

Our guide to interviews



INTERVIEW DO'S:

- For better or worse your success or failure in an interview is determined within the first five minutes... make sure you create a positive first impression.
- Be sure to smile, give a firm handshake, maintain eye contact and importantly have positive and interested body language.
- Demonstrate to the interviewer that you have a good understanding of the industry and the company and are interested in both by adding information you have learnt from research to your answers and by asking informed questions of your interviewer.
- When answering questions, use practical examples from past experiences that demonstrate you have the skills and personality traits for the job.
- At the beginning of an interview be ready to discuss some of your experiences (most often those outside of work) as an icebreaker.
- Take your time before answering questions (although not too much time)
- Keep positive throughout (even if the interview seems a disaster)
- Always ask a few questions (that you should prepare prior to the interview)
- Listen carefully to questions, if you don't understand a question ask for clarification.
- Always be sure to connect your skills and experiences to the needs of the employer.

INTERVIEW DON'TS:

- Never leave an answer with just a yes or no... always elaborate on answers.
- Never criticise yourself or your former employers (no matter how bad you think you are going or how miserable your last work experience was).
- Don't expect your résumé to win you the job alone, you will need to communicate why you are the right person... confidently, concisely and enthusiastically to the interviewer(s)
- Don't be too informal (even though the interviewer may have put you at ease) remember that it is an interview.
- Never answer "no" when asked whether you have any questions that you want to ask... if the questions you have prepared have already been answered you should try to make up new ones.
- Don't answer your phone during an interview, please make sure your mobile is turned off or on silent during the interview.

Common interview questions

Before any interview, it is worthwhile to prepare a list of questions you are likely to be asked and to practice answers (but don't memorise these as you will seem robotic).

Below is a list of questions you are likely to be asked:

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What challenges and opportunities do you think the company faces?
- How much do you know about our products and services?
- What are your career goals? How will you get there?
- How do you see this position assisting you in achieving your career goals?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What were your objectives for last year? Did you achieve them?
- What new skills are you looking to develop this year?
- What did you like best and least in your last position?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What about this job do you find exciting?
- Why should we hire you?
- What value will you bring to the position?
- Why do you think you would like working for us?
- Are you a fast learner? How long will it take you to begin adding value?
- What special qualifications and experiences do you have?
- What do you like to do in your spare time?
- In what kind of a work environment are you most comfortable?
- Have you ever worked in a situation when there was no process or procedures in place?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- Tell me about an important decision you had to make... how did you go about deciding?
- How well do you handle rejection?
- Tell me about a time when you took a risk? How did you handle it?
- What was the biggest challenge you ever faced?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you disagreed with your manager? How did you resolve the disagreement?
- Do you work best independently or as part of a team?
- Have you ever had to work with a person you didn't get along with? How did you handle the problem?
- Have you ever had to learn a skill and then apply it immediately?
- Tell me a time when you planned and arranged a large project or event? What steps did you take?
- What three things are most important to you in a job?
- Tell me about a time when you worked as part of a team? How did you handle it?
- Have you ever been in a difficult situation when you needed to remain positive? How did you handle it?
- What was the hardest decision you have ever had to make?
- Describe your approach to problem-solving?
- Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership and initiative?
- Tell me about a time when you made a mistake at work?

What questions should you ask?

In any interview you should always ask at least three to five intelligent questions



- What are the key challenges of the position?
- What is the overall structure of the department I would be working in?
- What differentiates your company from its rivals?
- Is there any travel involved with the position?
- What sort of induction training is offered?
- Are there any special projects I will be working on?
- To whom will I be reporting?
- What is your philosophy on training?
- What long-term career opportunities are available?
- What are the company's growth plans?
- How would you describe the corporate culture?
- Why do you enjoy working for your company?
- What opportunities does the position provide for personal growth?
- What system do you have in place for performance and salary reviews?
- What is the next step in the interviewing process?
- What are the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats?
- What is the work flexibility like at this company?