



# Interview Tips

## Handling Interviews

**It's a fact that no matter how qualified you are to do the job, it's how you perform at interview that will decide whether or not the job is yours. Here are some tips on how to handle the dreaded interview.**

### Be Prepared

- Ensure you know who you are meeting and what their position is within the company.
- Can you get there on time and do you know where you are going? If necessary, do a dry run before the interview. Use tools like Google Maps and Street View.
- Make sure you have researched the company and the role – there is no excuse for not looking at their website, and ensure you can demonstrate this knowledge to the interviewer.
- Prepare appropriate questions for the interviewer.
- Pay particular attention to how you look. Ensure your outfit is smart, but comfortable and remember the detail – clean shoes, neat fingernails, for example.
- Make sure your mobile 'phone is switched off before entering the company building. If you know you have a tendency to fiddle with or check it, leave it in the car or at home.

### First Impressions Count

- Your prospective new employer is sizing you up the moment you make contact and it's not just a smart appearance that makes a positive first impression;
- How you conduct yourself at reception on arrival may have an impact so remember to treat everyone with courtesy and respect at all times.
- Remember to demonstrate confidence and smile, make eye contact and use names where appropriate.
- Use a firm handshake.
- When entering the interview room, ensure you are comfortable and have any notes and preparation to hand. If the interview

room is too warm, it is appropriate to remove your jacket but only after asking if you may do so. Whilst interviewers like their interviewees to be relaxed and confident they do not like them to be informal or presumptuous and you will certainly appear less formal without a suit jacket.

### The Interview Process

- Remember to be attentive and interested throughout. Pay attention to eye contact and smile and nod as you listen.
- Make notes where appropriate although bear in mind that it can be disconcerting to an interviewer if you are scribbling throughout the process!
- Ask the interviewer questions throughout rather than save up questions for the prompt at the end. Treat the whole process as a conversation because that's what it is. The interview will be far more natural and you will get more out of it. You will be building a rapport.
- Take your time to answer questions carefully and considered. If you do not understand the question, clarify before answering.
- If you are being interviewed by more than person, ensure you answer any questions to the person who has asked but do not exclude the others. Make eye contact with those too, drawing them into the conversation.
- Ensure you remain honest in your answers. It is not wrong to have weaknesses. The importance is to be aware of them and understand there are areas that need improvement.
- If you are aware of an area that may come up for questioning that may be uncomfortable, pre-empt it.
- Remember never to be negative about previous employers.
- At the end of the interview, thank those present for their time and shake hands.

### After the Interview

- Call your Recruitment Consultant as soon as possible after the interview with your thoughts and feelings about how it went.

---

## Typical Interview Questions You May Be Asked

- What do you know about our company?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What attracted you to this position?
- Why are you leaving your current role?
- What are you looking for from your next move?
- Tell me about yourself (Don't ramble; give a brief outline of where you are from and where you want to be going, keeping the response positive).
- What contribution would you make to our organisation?
- What would your colleagues say about you?
- What motivates you?
- Why should we hire you?
- Describe a time when you took the initiative to accomplish something.

- Tell me about a time when you worked hard but felt a great sense of achievement.
- Give an example of when you did more than was required.
- How do you handle pressure?
- What was the biggest accomplishment / failure in your last position?
- Describe a typical working week.
- Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it.
- How do you evaluate success?
- Tell me about a time when you handled a difficult situation with a colleague.
- Is there anything I haven't told you about the job or company that you would like to know?
- What are you looking for in your next job? What is important to you?
- Do you prefer to work independently or in a team?
- What kind of people do you find difficult to get along with?

- What aspects of your role do you enjoy and why?
- What aspects of your role do you least enjoy and why?
- Describe a difficult problem that you have had to deal with recently. Tell me how you resolved the difficulty. What changes happened as a result of your actions?
- What are your salary requirements - both short-term and long-term?
- How do you interact with people at different levels within your current company?
- How do you handle failures or weaknesses in others?

## Management Questions

- How would you describe your leadership style?
- How do you motivate your team and build team spirit?
- Tell me why you left your last position.
- What is your approach to delegation?
- What unpopular decisions have you made?
- Tell me about a time when you affected the way a team worked together?
- How would your manager describe your management ability?
- What aspect of your management skills would you like to develop?
- What are your short to medium term goals?
- What do you have to do to achieve them?
- Tell me about a recent goal that you have set yourself.
- Tell me about how you have gained career advancement in your present company.
- Are you a good manager? Give an example. Why do you feel you have top managerial potential?
- What did you look for when you hired people in the past?
- What tasks would you feel uncomfortable about delegating and why?
- When were your leadership skills put to the test, give me an example?
- How do you approach selling your ideas?
- Tell me about a time when your work was criticised and how did you feel?
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.

## Interview Questions to Ask

- When can I expect to hear from you?
- Are there any other questions I can answer for you?
- What are the prospects for growth and advancement?
- What skills and attributes are you seeking in the ideal candidate?
- What are your expectations of the person who will be appointed?
- What are the development opportunities in the role?
- What type of training is available within the company?
- How regularly is performance assessed in the business?
- How does my experience match with what you are looking for?
- How many people work in this office/department?
- What is the vision for the company?
- How would you describe the culture in the business?
- What attracted you to join the company?
- What are the values for the business?
- What are your growth plans over the next 3-5 years?
- What are the major opportunities for your business?
- Who are your major threats in your business arena?
- Who are your major competitors?
- Why is your business so successful?
- Why is the post vacant?
- Who does this position report to? If I am offered the position, can I meet him/her?

## A Guide to Answering 5 Common “Tough” Interview Questions

### Tell me a bit about yourself

Answer this in a 3 part statement.

- 1 is always a one sentence summary of your career history.
- 2 is a one or two sentence summary of an achievement you are proud of (and one that an employer will be interested in).
- 3 needs to be a brief summary of what you want to do with your career.

### What are your strengths?

State them and then give them an example;

- 1 Describe a situation you have been in or a task you needed to accomplish.
- 2 Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Finish by describing what happened and what you learnt from the experience.

### What are your weaknesses?

Mention a weakness, and then explain how you are working on it. For example, I am not very confident doing presentations, but I have joined a public speaking group to overcome the issue.

### Why do you want this job?

This is where your research helps. Don't just say what you want to get out of the job but how your skills can bring value to the company.

### Why should we hire you?

Prepare concrete examples of why your skills and experience make you the best candidate. Compare the job description with your abilities and mention what you have accomplished in your other positions.