

## **Preparing for your Interview**

*An interview can be a stressful and traumatic experience, many anxieties can be reduced by proper preparation and understanding what may be expected of you. This document aims to provide some simple pointers for those attending an interview and help you avoid some of the more basic pitfalls.*

*You are being interviewed because an employer is looking to hire you, not because they want to embarrass you or waste your time. At an interview the employer is looking to uncover your strengths and weaknesses, evaluate your intellect and the abilities that you have developed as a result of your education and past experience. They will also be interested in personal characteristics such as your motivation and the way you present yourself.*

### **A few days before your interview:**

1. Make sure that you are well informed about the company you are going to visit. We will provide you with as much data relating to the company as possible, any additional research you do via the internet, library, trade publications or friends and family could prove to be time well spent.
2. Prepare a well thought out written list of questions to take to the interview. They should relate to the company, its culture, ethos, future direction as well as questions concerning why the position is available. Also note down your interest in the position, where your skills and experience add value and why they should consider you. This preparation will help you look and feel more confident and professional at the interview and demonstrates that you are serious about considering their company as your next employer.
3. Remember that first impressions count, make sure that the appropriate attire for your interview is clean and ready to wear, your shoes are polished, hair and nails cut and manicured as necessary.
4. Ensure that you have extra copies of your resume to take with you.
5. Plan your journey to the interview allowing time for traffic congestion, train delays etc.
6. The night before, ensure you have a relaxing evening and try to get good nights sleep.

### **On the day and at the interview:**

1. It may state the obvious but, take a bath or shower when you wake up and try to have a good breakfast. If it's an afternoon interview, consider taking a fresh shirt or blouse and a can of deodorant or perfume to freshen up with before you attend. Also have a mint or some gum to freshen your breath before you arrive, but do not enter the building chewing.
2. Arrive around 15 minutes before the interview, read any company literature in the reception and take in the surroundings and environment.
3. Remember to be polite, professional and courteous to everyone you come into contact with, you never know if they might have some influence in the hiring decision.
4. If asked to complete an application form, fill it out neatly and honestly answering all sections. Remember that a good CV and a neat application form are not going to guarantee you the job, you will have to sell yourself to the potential employer by speaking for yourself, but every little bit helps.
5. When you enter the interview room there is normally a short exchange of pleasantries and ice breaking. Do not be fooled by this time, its sole purpose is to put you at ease and many interviewers view this time as very informative. The best way to get through this opening few minutes is to display a pleasant natural smile, a firm handshake and a brief exchange of words in as naturally as possible.
6. Try to establish a rapport with your interviewer(s), memorise their names and use them when replying to questions. It is never a good thing to get their names wrong, write them down if you have to.
7. Sit comfortably with both feet on the floor, lean slightly towards the interviewer to show interest.
8. Try not to create defensive barriers between yourself and the interviewer(s), like placing your briefcase on your knees, folding your arms or crossing your legs, even if you feel the need to do so.
9. Don't play with your hair or hands and keep your hands out of your pockets.
10. Maintain natural eye contact with the interviewer but don't stare like a lunatic.

11. Answer all questions clearly and directly, try not to answer with yes or no answers and don't waffle as this may lose their interest.
12. If there's more than one interviewer look at the one talking, when you are talking shift your glance from one to the other.
13. If you feel the interview is not going well don't show discouragement, you're probably not a psychic. It's not uncommon for a genuinely interested employer to discourage you to test your reaction.
14. Don't over use your hands if you are a natural gesticulator.
15. Don't squirm and fidget.
16. Occasionally nod and Mmm when the interviewers are talking to show you are listening
17. NEVER criticise your current or previous employer, colleagues or competitors in any way.
18. Don't exaggerate or lie when answering questions, in fact just don't lie at all.
19. Don't focus on your weaknesses or lack of industry experience.
20. Don't ask questions for the sake of it.
21. Don't show annoyance at the interviewer even if you have been kept waiting too long.
22. Remember your interviewers are human, some are experienced, others unseasoned and nervous too.
23. Don't ask about salary, bonuses or benefits at the initial interview unless positive the employer is interested in hiring you. If the interviewer asks what salary you want, indicate what you've earned and that you are more interested in opportunity than a specific salary at the present.
24. Ask for a business card or compliment slip from the interviewer at the end if one has not been offered.
25. Above all try to be you, try to be natural, unless of course you're naturally offensive!

*Obedying these simple rules allows the interviewer(s) to concentrate on you, not what you are doing at the interview. Body language conveys all sorts of messages and the right body language will convey the message of a well-balanced confident individual, even if on occasion you are not.*

### **Closing the interview, asking for the job offer:**

If you are interested in the position, ask for it or ask for the next interview if the situation demands. If you feel the job is worth your efforts and you want to receive an offer you could and say something like this: -

*"Mr. Employer, I'm very impressed with what I have seen here today, your company, products and the people I've met. I'm confident that I have the necessary skills to perform an excellent job for you in the position described to me. How soon will I be able to start?"*

The employer will be impressed by your enthusiasm, if the employer makes an offer, accept it even if you are uncertain, you will have time to think about it before the formal offer letter arrives.

Don't get too discouraged if no definite offer is made or salary discussed. The interviewer(s) may want to speak with other members of the company or interview other candidates before committing to a firm and final decision

### **After the interview:**

1. Contact your consultant as soon as possible to discuss how you feel the interview went.
2. Don't think you know the outcome of the interview after it is over. Offers sometimes come from interviews that people felt went horribly wrong and it is not unusual to be rejected after an interview that people felt went particularly well.
3. Prepare and send a letter of thanks to the interviewers, correctly spelling their name, title and company address, which if collected a business card or compliment slip, shouldn't be a problem.
4. Remember if you are rejected for the position not to take it personally as decisions are made over things out of your control.
5. Keep positive and don't let the interview process get you down.