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Interview Tips and Techniques from CV-Shop.com

High-impact interview advice from our HR professionals

Below is a concise and highly useful guide to help you with your job interview. Although some of the points listed may seem like basic common sense, you would be surprised at the number of people who forget them. We hope you find the information helpful. Remember, an interview is the time to 'sell' yourself and let your interviewer know that you are the perfect candidate for the job. Don't let the nerves get to you. Just take a deep breath and dive in – but not before you've read this!

BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW:

It is important to prepare. The more prepared you are, the more confident you will feel and the less nervous you will appear. It could also determine whether or not you are successful. Do your homework!

Research the Company

Ensure you know exactly what the company does, and where, the different departments and divisions it has, type of customers and who its competitors are etc. Your interviewer will expect you to know this information.

Research the job you are applying for

Be certain that you fully understand the job description. Think about why you feel you would be suitable for the job and practice suitable responses to this question. Consider the key skills that the role requires and make a list of occasions when you have used these skills to good effect.

Personal Appraisal

No two interviewers are the same; you will encounter varying interview techniques and you will never be able to predict exactly what you will be asked. Despite this, you can still prepare yourself. Make a mental list of your strengths and qualifications that you would like to mention during the interview including any languages that you are able to speak, awards that you have gained, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, sporting / personal achievements and any other relevant experiences. Whenever you are asked a question, it will provide a valuable opportunity to include some of this information in your answer. Don't take it for granted that the interviewer will remember everything from your CV; they

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are more likely to be playing close attention to the answers you give, so include information from your CV whenever possible.

ON THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW:

Before the Interview

Remember to dress appropriately for the kind of job you are applying for. If possible, find out what is expected beforehand, but if you are unsure, smart business dress is always most appropriate. Far better to be overdressed than underdressed!

Very importantly, ensure that you are punctual. If, for any reason, you think you are going to be late through circumstances beyond your control, be certain to call and let the interviewer know immediately. Don't wait until you arrive to make your excuses.

Aim to arrive about fifteen minutes before your interview is scheduled. By the same token, it is not a good idea to arrive too early. If you do arrive at your destination early, wait at a nearby location before you announce yourself, and do not attempt to be seen before your interview time.

The Interview

Keep in mind the following:

- Take a few deep breaths before you go into the interview room. This will help you control your nerves.
'Sell' yourself. This is your best opportunity to make an impression and stand apart from other candidates. It is fine at an interview to 'talk-up' your achievements, but it must always be backed-up with real-life examples, otherwise it will just come across as empty bragging.
- Don't fidget with your hands or feet or fiddle with a pen, etc, as this will give the impression that you are ill at ease. You want your interviewer to feel that you are confident and in control.
- Look directly at the interviewer when they speak to you and when answering their questions.
- Always pause briefly before answering a question. Take time to consider your answer.
- Never reply with just a 'yes' or 'no' answer; always elaborate using real-life examples or by providing additional information.
- Never ramble. Give concise answers. Speak clearly and slowly.
- Use examples from previous jobs, e.g. 'During my appraisal, my last employer told me my organisational skills were outstanding.'

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- If you don't understand a question, don't hesitate to say so! Your interviewer will always prefer you to be honest rather than giving an inappropriate answer.
- Never criticise or run down a previous employer!
- Remain upbeat throughout your interview. Be honest about any areas where you possess only limited experience, but don't apologise for your lack of skills. Make it clear that you are keen to learn!

During your interview expect to be:

- Asked lots of questions. The interviewer will use your answers to assess your suitability for the job.
- Given more information about the role and the company.
- Invited to ask your interviewer questions.
- Given details of the recruitment process and what the next stage is.
- Informed of when a decision will be made.

It is always a good to ask questions at the end of an interview. Try to think of some of your own, but in case nothing springs to mind here are some ideas:

- What type of clients does your company deal with?
- Will you be inviting candidates for second interviews?
- Does the company offer opportunities for promotion?
- Do you provide training for your staff?

If the interviewer has answered all of your prepared questions and you are unable to think of any others, let them know that you had prepared questions to ask but they have all been answered during the course of the interview.

Finally, don't forget to thank the interviewer for their time.