

Interview Technique

Preparing for your Interview

The Basics:

Before preparing for any interview, make sure that your Consultant at Onside Appointments has provided you with the following:

- Time and Date of the Interview
- Interviewer's Name
- Interviewer's Position within the Company
- Interview Location – along with directions, map, train routes etc.
- Interview Format (e.g. is there a technical test?)
- Name of the company
- Job title and formal Job Description

The Company:

Prior to your interview, it is crucial to understand exactly what the company does, and to consider why you would like to work for them. Interviewers want to see that, as well as being interested in the nitty gritty of the job itself, you will be a company-focussed individual who will fit the corporate culture.

There are many ways that you can research a company – have a good look through the corporate website, search on Google and financial and media sites to seek the latest company news, even speak to friends who might be in the same industry to get a feeling for the company.

Key things to consider:

- What do the company actually do?
- What role would you be playing in the company's operations?
- What is the size of the company?
- Have the company been in the papers recently or made any press announcements?
- Why would you be interested in joining the company? (This is almost always asked in interviews, and so this is a key question to consider).

The Position:

You should have been given an in-depth briefing by your consultant about the position you are going for; the skills required, the everyday tasks, specific projects you may be working on. You should also have a formal job description which you can refer to.

Key things to consider:

- Do you understand the position you are going for?
- What are the day to day tasks of the role?
- Are there specific projects you will be working on?
- What are the essential skills mentioned in the job description?
- What are the desirable skills?
- Where have you demonstrated these skills? Print off a copy of the job description and note down examples of where you have.
- If the job description mentions skills which you do not have, maybe you could think of similar or transferable skills, or traits which may be useful, such as the ability to learn new skills rapidly. Demonstrate where you have done this before.
- What are your major selling points? Why would you be a good appointment?
- Finally, why do you want the position? Why would this be a good career move for you, and why would you enjoy the role?

The Interview Itself

Prior to the interview:

- Print off 2 or 3 copies of your CV, and a copy of the job description. Take these along in a smart folder.
- Ensure that you have the contact number for your consultant at Onside Appointments in case of an emergency.
- Make sure that you are smartly dressed – even if the company adopts a casual dress code, you want to show that you have made an effort.
- Leave early! Aim to find the building at least 20 minutes prior to the interview, so that you have time to compose yourself before the start.
- Do not make your way into the building too early – 10 minutes beforehand is ideal. If you turn up too early, the interviewer may feel under pressure to come and see you sooner, and they may not like the feeling of being rushed.
- Arriving early also gives you time to have a stroll around the surrounding area – is this somewhere you can see yourself working?

Body Language:

- Stand up when the interviewer enters the room.
- Greet them with a firm handshake.
- Smile, and make regular eye contact.
- Speak clearly, and listen carefully.
- Do your best to relax – do not worry if you are nervous, the interviewer will understand.

During the interview:

- When answering questions, speak clearly, and take your time. You should answer questions succinctly, and avoid the temptation to waffle!
- Don't just say you have a skill or characteristic, give an example of where you have actually demonstrated this in the past.
- Providing examples shows the interviewer that you have had a good think about the position prior to the interview. It also highlights how appointing you could benefit the team and the company.
- Try and convey that you are a positive, enthusiastic candidate with a can-do attitude.
- It is important to talk in positive terms about your current or previous employer.
- Make sure that by the end of the interview, the client is clear as to what your major selling points are.

Common interview questions (consider these as part of your interview preparation):

- Why would you like to work for our company?
- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you interested in this position?
- Why do you want to leave your current employer?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Where do you want to be in 5 years time?
- What are your greatest achievements to date?
- How would your friends describe you?
- Why would you be suited to this job?

Prepare a few questions yourself:

- The best interviews are friendly conversations, not one-way interrogations. Questions are a great way to demonstrate your enthusiasm for a particular company and position, and the answers provided will be of great benefit when it comes to making important career decisions.
- So ask the interviewer some questions of your own – about the company and the team as well as the position itself. Don't feel that you have to wait until the end of the interview to ask questions; if the interviewer mentions something which interests you, then feel free to ask a question at the time (being careful not to interrupt).

At the end of the Interview:

- If you like the sound of the position and the company, let the interviewer know.
- Without putting the interviewer on the spot, ask whether they believe you would be a strong candidate for the position.
- You can also ask when you might receive feedback, and what the next stage in the interview process would be. Remember not to be too pushy, but do let them know you are keen!
- Part with a firm handshake, and thank the interviewer for their time.
- When you have left the building, call your consultant at Onside Appointments to let them know how the interview went.