

Interview Advice.

You finally have an interview! Your moment of truth has arrived... Let's make sure you make the most of it! The interview levels the playing field. No matter where you went to school or completed your tertiary qualification, no matter how much experience you have, no matter who you know - if you aren't able to interview successfully, you won't get the job.





Looking for a new job has been compared to getting divorced, moving house and going through a death in the family. But, it does not have to be seen as such a dramatic occurrence if one prepares themselves properly.

Remember that you are being interviewed because there is a job that is vacant; the interviewer is not trying to trip you up or embarrass you. The aim of the interview will be to clarify your qualifications and skills. As well as to delve into any ominous gaps in your work record and to see if you have the level of maturity intellect and motivation required for the position at hand. The interviewer will also want to make sure that you would fit into the company or the department.

You can always walk away from a company that you later decide you have no interest in, but you need to remain in positive control to retain the power to pick and choose. Your objective in every interview should be to take yourself one step further toward generating a potential job offer. Treat every interview as if it were the only one you will ever get with that company and your only opportunity to convince them that you are the best candidate for the position.

Successful interviewing begins with preparation. Look through our Interviewing Winners and Killers to pick up a few tips on the DO'S and DON'TS of interviewing and take the time to prepare for the questions presented. In addition to this contact your Recruitment consultant for feedback on how you handled yourself in our interview to see if you can pick up any additional tips.

INTERVIEW WINNERS

-  **DO** a little homework - research the company by googling it and visiting the website prior to the interview. Ensure you have a clear understanding of the position available and where the interviewer fits into the organisation.
-  **DO** plan ahead and get your facts ready - Review your CV and be ready to support past career accomplishments with specific information.
-  **DO** dress in a conservative and businesslike manner.
-  **DO** arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled time and use this time to read any available literature in reception.

- ✚ **DO** remember to make a good impression on the receptionist, as this will probably filter back to the interviewer.
- ✚ **DO** shake the interviewers hand firmly and greet them by name.
- ✚ **DO** wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright in your chair.
- ✚ **DO** let the interviewer lead the discussion.
- ✚ **DO** sell yourself and why you believe you would be suitable for the position.
- ✚ **DO** watch your body language and be aware of sending off negative messages.
- ✚ **DO** speak with confidence and be specific when answering questions.
- ✚ **DO** display a positive attitude.
- ✚ **DO** listen and adapt - look alert and interested at all times and be sensitive to the style of the interviewer and adapt your presentation accordingly.
- ✚ **DO** come across as being negotiable.
- ✚ **DO** maintain eye contact with the interviewer and smile.
- ✚ **DO** thank the interviewer for his/her time and express an interest in the position and coming back for a second interview.

INTERVIEW KILLERS

- ✚ **DON'T** arrive late.
- ✚ **DON'T** show up unprepared.
- ✚ **DON'T** take a cellular phone into the interview.
- ✚ **DON'T** come across as conceited or overconfident.
- ✚ **DON'T** smoke during the interview, even if offered.
- ✚ **DON'T** chew gum.
- ✚ **DON'T** accept coffee if offered. If your throat is dry, rather ask for water, as the coffee may still be hot and undrinkable when the interview is over.
- ✚ **DON'T** forget to take a pen and paper with you to the interview in case the interviewer wants to give you details of a second interview, or to jot down a couple of notes if you need to.
- ✚ **DON'T** waffle and tell the interviewer unnecessary information. Answer questions in an intelligent, sincere and factual manner.
- ✚ **DON'T** pass negative comments about past employers.
- ✚ **DON'T** discuss company benefits at the first interview or display a "what can the company do for me" attitude.
- ✚ **DON'T** over emphasize money, make it clear to the interviewer that it is the job and the company that you are interested in.
- ✚ **DON'T** come across as desperate and prepared to take "anything" irrespective of your circumstances.

- ✚ **DON'T** forget to smile and let your personality shine through - try to enjoy the interview as it will show!
- ✚ **DON'T** undervalue the importance of experience.
- ✚ **DON'T** get too involved in discussions on controversial topics e.g. Religion or Politics.

QUESTIONS TO PREPARE FOR

Prepare short, concise answers that are work related. This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate why you are a suitable candidate for the company NOT to be coy, funny or egotistical. When answering questions try to put yourself in the interviewer's shoes and think of how you would react to the answer you are going to give before responding.

- ✚ Tell me about yourself? Your response must be no longer than 90 seconds.
- ✚ Why do you want to leave your current job? Avoid negative reasons, e.g. personality clash; more money; sexual harassment; unfair labour practice.
- ✚ What do you know about the company & why do you want to work here?
- ✚ What contribution do you believe you can make to this organisation?
- ✚ What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- ✚ What is your 5 year career plan - as important as it is to come across as being ambitious with direction not to say "sitting in your chair".
- ✚ How will this position fit in with your overall career plan?
- ✚ Which job did you enjoy most or least and why?
- ✚ Are you willing to relocate?
- ✚ What management style suits you best?
- ✚ What are your hobbies, how do you spend your free time
- ✚ What book are you currently reading?
- ✚ What kind of hours are you used to working or willing to work?
- ✚ How would your friends, colleagues or boss describe you?

COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEWING

A lot of corporate companies use a competency based interview structure to assess their applicants. Competency based recruitment is an approach to interviewing which enables the recruiter to assess a candidate by measuring the knowledge; skills and attributes required for the position available. The recruiter adopts a planned; structured approach to the interview and is required to take notes and score the candidate according to set criteria. The logic behind the approach is that past behaviour will give us the most accurate prediction of future results - it is a fair; reliable and objective recruitment tool that is consistent with SA Labour Legislation.

Examples of questions asked to assess your level of accuracy:-

1. Everyone makes mistakes at some point. Describe a situation where you made an error. How did you react?
2. What do you do to reduce mistakes that occur during your job? How is this effective?

Examples of questions asked to assess how customer focused you are:-

1. Describe a situation where you went the extra mile to satisfy a customer.
2. Was there ever a situation where you had to deal with an unreasonable or difficult client? How did you handle them?

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

In closing the interviewer will usually ask if you have any questions you would like to ask, take the opportunity to demonstrate how keen you are in the position, to subtly hint why you think you'd be suitable for the position and to show that you've done your homework on the company.

- ✚ Why is the position available and how often has it been filled in the last 5 years?
- ✚ Why isn't the job being filled internally?
- ✚ What are some of the objectives you would like to see accomplished in this job?
- ✚ What is most pressing? What would you expect me to accomplish in my first 3 months in the role?
- ✚ What are some of the more difficult problems one would face in this role?
- ✚ What are the prospects of advancement for someone who proves themselves in the next couple of years?
- ✚ How is one evaluated in this position?
- ✚ Do you foresee any significant changes in the business over the next 12 months?