

How to Succeed in Interviews

The importance of researching your potential employer cannot be emphasised enough. Nowadays, with so much information at our fingertips, there is no excuse not to do your homework. Probably the easiest and quickest way to access up-to-date information is via the Internet. Spend some time exploring the company's website.

If you haven't got easy access to the Internet, use more traditional methods - visit a business library and read through annual reports, or call the company and ask for information to be sent out to you.

Prepare Answers to Questions you might be asked

Prepare answers to the most frequently asked interview questions. In particular, those questions that you may find difficult to answer and work out how you will cope with them.

Try to use relevant examples that you have experienced in your personal and career life. Below are some examples of questions that may be asked.

- Why did you join your previous company? Did they live up to your expectations?
- What are you looking for in your new job?
- Why would like to work for our company?

Explain why you see the company as an attractive employer . Financial package should never be given as a reason, but things like the company culture, training programme, company structure, the ability to cross-train into different technologies or the company's reputation. These need to be relevant and well researched

- What interests you the most about our products or services?
- What specifically do you have to offer us?
- Give me a summary of your work experience?
- What were your duties and responsibilities on each job?
- Which job did you like the best, least and why?
- Why are you leaving your current position?
- What promotions have you received? Why did they promote you?
- Did you feel you progressed satisfactorily in your last job?
- What criticisms have you received in your job? How did you feel about that criticism?
- Would you be willing to work on multiple tasks under one position?
- Do you prefer to work under pressure or in a more relaxed environment?
- Give me an example of when you feel you have coped extremely well under pressure at work?
- Do you like routine work? Regular hours?
- Describe what you feel to be the ideal job for you?
- What motivates you to be successful?
- What was your greatest success? How did you achieve it?
- What has been your biggest failure?
- To what style of management do you relate best?
- Have you ever started something up from scratch?
- Where do you see yourself in 3, 5 years?

Be ambitious but realistic and have direction in your answer. If your consultant has told you that you are being interviewed at a small company where there is no room for progression, then don't say you want to be the Managing Director in 3 years

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?

This final question is particularly tricky. Obviously, you can't claim to have no weaknesses, but you don't want to stress anything too negative. Try to show your weaknesses in a positive light and give examples of where you have addressed and overcome them.

Dressing for the Interview

1. Ladies: business suit – trousers or a skirt. Plain blouse or shirt, crisply ironed. Keep jewellery and perfume to a minimum. Clean, unscuffed shoes. No piercings.
2. Men : business suit, shirt and tie are advisable. Clean, unscuffed shoes. Keep jewellery and aftershave to a minimum. No earrings. No piercings

To succeed in any interview you MUST:

- Be on time. Aim to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early giving you time to relax and get a feel for the company.
- Give a firm handshake and smile during the introduction. You must not underestimate the importance of this. It is your first impression and there is no worse start than a sloppy handshake.
- Be pleasant, poised and maintain eye contact as much as possible.
- Be aware of your body language. Don't sit with your arms folded. Try to be open and relaxed. But not so relaxed that you are laying back in your chair yawning.
- Listen carefully to questions; don't be afraid to ask for clarification and take time to think about your answers. Silences will seem a lot longer to you than they actually are.
- Be honest. You wouldn't want your employer to lie about your career and salary prospects so stick to the truth about your jobs and qualifications. These things are easily checked out.
- Always try to support your answers with examples of past achievements.
- Be clear and concise.
- Avoid saying negative things about your last or current employer.
- NEVER ask about sick pay!!!!
- Prepare questions for the interviewer.
- Thank the interviewer at the end of the interview and reiterate your interest in the position.
- Don't let the interview drag on by overselling yourself if you see signs that the interview is coming to a close.