

Interview Advice

Interviews

You will need to do a bit of homework before going to the interview – it is like any meeting – better to be prepared. Interviews are always different, some formal, some informal. Relax, be yourself and enjoy it – that's the important thing.

Information needed

Ensure you know who you will be meeting & the date & time of the interview as well as company name, interviewer/title, full address, phone number, clear directions and where to park or the nearest station – that way you will not be late.

Preparation

Preparation is one of the most important factors that can determine your success at interview. Demonstrating that you have done the appropriate research will show that you are interested and committed to getting this job and can reliably complete tasks. Failing to adequately research the company will most likely lead to an immediate no.

So, how should you go about your preparation?

1. Website:

About Us - This section of an employer's site will give you valuable information about the company's culture and what their ambitions are. Find things about the company that you particularly like – as interest in these areas will come across as genuine enthusiasm.

Products - Use this area to get to grips with what your prospective employers do. It may sound obvious, but having a clear understanding of the products or services will impress the manager interviewing you, yet failing to provide an adequate answer to the question, "*so, what do we do?*" could decide the interview then and there.

2. Job Description

Responsibilities – Get to grips with what you'll be doing in the role. It's important to understand what your day-day responsibilities will be so that you can explain how your background will enable you to perform in this role.

Requirements – Understand what they need to see in order to offer you the position. This is a good opportunity to discuss what the employer is looking for with your consultant. The fact that they are bringing you in for a face-face means that you have the required skills on paper. Now you need to back that up. Study the job description's requirements to understand what they want to see from you.

3. Yourself

Your Response – Make sure you run over your CV and are able to justify any gaps and explain the reason you left your previous company, or why you are looking to leave now. This is an important step because your prospective employer is assessing how serious you are about moving company whilst looking for any red flags.

Your Questions – An interview is a two way assessment. On the one hand, you are trying to sell your experience and ability to the employer but if they feel you are the right person for the job, then it is up to them to sell the role so that you would consider accepting an offer.

Therefore, it is in your interest to ask questions. If you don't ask questions this may come across as not being interested – so do have some prepared and write them down so you don't forget them. It's perfectly ok to refer to this written list during the interview.

4. Plan and organise

Find out the most suitable way to get to the company and make sure you have enough time to get there if there is bad traffic or a problem with transport. There is no harm in getting to an interview early and it will give you time to check out the surroundings, but if you arrive early don't assume they can see you early. It would be better to wait in the car park until just a few minutes before the schedule time.

Make sure that you have everything you will need prepared before the day of the interview. If you are attending a technical interview then gather some examples of previous work:

- for a mechanical role bring a portfolio
- for a software role familiarise yourself with the language they develop in
- If you have prepared a presentation then make sure it is on a USB stick and you have a file saved as an attachment in your emails.

5. Dress code

The dress code can differ from interview to interview therefore it's worth checking with your consultant. As a general rule it's going to be a suit.

Women - Skirt or trousers. Black, navy, brown, grey or a lighter plain colour are perfectly fine. Plain colours are preferred - try to avoid large patterns. Keep shoes formal and smart and heels at a sensible height. Make sure they are polished – an easy trap to fall into is to look smart only from the ankles up! A plain blouse or one with a simple stripe is a good option.

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Men – Dark, smart colours are always a good idea. Shoes should be brown or black. Avoid loud patterns on ties that can distract an interviewer. You want your personality and ability to shine through not your fashion choices. It's always easiest to go with a plain, white shirt and a plain single-coloured tie and socks.

On some occasions you'll be asked to dress business casual. This means that causal trousers and blazers can be worn. Feel free to mix and match, leave the tie at home and wear less formal shoes. However, no trainers, no light jeans, and not t-shirts. You still need to look smart and presentable.

Do one quick check to see if there are any holes/creases in your clothes and that your shoes are polished.

6. Get some rest

Make sure you get enough sleep the night before. That way you should be at your best for the interview. It's ok to feel slightly nervous but try to enjoy it, this is an opportunity to show someone what you can do and remember that you have been selected. They want to see you.