

Job Interview Skills - Tips for Interviewees

Well done! Your CV and cover letter has created an employment opportunity for you – now you need to perform brilliantly to secure yourself the job. The interview is your chance to back up in person everything that the employer has read about you. An interview is a focused conversation, allowing the employer to get to know you and your abilities and for you to see what they are like and what they offer.

Follow these tips in preparation:

1. Research as much as you can about the organisation - products, services, markets, competitors, trends, current activities, priorities. Use the web, read and make notes to help you remember the relevant issues.
2. Request a job description and person specification if they have not been provided to you. Ask what testing methods the organisation will be using to select candidates.
3. The job description should list the tasks and duties: take time to work through this document and imagine yourself in the job. What questions may you have?
4. The person specification should clearly state the knowledge, skills, experience and competencies/behaviours that are essential and desirable for the position. Prepare your examples for the essential criteria, e.g. – an essential is team working. Think of recent times (within the last year) when you have worked in a team and have these ready for the interviewers. Do you have any evidence to back up the desirables (not essential criteria but useful for the position?). Focus more effort on the essentials.
5. Assemble hard evidence (make sure it's clear and concise) of *how* you've achieved something in the past - proof will put you ahead of those who merely talk about it. Take this with you to show them (e.g. spreadsheets you have designed).
6. If you have some experience of personality tests, take the results with you. You can talk through your personality strengths and how they fit the job.
7. Review your personal goals and align them with the goals of the organisation. Really climb inside the job and the organisation and think about what, how, where, when, type questions. For example, 'You say the role involves client management. How quickly do you expect me to be competent to manage my own clients?'
8. Ensure you have two or three really good reputable and relevant references, and check they'd each be happy to be contacted. Take written references if you have them.
9. Get into an enthusiastic, alert, positive state of mind.
10. Make sure you take a copy of your CV with you and 2 spare copies (one for the interviewer, one for you and a spare in case the interviewer brings a colleague in to the meeting). Also take a pad and a pen to make your own notes.
11. Enter with a confident air, be friendly and open and most importantly don't forget to breathe. Look into the interviewer's eyes when you shake hands or introduce yourself; make a mental note to remember the colour of their eyes. This is a handy tip for focusing on them and not you.
12. At the end of the interview ask what the next stage is.