

PERFECTING YOUR INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

After securing an interview, preparation and making a professional first impression is the priority. Lack of preparation for your interview will be obvious to an employer but if you are prepared for what the interview holds, you will be comfortable, confident and positive. Here are some tips for how to prepare for the interview and perfect your delivery.

Before the Interview

Know the employer

Be proactive and make an effort to obtain more information about the company and its products/services. Check the company website, try and get a hold of company and product literature, speak to customers and current employees if you get the chance. If the industry is unfamiliar to you, look at their competitors' sites too. If you can demonstrate that you are interested in the role by going out of your way to understand the company, you will stand out.

Know the format

Make sure that you know the name and position of the interviewers and that you are familiar with the employer's recruitment policies.

Anticipate and practise questions

Carefully consider the questions you may be asked (see our list of practice questions for further assistance). Read through your CV and write down any questions that you would ask if you were in their position. Once you have a list of questions, practice your answers (but do not memorise a response word-for-word or you will sound too rehearsed). Take documentary evidence of your success with you (enough copies for yourself and each interviewer), but only provide them if appropriate.

Answering challenges

If you are responding to questions about challenges that you may face in the role or may have faced in previous roles, remember to turn a potential negative into a positive. Always show what you have learnt from a challenging situation, what tactics you considered, what action you took and what you achieved/learnt as a result.

Ask questions

Remember that you are free to ask sensible and probing questions of your own. This is your potential career, so it is best that you know all you possibly can to make an informed decision about an employer.

Explain gaps

If you have gaps in your CV, be prepared to explain them in a positive way, making no apologies.

Presentations

If you are asked to give a presentation, find out as much as possible beforehand to avoid delays and awkwardness.

Room for improvement

Finally, even though you need to show yourself in the best possible light, you should be prepared to discuss some areas where you feel you could benefit from further training or experience. It makes you human.

At the Interview

First Impressions

As soon as you enter the interview room the interview has begun. Therefore, the first few seconds can make or break your chances of success.

Remember:

- Punctuality – arrive 5 minutes early.
- Dress – this generally means formal business wear.
- Greeting – always smile, have good eye contact and a firm handshake to show you have confidence and nothing to hide.

During the interview

Remember:

- Relax – it is vital that you relax and bring a positive attitude with you. This will ensure a confident appearance.
- Listen – it is important to understand each question so that you can carefully consider your answers. Take care not to talk excessively or repeat yourself too much, as you will appear nervous and unsure of yourself.
- Don't be critical of previous employers and managers, especially if it is in the same industry.
- Don't lie. If you're not the right person for the job, lying about your abilities, background or experience won't change that.

After the Interview

More Hints and Tips

- At the end of the interview, ask if there is any point the interview panel would like clarification on.
- If you are not successful, call to get constructive feedback and reasons that may assist you in the future.
- If you are successful, wait for your official offer before assuming it's definite.