Interview guidance notes

All too often we are surprised that a candidate was unsuccessful following an interview for a position we felt to be the perfect match. On some occasions this can be for reasons unforeseen. However, the most frequently received feedback from interviewers is "they didn't interview very well", or "I know they could do the job, but they hadn't researched the company at all".

Getting your interview technique right can be tricky, no one wants to come across as something they are not, or worse still insincere or fake. Following below are a few ideas to help you perfect your technique. In addition, there are many resources available online, and we would also recommend speaking to your consultant prior to interview to glean as much information from them about the role, company and interviewers as possible.

The Basics...

Prepare – Most importantly, it is imperative that you have prepared for the interview. Read the company website, ensure you know everything possible about the role you are interviewing for. Ensure you have taken your time to consider where your skills and experience match up with that of the job specification and you are ready to get this information across in a clear and concise manner.

Location - Make sure you know where you are going! This is especially true of larger companies that occupy several buildings / sites at one location. Check with your consultant that you have the correct address and building. You don't want to arrive at the main office only to be told that are in a satellite office 15 minutes' drive away.

Be on time – We would recommend reporting to reception 10 minutes prior to your interview start time. Too early and you may disturb your interviewer in a prior meeting or in the middle of something they are just finishing up. Too late, and it can look tardy and unprepared. Top tip - Sometimes the unforeseen can happen; a flat tyre, cancelled train, or even a freak snow storm! Build in some contingency to your travel plans, best to get there early and hole up in a local coffee shop or sit in your car in the car park. Take some reading material on the company, job specification and a copy of your CV. Spend your last few minutes refreshing yourself on where your experience matches their requirements and ensure this is fresh in your mind when you walk in to the interview room.

If you are late – SAY SORRY!!!! So many people forget to do this as they are still in a fluster from arriving late. Explain what happened, convey your apology sincerely – but don't labour the point! You need to focus on being extra fantastic to turn around your bad start.

Dress code – In the past, it was always appropriate to dress 'business formal' for an interview. Today many companies are business casual and prefer their interviewees to dress likewise. Definitely worth checking this when arranging your interview.

What should you take with you? – Many companies require candidates to arrive with a proof of ID or Nationality. Should you bring a copies of your CV and qualification certificates? Are you expected to carry out a technical test? Will you need any tools / items to complete that test? - It's always best to ask when arranging your interview. It's never ideal to call up on the morning of your interview - only to find you need something particular you don't have or can't get in time.

What is the timeline before a job offer is made? – It's worth finding out how many interview stages there will be. Will this fit with your timeline? Do you have other job offers waiting for an answer? We work with a range of companies. Some that hire candidates on the strength of

their CV and Certifications and do not require to meet candidates face to face, others have a tenstage interview process! Be sure what you are committing to and know when a decision is likely to be made.

Once you are there...

Well done, you've made it to the interview room. You should feel a sense of accomplishment and pride for getting this far. Many companies will review hundreds of applications for a vacant role and meet with only the best matched 3-5 candidates. Take some confidence from this. All that stands between you and a job offer is your performance over the next few minutes / hours.

DO

- Relax What's the worst that could happen? Not that bad is it? Be calm, you're much more likely to perform better if you are relaxed.
- Smile According to science, the best way to create a good first impression is to smile!
- Say hello, be friendly. Be yourself!!!!
- Be engaging ask them how their day is going.
- Always ask relevant questions, it shows a level of interest in the job and company. Not asking questions makes you look disinterested.
- Be polite and courteous to the receptionist if there is one, they could well be a good friend or trusted advisor to the interviewer.
- Make eye contact Look your interviewer in the eye when answering their questions
- Turn off your mobile phone!

DON'T

- Waffle be concise, if you don't know the answer, ask them to elaborate further and if you're still unsure say so. Don't try and guess or blag your way through a question. Try and highlight your strengths in other relevant areas if appropriate.
- Swear This is a big no no! No matter how informal your interviewer may seem, there is nothing to be gained and everything to be lost from swearing. Don't do it, even if they do!
- Go for a kiss and cuddle when you greet your interviewer! A firm handshake is fine.
- Talk about salary, working hours, benefits or annual leave at the interview. Your agency should have briefed you and the interviewer of each other's expectations prior to the interview. This is best left here until after you are in receipt of a job offer.
- Talk in a negative way about ex-employers, or colleagues
- Bring up any personal issues or problems
- Crack jokes unless the interview is for a job as a Comic, in which case, make sure they're good!

Answering Questions

Interviewers often ask candidates to prove their potential value to a company with behavioural job interview or competency-based questions. You should tell a story—your story of achievement. Don't let the pressure get to you; just remember to use the 'STAR' method. STAR is an acronym for Situation, Task, Action and Result.

The STAR model is a framework for answering questions that start like this: "Describe the most difficult/interesting/rewarding..." or "Give me an example where you..." with a short story.

Situation: Open with a brief description of the Situation and context of the story (who, what, where, when, how).

Task: Explain the Task you had to complete highlighting any specific challenges or constraint (eg deadlines, costs, other issues).

Action: Describe the specific Actions that you took to complete the task. These should highlight desirable traits without needing to state them (initiative, intelligence, dedication, leadership, understanding, etc.)

Result: Close with the result of your efforts. Include figures to quantify the result if possible.

Using the above technique will help you convey your answer to the interviewer in a clear, considered and concise manner, yet give them enough detail that backs up your knowledge of the topic.

For more Interview hints and tips please speak with one of our consultants – We're here to help!

Good luck!!