

## How to succeed in giving the best interview you can

Interview stage. You only get one chance to impress, so don't let yourself down by not doing your homework. It's important to make the best overall impression on your prospective employer.

Below are our handy interview techniques and tips to help you maximize your chances of success and deal effectively with some of the tougher questions you may be asked.

### **Our interview briefs are informative and concise. We will:**

Give you a full briefing on the job description and candidate specification to make sure you know exactly what the job entails and what your role is about. Feel free to ask your consultant if you're unclear about anything at any stage. You might also find it helpful to read through these again prior to your interview.

- Provide you with relevant company information, specifically tailored for the role you will be interviewed for. This will enable you to get an overview of the company and help you to gain an insight into the work of the department or section for which you will be interviewed.
- We recommend that you take a look at the company website to find out about the products and services they offer, the location of the office and the number of employees. It's also a good idea to check out the latest news for any additional information and to show that you are up to date.
- Let you know any other details about the interview, such as if it is a one to one, panel or group interview. We will also inform you of any tests you may have to take and if the client requires you to bring samples of your previous work.
- Make sure you have the practical details to hand. This will be the full company address, date and time of the interview, correct contact name and full title of the person interviewing you. If the location is unfamiliar, visit [www.whereis.com.au](http://www.whereis.com.au) and print off a map to your destination. It's useful to plan your journey and allow time for delays.

## Interview preparation

Interviews are all about questions and you're likely to face some standard ones and others that are real challenges. It's a good idea to prepare for these and add some of your own to ask at the end of an interview. This will show that you have initiative, as well as a genuine interest and enthusiasm in the role and the company.

### **It's a good idea to prepare for a diverse range of questions**

It's important to stand out in your interview and if you can answer well to a diverse range of questions, you could already have a big advantage over your competitors. You can't prepare for every single question that will come up at the interview, but you can anticipate most of them.

Below are examples of standard questions that you most likely have already been asked in past interviews, and more awkward ones.

#### **Q. Tell me about yourself?**

This is probably the most common question any interviewer is likely to ask. It's best to plan ahead for it by preparing a presentation statement. Start by letting them know where you've worked/are currently working, for how long and what it is you do. Then list your previous jobs and companies. This will depend on how many companies you've worked for, most employers will go back a couple of years.

Tell them what you like about your job and what you think your major strengths are. How have those strengths made a difference in your role and in your team? Describe any challenges and let them know how you have effectively dealt with them.

After you've answered this question as fully as possible, ask the interviewer what would be most relevant to them and what the company needs? Then let them know how your skills could fit in with the company needs.

#### **Q. What experience do you have?**

You will already have read your job description and candidate specification at this point. Let those briefs guide you in your answer to this question. Describe any

experience you've had previously that is relevant to the company's job description and the role for which you are being interviewed. You can always ask your interviewer if they are looking for experience in specific areas of the role. If they are, use that information as a further guide to answering the question.

## **Q. What do you know about our company?**

This is where all your research really comes in useful, so make sure you've done your homework!

Mention what you've read on the company website. What products and services does the company offer? Tailor your information towards the role you are going for. It's a good idea to mention some of the latest news and developments as well at this stage.

## **Q. Why do you want this job?**

Have a clear answer to this question, even if you're not entirely sure yourself. Address the employer's interests, rather than your own. It's helpful to use words like 'contribute', 'enhance' and 'improve in your response'.

For example, you could say that you've contributed significantly to your present role and then give a valid example of how you have. It's good to highlight some successful situations, such as:

"As a product supervisor, I increased efficiency by an average 10 percent, which meant a quarterly increase in \$10,000 in net revenue for our department." Let the employer know how you can contribute towards making a difference in their company.

## **Q. What kind of person are you?**

This is a tricky personality question and it should be dealt with carefully. If for instance, you think you are a great communicator, it's best to describe a situation which highlights your skills in your current job or in a past role. You could give a good example where you dealt with sensitive information diplomatically to effectively stop a crisis from developing.

## **Q. Why did you leave XXX company?**

Employers will often ask why you left a certain company, if that is reflected in your CV. Make sure you have short, simple positive answers to cover any gaps and short contracts you may have had at different companies and organisations. Rather than being untruthful, your answers should provide positive summaries. Also, don't answer with negative reasons, even if they are true! Frame your answers to reflect positively by answering why you want to move to the target company, rather than why you left your recent job. Confirm that you are eager to take on more challenges and the role you are going for has those.

## **Q. What don't you like about your current job?**

Although this is a negative question, answer it positively. You can say that you like everything about your current role, however, you have now gained and developed many different skills and you would like to move onto a new set of challenges and further responsibility.

## **Q. Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?**

Another tricky question, so keep your answer simple and effective. It's best to mention what you want to learn and achieve in the future. Make sure your answer is honest for you, because if it's not, it won't be for anyone else either!

## **Q. How did you cope with a crisis or difficult situation at work?**

This is a question that is often asked in PR and marketing circles, but it can be asked in other sectors too. Always have a couple of good relevant examples of past triumphs which you have dealt with effectively. Employers like to know that their employees can act calmly, efficiently and with care and diplomacy

## **Q. What are your weaknesses?**

Employers always give more weight to negative information, so try not to give them any! With this question, it would be best to talk about weaknesses that are also strengths. For example, you push hard to get things done but that's because you want to meet your deadline, you are demanding of your team yet you are an excellent team player and you are a perfectionist but that helps you set your

priorities and organise your work brilliantly. Set these strengths in context and give a couple of examples.

### **Other questions that could come up**

You may be asked questions beginning with: "How would you XXX?"

If this question does come up try to describe what you would do if you were already within the organisation. If you create the right picture, the employer will be able to see you working for them in the company already.

### **Another question you could be asked is: "What would you do if XXX?"**

If this type of open-ended question crops up, be prepared to think on your feet. There is no right or wrong answer, the employer is asking you to imagine a scenario that will require you to be a little creative!

### **Q. What do you need to earn?**

In most instances, your consultant would have already discussed your salary needs prior to interview. If by chance, this question does come up, focus on the value you can add to the employer, not your financial needs. You can always refer them back to the agency and say your consultant will get liaise with them. Always pass pay questions back to the prospective employer.

### **Q. How will you make a difference to the company?**

This question might sound negative but the employer is actually asking for you to help him or her hire you! It's good to keep your response short and recap any job requirements the interviewer might have said earlier on in the interview. You should highlight again your skills and experience.

## **A successful interview**

Interviews are a two way meetings and are an opportunity for both the interviewer to see if you are a suitable person for the job and for you to find out about the company and if the position will give you the right challenges and job satisfaction.

You are in the interview to sell yourself, do this by talking about your skills, qualifications and experience, especially what is on your resume. Make sure you discuss the relevant skills in the role that you are being interviewed for and tell them what you can contribute. Employers buy experience, so go in the interview already knowing what successful achievements you can talk about.

If the discussion turns towards previous employers or jobs, don't criticise them. Always turn negative questions into positive answers.

Each interviewer will have their own personal style. Some will fire questions at you from the minute you sit down, and others will come forward with questions that are more open, which will leave you to do most of the talking. Try not to take over the meeting and let your interviewer talk. Be prepared for any style of interview, in the beginning this can be hard but it does get easier!

Finally, agree with the interviewer what the next step will be. When will they be contacting your consultant to let you know if you've been successful? Find out if there are any second stage interviews and who you will be interviewed by.

## **After the Interview**

Give feedback to your consultant about the interview and let them know the next steps.

Afterwards, if you don't get the job, you would still have learnt a lot about your market value and you'll be better prepared for your next interview. We will work hard to ensure we continue to get you further interviews and find you your dream job.

