interviewed for.
- Listen to the interviewer; take with you a pen and paper to make notes about any additional information you receive on the day.
- Enjoy yourself don't let the nerves get the better of you.

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CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

Probably one of the most difficult questions in any interview comes at the end, with the classic 'do you have any questions to ask?' Here is a selection:

- How many people are you interviewing for the position?
- Will you be undertaking more than one interview?
- Are there any internal candidates interested in the position?
- When would you ideally like someone to start?
- How long was the last post-holder in the position?
- Can you tell me about the company culture?
- How long has the interviewer worked for the company?
- What makes them a good company to work for?
- How do my skills and experience meet the requirements of the role?
- What is the next stage following the interview?

And finally..... the very best of luck with your interview! Please contact us afterwards to talk about how you feel it went as your feedback is important to us.