



Interview Tips

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Preparation

Preparation is the first essential step towards conducting a successful interview. Employers are ever amazed at the number of candidates who do not prepare themselves for interview, possessing little or no information about the company for which they are being interviewed.

Dress

Dress in a smart business suit with a clean, ironed shirt and tie (or blouse) and dark shoes. Do not wear casual clothes even if you know that it is company policy.

Ensure that you know the following things

1. The exact time and location of the interview, route, parking etc and how long it will take to get there.
2. The interviewer's correct title and pronunciation of his or her full name.
3. Specific facts about the company -
 - > the company's mission
 - > the market in which it operates
 - > its plant, office or store locations
 - > its products and services
 - > its recent business growth
 - > its growth potential for the future

There are also a number of helpful documents and research publications

- > The company's website
 - > The company's annual reports
 - > Kompass
 - > Textile
 - > Library
 - > The Stock Exchange Research Handbook
 - > Hambros Company Guide
4. Facts and figures about your present or former employer. Refresh your memory on this as you will be expected to know a lot about a company for which you have previously worked.
 5. Questions to ask the interviewer. Remember that an interview is a two way street. The interviewer will try to determine through questioning whether you are the right person for a specific job. Likewise, you must determine through questioning whether this potential employer will provide the opportunity for career development that you seek. Besides this, the interviewer will be impressed by your interest in the company and by your articulation of intelligent questions.

Some questions you might ask include

- Can you give me a detailed description of the position?
- Why has the position become available? What is the culture of the company?
- What is the culture of the company?
- What induction/training programme is there?
- What kinds of people have previously been successful in the company?
- What advanced training programmes are available for those who demonstrate ability?
- What plans has the company for future development?
- Which are the company's best selling products or services?
- What is the next step?

Interview Techniques

During the interview, you will be assessed for your strengths and weaknesses/areas for development. In addition to this, specific personal characteristics will be probed, such as attitude, aptitude, stability, motivation and maturity.

Some interview dos and don'ts follow

Can you give me a detailed description of the position?

- DO arrive on time or a few minutes early. Late arrival for a job interview is never excusable.
- DO fill out any application forms neatly and completely. If you have a personal resume, be sure that the person to whom you release it is the person who will actually do the hiring.
- DO greet the interviewer by his or her title and surname. If you are not sure of the name pronunciation, ask the interviewer to repeat it.
- DO shake hands firmly.
- DO wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright in your chair and look alert and interested at all times.
- 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.
- DO smile.
- DO look the interviewer in the eye.
- DO follow the interviewer's leads. Try, however, to obtain a full description of the position and duties it incorporates at an early stage so that you can relay your appropriate background and skills accordingly.
- DO make sure that your good points get across to the interviewer in a concise, factual and sincere manner. Waffle will get you nowhere. Bear in mind that only you can sell yourself and make the interviewer aware of the benefits that you can offer to the organisation.
- DO always conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are discussing. Never close the door on opportunity. It is better to be in a position where you can choose from a number of offers - rather than only one.
- DON'T smoke even if the interviewer smokes and offers you a cigarette.
- DON'T answer questions with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. Explain yourself whenever possible. Describe those things about yourself that relate to the position on offer.
- DON'T lie. Answer questions truthfully, frankly and as close to the point as possible.
- DON'T make derogatory remarks about your present or former employers.
- DON'T 'over answer' questions. The interviewer may steer the conversation into politics or economics, which can be controversial topics. It is best to respond to such issues honestly, yet trying not to say more than is necessary.
- 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.

Be prepared to answer questions such as

- › Why did you choose a career in accountancy/IT/tax/banking?
- › What kind of job are you seeking?
- › What is your technical experience?
- › Why would you like to work for our company?
- › What do you want to be doing in your career five years from now?
- › When was your last salary review?
- › What style of management gets the best from you?
- › What interests you about our product/service?
- › What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?
- › Which job did you enjoy the most and why?
- › What have you done that shows initiative in your career?
- › What are your major weaknesses and what are your strengths?
- › What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
- › Are you willing to relocate?
- › What are your hobbies?
- › What does 'teamwork' mean to you?

Negative factors to avoid

During the course of the interview, the interviewer will be evaluating your negative attributes as well as your positive ones.

Listed below are some negative traits that are frequently evaluated during the course of an interview and which most often lead to rejection.

- › Poor personal appearance
- › Overbearing, aggressive, conceited 'superiority complex' - 'know it all' attitude
- › Inability to express thoughts clearly - poor diction or grammar
- › Lack of career planning - no purpose or goals or foresight
- › Lack of interest and enthusiasm - passive and indifferent
- › Lack of confidence - nervousness
- › Over-emphasis on money - interested only in remuneration
- › Condemnation of past employers
- › Failure to look the interviewer in the eye
- › Limp handshake
- › Failure to ask good questions about the job and company
- › Lack of interview preparation - failure to research the company - resulting in an inability to ask intelligent questions

Closing the Interview

If you are interested in the position enquire about the next interview stage. If the interview offers the position to you and you want it, accept on the spot. If you wish for some time to think it over, be courteous and tactful in asking for that time. Set a definite date on which you can provide an answer.

DON'T be too discouraged if no definite offer is made nor a specific salary discussed. The interviewer will probably want to consult colleagues or interview other candidates (or both) before making a decision.

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.

THANK the interviewer for the time spent with you.