

**GUIDE LINES FOR INTERVIEW PREPARATION**

*As quoted by Benjamin Franklin: “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail”, so prepare, prepare, prepare.....!*

By preparing, you will be much more confident and more in control in an interview situation.

**What can I do to prepare...?**

- Research information on the company- look at websites, request a brochure, all else failing, ring the receptionist and ask for information. Make the effort!
- Request a job specification from the company- know and understand about the job you have applied for.
- Know your own CV inside out and practice talking through it without having it in front of you. Ask family member or friend to run through it with you.
- Prepare mental notes on your direct experience and relevance for the role- why you are a suitable candidate for the role?
- Allow ample time to get to interview- always give yourself at least extra half hour. Beware of Murphy’s Law...!
- Put yourself in employers position- what questions am I likely to be asked? Prepare answers.

**Top Interview Tips**

- When answering questions - pause to think, give yourself time to compose an answer.
- Listen closely to question, if you do not understand it ask interviewer to rephrase it or explain. It’s not a crime to say you are not sure you understand.
- Answer question concisely without veering off the point.
- Let your personality shine through; don’t be afraid to smile, use hand gestures, facial expressions etc.
- Never give a “yes” or “no” answer, always volunteer more information.
- Try to use your intuition read the interviewer closely, if they seem interested, elaborate, if they are clearly not, keep it brief - watch their body language for clues.
- Give concrete examples of your strengths, e.g. how you beat a deadline or how you excelled in a project.
- Show by words and examples that you have a “can do” attitude.
- Be honest, nothing worse than being caught in web of lies. If you don’t know the answer, say so.
- Try not to waffle, keep your answers relevant and to the point.
- Remember enthusiasm is a major reason for obtaining a job offer, be enthusiastic and positive.
- By portraying the attitude of wanting to do your best for the company, of being focused on the company’s needs and putting yourself forward as the person who will be committed to fulfilling their needs, you will likely be the one chosen.

**Big Interview No-Nos**

- Failure to answer to questions asked.
- Failure to show ambition and career path.
- Inability to back up statement with facts.
- Not being positive.
- Avoid tentative language like “I think I can” or “I may have done”, makes you seem unsure of yourself.
- Acting “cocky” or “trying to be too palsy” with interviewer.
- Avoiding eye contact or being fidgety or slouching in chair - any negative body language it a big no-no.
- Never be critical of a past employer.
- Do not discuss salary at this stage, if asked what your expectations are, leave the question open by saying that you are open to a reasonable offer.

**The Awkward Question**

*Be prepared to explain why you left each of your previous jobs. Prepare to answer difficult questions such as your lack of related experience and record of job hopping!*

- Why do you want to leave your present job?
- Why did you stay in the same position for so long?
- Were you ever passed over for promotion....why?
- Why should we choose you over the other candidates?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?
- Do you have any questions for us?

**Questions to Ask the Employer**

*Your questions should illustrate your interest in the company and your role.*

- What are the opportunities for career progression?
- What are the training opportunities?
- Why has the role become available?
- How do you see this role progressing?
- How do you see your business expanding/developing over the next five years?
- What sort of management style does the company adopt?

**Common Interview Questions**

*Prepare answers to these popular interview-type questions.*

- Tell me a little bit about yourself?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How would your colleagues describe you?
- Why have you applied for this job?
- Why should we give you this job?
- What can you offer us?
- Why have you applied for this job?
- What do you think is involved in this job?

- Tell us about any experience you have had with this type of job?
- How could you develop this role?
- What motivates you to be successful?
- How would you describe your work ethic?
- Where do you see yourself in five years time?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Describe a difficult situation you had at a previous job and how you overcame it?
- What motivates you to be successful?

### Identify Your Strengths

*When preparing for an interview, identify your strengths and relate them to your experience both in your career and personal life. Always back statements up with facts!*

Employers are interested in employing people who can show that they are:

- **Reliable:** Honesty, persistent, punctual, employers want to know they can depend on you to be on time and rely on you to do the job.
- **Flexible:** Employers want someone who is willing to help out, to do what's asked even if it means extra work and inconvenience.
- **Easy to get on with:** Employers are looking for compatibility with colleagues.
- **Good- Natured:** Happy, enthusiastic people with a positive outlook on life can make a big difference to a company.
- **Team Players:** Employers often need people who can work as part of a team. Cooperation is essential to any position.
- **Initiative-takers:** In a job situation, people need to be able to work out things for themselves without always having to turn to someone else or leaving it to other people.
- **Eagerness:** Show how you are willing to learn and develop new and existing skills.

You have done all the hard work, now all you have to do is wait to hear for the outcome of the interview.

### What Else Can I do?

- Send thank you note the day after the interview. It's a polite gesture and a subtle reminder to them of you.
- Make follow up call - if you haven't heard from the company and you are still very interested, make a quick call to the person who interviewed you or the HR dept. Enquire as to when you might expect to hear from them.
- Be patient - if does not work out, learn from the experience, ask for feedback from interview, both positive and negative and improve your interview skills for the next time.

**GOOD LUCK!**