

# OUR TOP TEN ✓ INTERVIEW TIPS

Securing an interview for your perfect job is a great achievement and is your chance to show the employer why you are the perfect fit for both the role and their company. From making sure you research the company as thoroughly as possible to preparing for questions and having all your documentation prepared, our list of job interview tips below will help ensure your interview leads to a successful appointment and a great career.

## TOP TIP #1: RESEARCH THE COMPANY

A potential employer will want you to demonstrate your knowledge to them. Who are they? What do they do? How are they placed within their industry sector?

- Look at their website. What are their values and story?
- What social media presence do they have? Follow them on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.
- Search for company updates by 'Googling' the company name and clicking on the 'news' tab.
- Who are their competitors? Look on their website(s).
- Read trade magazines and look for industry updates.

## TOP TIP #2: READ THE JOB DESCRIPTION

This will enable you to understand what the position entails and ultimately what skills are required to be successful within the role.

- Read through the job description, breaking down the skills and specific duties.
- Think about how the detailed points relate to your previous experience.
- Identify areas you don't have experience in to research and address them at interview.

## TOP TIP #3: WRITE THINGS DOWN

Don't rely solely on your memory. The action of writing things down will help you to remember key points.

- Make a note of any achievements, awards and accolades.
- Write down examples that demonstrate your ability to match the skills and duties required.
- Write down the skills and qualities that makes you the best person for the job.
- Take your notepad. It will provide reassurance when faced with a hard question. Just don't read from it.

## TOP TIP #4: FIGURE THE FORMAT

Organisations have preferred interview methods. Knowing the format will enable you to prepare and feel at ease.

- It's important to adapt your style to who's conducting the interview. Line managers are often looking for key skills and competencies. Directors look at the organisational fit and the HR team are often process driven, ensuring interviews meet employment law.
- Ask the company about their interview process. What are the next steps should you be successful? What are the timescales? Have they had many applications?

## **TOP TIP #5: COMMON QUESTIONS**

Here are a few questions that may sound simple to answer but getting them right is crucial.

- Why are you leaving your current job? Stick to facts, be direct and focus on the future, especially if your leaving wasn't under the best circumstances.
- Why do you want this job? Be specific about what makes you a good fit. Discuss transferrable skills and aspects of the company and position that appeal.
- What are your salary expectations? Don't overprice yourself. Research the market pay scale and know what the potential employer is willing to pay.

## **TOP TIP #7: END OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

The employer wants to know the you're the best fit for them but are they the best fit for you? The end of interview questions offer a chance to ask the interviewer about the company, the management team and the position. It also demonstrates your interest in them.

- What do you most like about working here?
- What are the team like that I would be working with?
- What are your top priorities for the person in this position during the first 30 days?
- When will I hear from you and what are the next steps?

## **TOP TIP #9: KNOW WHERE TO GO**

You've completed your planning and preparation. Ensure you make the best first impression by knowing where to go and giving plenty of time to arrive feeling calm.

- Do a practise run at the same time as your interview.
- Print out directions. Don't rely on a Sat Nav.
- Is there free parking? Will you need to park elsewhere?
- Aim to arrive fifteen minutes early and take a few minutes to collect yourself and read over your notes.
- Plan for longer than it should take. You don't want to be clock watching if you need to get back to work.

## **TOP TIP #6: COMPETENCY QUESTIONS**

Competency based questions give employers an insight into your experience. You can use the STAR technique to structure your answers:

- **Situation:** What happened? Set the scene about a situation which didn't go quite to plan.
- **Task:** Tell the interviewer how the situation related to your role and what the objective was.
- **Activity:** What did you do? Explain everything you personally did to rectify the situation.
- **Result:** What happened as a result of your actions? Always give a positive outcome!

## **TOP TIP #8: WHAT TO TAKE**

Interviews are roughly 80% preparation and 20% how to conduct yourself. The more time you spend preparing, the better you'll come across. Ensuring you have the below will assist with your preparation.

- A copy of you CV, well presented in a folder.
- Take a pen and a notepad.
- Prepare a list of questions to use as a prompt.
- References to hand (the last three employers).
- A personal / educational reference if it's your first role.
- Directions and contact details of the interviewer(s).
- Anything that demonstrates your ability (e.g. awards).

## **TOP TIP #10: FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT**

Research shows employers make decisions about interviewees in under seven minutes. These top tips will ensure you are covering all bases.

- Interact in a friendly, professional way with the person who initially greets you.
- Greet your interviewer by name and with a smile.
- Perfect your handshake... firm but not bone crushing!
- Dress to impress but also to suit the company. Business attire with a suit jacket is essential.
- Don't fidget, sit up straight and make eye contact.
- Turn off your mobile phone to avoid interruptions.