

Tips on Preparation for Interview

The 2 main areas that have to be covered during preparation are information about:

- The Job
- The Company/University/Institution

The Job

- Company/University/Institution history
- Location, parking, bus/train routes
- Culture and ethos of Company/University/Institution. Use relevant brochures/ websites
- What they do and what is their expertise
- Possible competition
- Structure
- Future plans

Skills

- Relate your skills to the needs of the job
- Find sell points for your experience and knowledge to the job

Interview Techniques

Body Language

The ability to get along with other people is a very important life skill – and this equally applies when it comes to making the right impression in an interview.

If you want to make the right impression, you should:

- Be friendly – make an effort to smile and talk
- Try not to overdo the talking – allow others to have their say
- Become a good listener – it is a good way of complementing other people and gaining their respect
- Body language

The overall message your body conveys is known as body language firstly in communicating attitudes and emotions e.g. crossing your arms can mean that you are feeling defensive. Secondly, in supporting and maintaining conversation; we speak with our voice, but we converse with our whole bodies. The position of the body can communicate whether you are feeling friendly or hostile. Eyes are the most revealing and accurate of communication signs; to build rapport with an interviewer, your eyes should meet 60% to 70% of the time. Facial expressions can convey what you are thinking and are often linked to speech.

Do's and Don'ts of Body Language

Do's

- Do walk into the interview with a smile
- Do shake hands firmly and briefly
- Do point your feet towards the interviewer. It is a sign that you are interested in what they are saying
- Do look at the interviewer when you are speaking to him/her

Don'ts

- Don't walk in with your hands in your pocket, this can look insolent or even aggressive
- Don't put your hands or fingers over your mouth when you speak. It gives the impression that you are not telling the truth.
- Don't point your finger at the interviewer. Your finger acts like a club, which you are using to try and beat the person into submission!
- Don't grip the arms of your chair – it displays a negative attitude

Making the right impression is what you want to do. Specific questions will vary from interview to interview, but you can still predict which types of questions are likely to come up. Interviewers are unlikely

to confine themselves to asking questions about work or academic achievements, so be ready to answer some personal and sensitive questions and to talk about feelings as well as facts.

Questions

You should be prepared to respond to questions and will be expected to ask some.

Questions an interviewer may ask:

Assess how prepared you are for these.

- What do they know about the company/institution etc?
- What are the reasons for leaving your current/last job?
- What do/did you like best about your job?
- What do/did you like least about your job?
- What are/were your responsibilities in your current/last job? (An average day)
- What are your career plans or what are you looking for with regards to promotional prospects?
- Where do your strengths lie? (Advise in line with what the client will want to hear)
- What are your weaknesses? (Try to turn it into a positive point i.e. something that you have now overcome or learnt from it)
- What personal qualities do you feel you can offer an employer?
- What interested you in this position?
- How do you cope under pressure? (give an example)
- How do you cope when you have to prioritise? (give an example)
- How do you work within a team? (give an example)
- How do you work using your initiative? (give an example)
- What computer packages are you familiar with and at what level?
- Why should we employ you rather than anyone else?

Questions you could ask:

- How many staff do you have?
- Do you have any other sites?
- What is the working environment like?
- How would you describe the company/university's style/culture?
- What do you do differently to make you more successful?
- Who would I be reporting to and what are they like?
- What are the team that I would be working with like?
- What type of person do you feel will fit in with the existing team?
- What other departments do you have? Will I be involved with them in any way?
- How would my day be split? What will I be doing the highest percentage of the time?
- What are the rewarding parts of my jobs?

First Impressions are very important, but so are last impressions. Try to end on a positive and confident note that they will remember you.

How to end the interview positively.

- Thank them for their time
- Tell them that you are interested and give them 3 or 4 reason why you like it.
- Tell them when you can start
- Ask how soon they can let you know or when the second interview will be.
- Shake their hand – remember to smile!
- Ask to look around if not done so already
- Ask have I done enough to convince you I really want this job?