



## Preparing for your interview

If you are invited to an interview it means you have passed the first hurdle. It is important to prepare yourself for the interview to make sure you make the most of the opportunity. It may be useful to plan your journey to make sure you get to the interview at least 15 minutes early.

The vast majority of job interviews are perfectly straightforward - you attend the interview and everything goes well, but there are a few simple common sense rules that you should always remember for your own safety.

### Plan for the interview:

- Make sure you have researched your prospective employer - your consultant will provide you with a lot of this information, but it is always best to do your own.
- Ensure you know who will be interviewing you and the format of the interview.
- Will there be a test to take? Find out before the interview and ask for an example of the things you'll be asked to do.
- If you have a disability, ensure your consultant knows if you require any particular arrangements. Check the day before to ensure details have been noted prior to your arrival.

### Think about what you will wear:

- Give yourself plenty of time to decide what to wear and get the clothes ready the day before.
- If you look good it will help you feel good!

### Plan your journey:

- Consider a "dummy run" before the day of the interview or check how long the journey will take.
- Ask your consultant for a map and directions.
- Plan an alternative means of getting there and be prepared for the unexpected.
- If you have a disability, check there are no obstacles which could cause you problems or delays.

### Prepare for questions you might be asked:

The following is a list of ten questions you may be asked at an interview. Some suggestions are given which you may like to use to prepare your own answer. Thorough preparation will give you the confidence to do your best at an interview.

- |                                             |                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Why do you want to work here?</i>     | 6. <i>What makes a good team member?</i>                      |
| 2. <i>Why did you leave your last job?</i>  | 7. <i>How do you cope with pressure?</i>                      |
| 3. <i>What did you do in your last job?</i> | 8. <i>What are your strengths and weaknesses?</i>             |
| 4. <i>Why should I take you on?</i>         | 9. <i>What would you like to be doing in five years time?</i> |
| 5. <i>Aren't you over-qualified?</i>        | 10. <i>Do you have any questions?</i>                         |

It is almost always asked at the interview. You could ask:

- |                                             |                                          |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Why do you want to work here?</i>     | 4. <i>Why should I take you on?</i>      |
| 2. <i>Why did you leave your last job?</i>  | 5. <i>Aren't you over-qualified?</i>     |
| 3. <i>What did you do in your last job?</i> | 6. <i>What makes a good team member?</i> |

### And finally:

- Try to get a good night's sleep!



## The day of your interview

### Before Leaving:

- Give yourself plenty of time to get ready.
- If you are unavoidably delayed, telephone immediately to explain and apologise, get your consultant to call the client and let them know.

### On Arrival:

- Aim to arrive about 15 minutes before the interview time.
- Give your name to the receptionist or whoever is there to greet you.
- Try to relax and keep calm.
- Chat to the receptionist or whoever greets you, before going into the interview.

This will ensure that the first thing you say isn't croaked out because you haven't spoken to anyone for over an hour!

## Your interview

You will make an impression in the first few minutes. It takes this time for people to assess someone and store this information. Once an impression has been formed, it's seldom changed. It's important to make first impression work for you.

Here are some tips which may help:

### DO

- enter the room confidently
- shake hands firmly - and introduce yourself
- be polite and friendly - look the interviewer straight in the eye as soon as you enter the room
- look interested - ask questions as well as answering
- answer questions as fully as you can - avoid yes and no answers
- provide examples to prove your achievements
- chat to the receptionist or whoever greets you, before going into the interview.
- tell the truth
- speak clearly
- sell yourself - get your good points across/be positive
- give a friendly smile (if in doubt don't - it is better to look serious than insincere)
- provide examples to prove your achievements

### DON'T

- sit until invited
- fidget and slouch in the chair
- smoke
- swear (even mildly)
- criticise former employers
- interrupt
- draw attention to your weaknesses
- go over the top - stay calm and stick to the facts. Remember, most employers like:
  - *people who listen*
  - *people who answer questions with examples*
  - *people who are brief in the right places*
  - *people who come prepared*
  - *people who appear confident*



### After the interview

While it is still fresh in your mind, call your consultant and give them feedback on how the interview went:

- What went well?
- What went badly?
- Were there any questions you found difficult and why?
- What training will I do, if any?
- Would you go back if asked?
- Would you accept the job if offered?

Use a checklist to help you identify areas for improvement. Did you:

- Arrive on time
- Dress appropriately
- Greet the interviewer politely
- Sit well and avoid fidgeting
- Answer the questions fully enough
- Sell yourself - stress why you were the best person for the
- Describe your previous duties well
- Look at the interviewer and smile occasionally
- Thank the interviewer for taking the time to see you