

NEXERE

Interview Advice

Interview Success

This document has been prepared to offer our candidates information to help them succeed at interview. Competition for roles can be intense and we appreciate that you may forget even the most obvious things under pressure of an interview.

Some of the information provided may appear very obvious. However, we hope that there will be items that you find useful for your specific needs. We have included as much detail as possible since our candidates vary in the amount of interview experience they have. Contractors attending interviews every six months or so will require less advice from us than permanent candidates who have not changed their job for the last five years.

If you have any questions that are not answered in this document, please do not hesitate to contact your Consultant at NEXERE

We are happy to provide you with additional copies of this document on request.

Please advise NEXERE if you have a disability, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, so that we can make any special arrangements to assist you

Preparation

Finding out About the Company

Employers are impressed by people who have taken trouble to research their company and indeed many will expect this from you.

It is a sign that you are genuinely interested in applying for the position and that you have the initiative to do some research. They want to employ people who take a professional approach.

- Look on the company website. If you cannot find the website ask your Consultant or enter the name of the company on Google or another search engine.
- If you have time, call the company and ask them to send you a company brochure and/or Annual Report. Companies House will have the latest audited accounts of an organisation (for which there is a minimal charge).
- Ask your Consultant what they know about the Company and indeed the interviewer(s). The interviewer(s) may also be featured on the Company website under 'Our People' or similar page header. Press coverage/copies of articles about Senior Executives of the firm may appear if you search on their name in Google (or other search engine).
- NEXERE produces Candidate Briefing Packs on most of our PSL Clients. Ask your Consultant if we have one for this Company.
- Make sure that you know what the company's product or service is and if they are part of a larger Group. How many people do they employ and what is their mission statement or values?

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Finding out about the position

You will be better able to 'sell' your skills and experience for a position if you know exactly what it involves and what is required. You will also be able to ask the most appropriate questions of the interviewer(s).

- Make sure you are familiar with the details on your CV. Be prepared to answer questions about gaps in employment history or very short periods of employment.
- Make sure you have a copy of the Job Specification
- Read the specification carefully
- Make notes for yourself of your relevant experience against each Essential skill / experience and Desirable skill / experience listed on the job spec
- Remind yourself of your transferable skills, for example: team/project management, Marketing, business development, customer facing skills, bids/tenders and supplier management.
- Make a note at this stage of the questions you have for the Client in respect of the specification
- Find out if there will be any technical or other type of tests

Planning your journey

Employers are not impressed if you are late for your interview. Plan to arrive 10-15 minutes before the interview time.

- Make sure you have confirmation of the exact address
- Plan how you will get there well in advance, including train, tube and bus journeys. Go to Home | Transport for London or National Rail Enquiries - Official source for rail information, UK train times and timetables
- If travelling by car visit theaa.com for a route planner
- Ask NEXERE for a location map or go to www.streetmap.co.uk

Choosing what to wear

First impressions are very important. Even if you know that the firm adopts a casual dress code for employees, you should dress in business wear for the interview.

- Chose something classic and conservative
- Wear something that you feel comfortable in
- If wearing make-up or jewellery keep it to a minimum
- Be subtle with perfume or aftershave
- Avoid body piercing

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At the interview

Punctuality

If for any reason you do unfortunately arrive late, always make sure that you apologise to the interviewer(s). Explain the reason for your late arrival and that you are not usually late for appointments or for work.

You should ask your Consultant to call the Employer, or call them yourself, to advise if you are running late and to give an expected time of arrival. This will help the interviewer re-organise their commitments and prepare them in advance for your delayed arrival.

Mobile Phones

Turn off your mobile phone before going into the building. If you should forget and your phone should ring during the interview, make sure you do not answer it. Apologise profusely and turn it off immediately.

First Impressions

Be polite and courteous to the Security Guard, Receptionist and the person sent to greet you and to take you to meet the interviewer. Any of them could be asked for their feedback about you. Realise that you are being judged as soon as you arrive at the company.

When introduced to the interviewer give the person a firm handshake and smile.

If you are asked to fill out any application forms or to complete any tests listen carefully to what you are asked to do.

Approach

- Be confident when answering or asking questions.
- Look directly at the interviewer when you talk and listen, maintaining good eye contact.
- Speak clearly and be enthusiastic.
- Do not ramble or waffle, keep to the point and answer the question. If you talk too much it demonstrates over-confidence or insecurity & nerves. Too little and you may appear scared or even rude.

Body language

Body language comprises up to 55% of the force of any response. Non-verbal communication is more eloquent, honest & accurate than verbal communication and actions reveal your inner confidence. Body language is spontaneous and shows your true feelings and attitudes. Even if you are motionless your posture communicates a message. Confident applicants have relaxed, balanced postures.

An interviewer will be looking at how you compose yourself, how confident you appear and how much presence you have.

Sit upright and look interested. If you sit, choose a chair across from, or aside the interviewer's desk. Don't ask if and where to sit, as it shows lack of confidence.

Keep control of your hands as they have a tendency to show your nervousness but don't fold your arms as this can appear defensive or aggressive. Perhaps clasp your hands together or fold them in your lap.

Try to avoid fiddling with a pen or button or your hair. It may be seen as a sign of nerves and a possible weakness.

Maintain eye contact but be careful not to stare.

Even if you are nervous don't forget to smile at appropriate times.

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Interview Questions you may wish to ask

There is nothing wrong with saying "No thank you, you've covered everything", but it shows initiative and interest in the position if you can ask questions, e.g.

- Can you tell me more about your Company?
- Can I ask how long you have worked here and what first attracted you to the Company?
- Can you describe the responsibilities & challenges of this role in more detail?
- Who will I be responsible to?
- Is this position a new role?
- What are the career prospects within the Company?
- What type of person is most successful within the Company and why?
- What are the plans for the Company (growth, new products/services, expansion to other countries etc)?
- Think about what questions you wished you had asked your current / last employer.

Questions that you may be asked

It is worth preparing your answer to the following:

- What do you know about us?
- Why are you interested in this role?
- What skills do you think that you can bring to this Company?
- Why do you want to leave your current position/why left your last position? (Remember not to speak against a former employer)
- What have been your achievements in your present/last position?
- How have you solved problems in the past?
- What do you enjoy most about your current/last role?
- What type of Manager and Company do you most enjoy working for?
- What do you think are your greatest strengths (identify 5 key strengths) and weaknesses? (Try to think of an up-side to the weakness i.e. taking on too much work instead of delegating shows that you enjoy responsibility and can work under pressure alternatively give an example of a weakness you have overcome or highlight a skill you wish to improve.
- What is the biggest mistake you have ever made and what did you learn from it?
- What motivates you in your job?
- What salary/rate are you looking for?

(Try not to answer this question with a firm figure, but leave it open and allow your NEXERE Consultant to help you negotiate at a later stage if the Employer wishes to proceed)

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Closing the Interview

If you are interested in the role don't be afraid to say so 'I am very interested in this position and were you to offer me I would not hesitate to accept'. The more interested you are in them the more they will be interested in you.

Ask what the next steps are in the recruitment process and when you are likely to have feedback on today's meeting.

Ask if you have answered all their questions or if there is anything else they want to know before you leave.

Thank the interviewer(s) for their time and say that you enjoyed the interview.

Immediately after the interview

Call your Consultant at NEXERE and give him/her your feedback on the interview. It will be useful for them to have this before they call the Employer.

If there are things that you forgot to say or to ask, your Consultant can do this for you. If you said something that you now regret perhaps they can help with damage limitation!

Think if the interview could have been handled better by yourself and learn from the experience to do even better next time.

Write down for future reference, the questions that you were asked and did not expect, or in hindsight could have answered better.