

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Preparation is key to a successful interview. This document is designed to help you understand, prepare and execute a job interview so that you can maximise your chances of success. We will outline an overview of the whole process, including how to highlight your strong points and recognise the pitfalls.

Common Interview Questions

The questions below are a sample of the subjects you could be asked, they may be phrased in a variety of ways. We recommend that you study a job description closely to highlight the key skills required, as your knowledge of these will be specifically tested in the meeting.

1. Tell me about your qualifications for this job?
2. In what way do you think that you can contribute to our company/department?
3. What are your day to day responsibilities?
4. What is your particular responsibility within the product, project or communications life cycle?
5. Tell me about your influencing and negotiation skills - both externally and internally.
6. Tell me about a time when you tried and failed.
7. Tell me about yourself.
8. Tell us about your analytical skills.
9. What are your short and long term goals?
10. What can you add to what we have already discussed that would make us want to hire you?
11. What do you want from us?
12. What is your biggest weakness/strength?
13. What motivates you?
14. What things make a good team member?
15. Why do you want to change jobs?
16. Why do you want to leave your current position so soon?
17. How would you deal with an unhappy or frustrated employee?
18. What makes a good manager?
19. What do you do at weekends? / Tell me about your interests?
20. Why did you choose this career?
21. What difficulties and challenges do you foresee in making this move?
22. How will you overcome these?
23. Would you relocate?

Common Mistakes

It is important to remember that you will be assessed throughout the whole process and that negative aspects as well as positive factors will build the complete picture of you in the interviewer's mind. An interview is a very short period in which to make a positive impact so we have detailed some of the most common mistakes made by candidates.

1. Poor personal appearance.
2. Lack of interest and enthusiasm: Passive and indifferent.
3. Over emphasis on money.
4. Condemnation of past employers.
5. Failure to maintain eye contact when conversing.
6. Limp handshake.
7. Unwillingness to relocate.

8. Late arrival at interview.
9. Failure to express appreciation of interviewer's time.
10. Failure to ask sensible questions about the job.
11. Indefinite response to questions.
12. Overbearing, over aggressive, conceited with superiority or "know it all" complex.
13. Inability to express self clearly: poor voice, diction, grammar.
14. Lack of planning for career: no purpose and goals.
15. Lack of confidence and poise.
16. Expectations set too high.
17. Makes excuses, evasive.
18. Lack of tact, courtesy, maturity, or vitality.
19. Coming across as "shopping around".
20. Lack of demonstrable interest in the company/industry.
21. Low moral standards.
22. Cynical.
23. Lazy.
24. Intolerant: strong prejudices.
25. Narrow interests.
26. Inability to take criticism.
27. Lack of preparation.

Be Prepared

As mentioned earlier, preparation is vital if you are to be successful at interview. It may help to jot down a few notes to formalise your thoughts prior to a meeting; it will help you to remember key facts, such as major accomplishments, and serious questions or concerns. We have outlined some headings that may help you:

Day, Date and Time:

Company:

Address:

Name:

Title:

Telephone:

Major Achievements - work related and non-work related:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Management or Work Style:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Things the interviewer needs to know about me:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Reasons I left last job and want to leave current job:

- 1.
- 2.

Answers to difficult questions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My Strengths/Weaknesses:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Questions to ask the interviewer:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The value I can add to this role:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

It is important to do some homework and find out some facts about your current, former and potential employer so that you appear to have a genuine interest in your chosen career.

Good sources of information are:

- Annual Reports
- Company Websites

In most interviews, you will be offered the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the meeting. The key to interviews is enthusiasm and this is bred through asking the interviewer questions - try and turn the interview around. Always prepare questions to ask, not doing this may send the message that you have no independent thought process. Do not ask questions that are directly answered on the employer's web site and/or any literature provided in advance of the meeting. This would simply reveal that you have not prepared for the interview and that you are wasting the interviewer's time.

Never ask about salary and benefits issues until the employer raises those subjects.

If you are having trouble developing questions then consider the following as food for thought: (However, don't ask a question if you are not truly interested in the answer - it will appear obvious to the interviewer.)

1. Where are the company's strengths and weaknesses compared to its competition?
2. Could you explain the organisational structure?
3. How will my responsibilities and performance be measured? By whom?
4. What are the KPIs for this position?
5. What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
6. What will be the key projects I will be involved in?



7. What is the short and long term strategy of the company? How will this position fit into this strategy and where can I influence this?
8. Could you describe your company's style and type of employee who fits well with it?
9. What is the working atmosphere and culture of the company and team?
10. What are some of the skills necessary for someone to succeed in this job?
11. What is the company's policy on training?
12. Will there be opportunities for career progression in the company?
13. What particular computer systems and software do you use?
14. What percentage of routine, detailed work will I encounter?
15. How much opportunity is there to see the end result of my efforts?
16. How much opportunity will I have for decision-making?
17. Can you describe an ideal employee?
18. What is the policy on transfer overseas?

Finally...

- DO plan to arrive a few minutes early for an interview. If you do feel you might be late, endeavour to make the interviewer aware.
- DO greet the interviewer by their title and surname, ensuring that you know the correct pronunciation and shake hands firmly.
- DO wait to be offered a seat.
- DO maintain good eye contact, look interested and be a good listener.
- DO try to ascertain quickly the key requirements of the role so you might highlight your relevant skills and practical experience.
- DO convey your thoughts with clarity and in a factual and sincere manner.
- DO appear determined to get the job. Even if the role does not appear ideal, do not close the door on the opportunity. It is always better to choose the right job for you from a selection of roles rather than only one and the employer may cross-sell you internally to a more suitable opportunity.
- DO NOT lie; your past has a knack of catching up with you.
- DO NOT "waffle" or be controversial. Answer questions as concisely as possible and try to steer away from the usual emotive topics such as politics and religion.
- If you have an interest in the position then enquire about the next stage of the process.
- If you are offered the position by the interviewer and you feel you need time to consider the opportunity, be polite and tactful and arrange a set date/time that you can provide an answer. If the role is right for you then you can accept the verbal offer.