

Interview Skills

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- What is an Interview?
- What is the purpose of an interview?

The interviewer will certainly be looking to find out whether you have the potential to do the job effectively and whether you make a useful contribution to the department and the organisation.

At its simplest level, this means they will be asking:

- Can you do the job? (Skills, attributes, knowledge, experience, understanding)
- Will you do the job? (Enthusiasm, commitment, loyalty)
- Will you fit in? (Personality, attitude, approach, good fit with company ethos, values and the existing team)

Types Of Interview

- Initial screening
- Follow-up interview
- Telephone Interview
- One-on-One Interview
- Panel Interview

Interview Tips

1. Preparation and confidence

- Prepare yourself practically for the interview.
- Gather information which is useful during the interview.

2. Checklist

- Confirm time, date and location of the interview and name of interviewee where appropriate.
- Get there no earlier than half an hour before the interview time.
- Dress professionally.
- Ensure the receptionist knows you are there.

3. Be on time! Be Prepared!

- This will help you learn about the organization and you can use this information in your interview.
- Look at the company's website and learn something about the company before you attend your interview.
- Write down and practice answers to possible questions.

4. You never get a second chance to make a first impression

- A good smile always pleases people.
- Dressing professionally is very important. Keep in mind the cultural preferences of the country you are working in.
- Shake hand firmly.
- Maintain eye contact.

5. Do not talk too much

- Do not interrupt the interviewer when he/she is talking. Give him/her the opportunity to finish what she/he is saying.
- It is important to listen to the question asked and then answer that specific question.
- Keep your answers to two to three minutes at the most. When you limit your time, you tend to stay more focused.

6. Be enthusiastic and positive

- Do not mention negative incidents with previous employers.
- Focus on positive achievements and views.

7. Look in the Eyes

- Eye contact shows confidence and is one of the most important aspects of nonverbal communication, it can make a significant difference to how the first impression the prospective employer has of you.

8. Talk about specific achievements

- This will help the interviewer understand your strengths in terms of measurable outcomes.

9. Explain Why You Left

- Follow these guidelines when an interviewer asks, “Why did you leave your company?” Carefully describe the reason for your departure, and do not go into details unless asked.

10. Questions to ask the Employer

At the end of the interview, ask, “Based on what we’ve talked about today, I feel positive about the position. Do you have any concerns about my ability to do the job?” Often, that gives you a chance to counter any reservations

11. Know What You Offer

- Prepare answers for possible open-ended questions, such as, “Tell me about yourself” by making a list of your skills and abilities that match the employer’s requirements.
- You should leave the interviewer with a clear picture of what you have to offer.

12. Prove What You Could Do - Sell Yourself

- Always put a positive spin on your answers to difficult questions.
- If you lack a particular skill or do not know a certain computer program, be sure to emphasize how quickly you learn.

13. Talking about Salary

- Let the interviewer bring up the subject of money.
- If you are asked what your salary expectations are too early in the process, just say you would rather postpone that discussion until you have more information about the position.

14. Follow the interviewer's lead

- During the interview, your interviewer will give you information that can guide you on how to behave during the meeting.
- Observe your interviewer's style. Listen very carefully, and let him/her know that you have been listening by asking relevant questions and making appropriate comments.

15. INTERVIEW FOLLOW UP TIPS

Purpose Following an interview, promptly (within 2 business days) write a letter to the interviewer and thank him/her for the interview.

The purpose of this letter is to:

- Reiterate your interest in the position and in the organization.
- Remind the employer about your qualifications for the position. If you think of something you forgot to mention in the interview, mention it in your follow-up / thank-you letter.
- Demonstrate that you have good manners and know to write a thank-you letter.
- Follow up with any information the employer may have asked you to provide after the interview

Common Questions

1. Tell us about yourself.

- What makes you special? Why should we hire you?

Tips: Prepare several selling points about yourself. Give a quick “elevator speech” that overviews your experience and achievements.

2. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

Try to identify something that perhaps you have found a challenge in the past, but show how you have devised strategies to overcome any difficulties

Tips: Sell yourself. If you don't promote your strengths, nobody else will. Prepare six or seven responses.

Be “confidently humble.” Present your weakness as a positive. Don't talk too long or emphasize your downfalls.

3. What motivates you?

- What are your values? If we hire you, will you easily get distracted by a higher pay?

Tips: Prepare several selling points about your values. This can include how much you like to contribute to the society or if you like leadership, variety or security in a certain job. Try to resist saying money is the only motivating factor!

4. Why are you interested in working here?

- How dedicated are you? Do you have a passion for this type of work?

Tips: Keep your answer simple and to the point. Stay away from responses such as, “Many of my friends have worked here.”

5. Why should we hire you?

- Can you convince us you’re “the one?” Can you sell your “product?”

Tips: Make a powerful statement about the value you’ll bring to their organization.

6. Where do you see yourself five years from now?

- Will you only be here for a year before moving on, or are you committed to staying here for a while? Are you a stable person? Can you set goals for yourself?

Tips: Be aware that they might not want to hire someone who will only be around for a year or two. Feel free to say that you have one goal at the moment: to be the very best employee for that particular job.

7. How do you define success?

- How ambitious (determined) are you?

Tips: Emphasize on your need to be successful at whatever you do and show your passion for the particular role you are being interviewed for.

8. Would you be willing to pursue an extra certificate or credential?

- How is your attitude? How flexible are you?

Tips: Tell the interviewer how important professional growth is to you.

9. Are You Still Employed and If Not, Why Not?

- Are you committed? Will you stay with current position if employed? If not, why not?

Tips: If you aren't, you can still use your answer to this question to shine a light on your positive features. For example, if you were laid off or terminated, focus less on the actual termination and more on what you learned from the whole process.

10. Have you any questions for us?

Always have one or two questions for them. Do not ask about money or benefits etc. You could ask about opportunities for continuing professional development for example, or go back to a point someone made earlier and ask them to expand, or perhaps you could ask them about expansion plans or new initiatives you have heard about.

Common Questions: 11. Creative Questions

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you had absolute power in the whole world tomorrow, what would be the first thing you would do?	These questions may be used to see how you react under pressure and how quick thinking you are.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your favourite quotation and why?	You can't really prepare for these, but it is useful to know that you might get thrown a 'curved ball'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you had to get rid of one country in	It's okay to show a little wit and humour in your answers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you were an animal/piece of fruit/vehicle, what would you be and why?	Remember that your replies to these sorts of questions will also send out significant messages about your 'submerged self' - but that, with a little thought, you can still demonstrate your suitability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How would you weigh an aeroplane without scales?	Sometimes, especially for IT/technical type jobs you may get asked a logic/creative thinking problem. See www.careerknowhow.com/interviewtips/mtfuji.htm for ideas.

12. Strength Based Questions

Here are some examples of strength-based questions;

- What do you do well?
- What activities energise you?
- When do you feel that you are most like 'yourself'?
- When are you at your best?
- • How can you capitalise on your strengths more?

Telephone interview

- Make sure you are alone in a quiet room and sit at a table with your notes in front of you and a pen to take further notes.
- Be professional and take care not to be over familiar and chatty or to be slapdash and slangy in your speech.
- Make sure you know the person's name. Refer to them as Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr etc and do not use their first names unless invited to do so.
- Breathe deeply and take it slowly. Try not to gabble. Sitting up straight with shoulders back will improve the sound of your voice.
- It is essential to sound enthusiastic and smile!
- To get you in the right frame of mind, imagine that the interviewer can see you - that is, don't conduct a telephone interview in your pyjamas!

Halo Effect

Achieving the halo : Experts estimate that between 70 – 80% of all communication is non-verbal. You are giving out all kinds of messages even before you start to speak. The most important things to remember are:

1. Walk tall and stretch up through your spine making yourself as tall and straight as possible.
2. Walk confidently without shuffling and keep your chin up and straight on your shoulders.
3. Do not cover your body with your arms, a folder, a bag or anything, whether sitting or standing.
4. Be careful if you sit with your legs crossed that your raised foot doesn't start moving about of its own accord! This sends an anxious message and can be distracting.
5. Make calm and direct eye contact without staring aggressively. When one person asks you a question, reply to all interviewers and make eye contact with each of them too.
6. Beware of physical habits and tics.
7. Do not keep touching your face (or any other bits of you!).
8. Subtly mirroring a person can enhance positive feelings in them, eg nodding, leaning forward to listen.
9. Do use gestures to demonstrate energy and enthusiasm, but don't get carried away! Be subtle.
10. Smile – this is such a powerful and important human expression it can be recognised from a considerable distance. But obviously, don't grin like a fool all the time or giggle nervously.

References

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