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REACH YOUR PEAK



INTERVIEW PREPARATION

INTERVIEW TIPS AND ADVICE

How you present and market yourself at an interview is crucial in determining whether or not you secure the job you want. This guide provides you with best practice advice and tips on undertaking a successful interview.

Step One: PREPARATION

Preparation is the first essential step towards conducting a successful interview. The better prepared you are, the more confident you will be.

Research

Before your interview ensure you know the following:

- The exact time and location of the interview, route, transport options, parking and how long it will take to get there.
- The interviewer's correct title and pronunciation of his or her full name.
- Specific facts about the company. The company's website is often an excellent source of information. Make sure you know the company's history, financial position, mission, market in which it operates, competitors, latest news, products and services
- Facts and figures about your present and former employer. Refresh your memory on this as you will be expected to know a lot about the company for which you have previously worked

Dress

Dress like a professional, in a smart business suit with a clean ironed plain shirt and tie or blouse and dark shoes. Do not wear casual clothes even if you know it is company policy.

Review and answer preparation

Review your resume and ensure you are equipped to answer questions on the details you have supplied. Also review the job description and core competencies of the role. Examine your suitability and prepare specific answers before the interview that demonstrate your skills and competencies.

Examples of traditional interview questions you may be asked:

- Why did you choose your particular career path?
- What kind of role are you seeking?
- Why would you like to work for this company?
- What do you want to be doing in your career five years from now?
- What interests you about our products/services?
- What style of management gets the best from you?
- What are your major weaknesses and what are your strengths?
- What does 'teamwork' mean to you?

Questions to ask the interviewer

An interview is a two-way process. The interviewer will be trying to determine whether you are the right person for the role and you should take the opportunity to determine whether the potential employer will provide the career development and challenge that you seek.

Some questions you might ask include:

- Why has the position become available?
- Can you please give me a detailed description of the position?
- What is the culture of the company?
- What training programs are available to ensure continued career development?
- What plans does the company have for future development?
- What are the company's best selling products or services?
- What motivated you to join the company?
- What is the next step?

INTERVIEW TIPS AND ADVICE

Step Two: THE INTERVIEW

During the interview your strengths and areas for development will be assessed. In addition, specific personal characteristics will be examined, such as attitude, aptitude and motivation.

Interview Dos and Don'ts

Do arrive on time or a few minutes early. Late arrival for an interview is inexcusable.

Do greet the interviewer and thank them for their time.

Do shake hands firmly.

Do wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright in your chair and look alert and interested at all times.

Do be as charismatic as possible. It is very important you demonstrate your interpersonal skills during the interview.

Do be a good listener as well as a good talker.

Do smile and make eye contact.

Do describe your accomplishments and how they apply to the prospective role in a clear, concise way.

Do always conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are discussing. Never close the door on an opportunity. It is better to be in a position where you can choose from a number of offers.

Do Not leave your mobile phone on.

Do Not chew gum during the interview.

Do Not lie. Answer questions truthfully and as close to the point as possible.

Do Not make derogatory remarks about your present or former employers.

Do Not talk about salary, holidays or bonuses unless the interviewer brings them up.

Do Not answer questions with a simple "yes" or "no". Make sure that you explain your reasoning fully.

Step Three: CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- If you are interested in the position enquire about the next interview stage. If the interview offers the position to you and you want it, accept on the spot. If you ask for some time to think it over make sure you are courteous and tactful. Set a definite date on which you can provide an answer.

- Don't be too discouraged if no definite offer is made nor a specific salary discussed. The interviewer will probably want to consult colleagues or interview other candidates (or both) before making a decision.

- If you get the impression that the interview is not going very well and you have already been rejected, don't let your discouragement show.

Once in a while an interviewer who is genuinely interested in you may intend to discourage you in order to test your reaction.

- Thank the interviewer for the time spent with you.

After the Interview

Lastly, and most importantly, call us immediately after the interview to explain what happened. We will want to speak with you before the interviewer calls with their feedback and decision.

10 MOST-ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS OF 2019 (ANSWERED)

1. Based on your understanding of this role, which of your skills do you believe will be most valuable to our organisation?

Why employers ask this question?

Employers want to get a sense of how well you understand the role and its day-to-day requirements. They also want to find out whether your skills match the job description and what you can do for the organisation overall.

What's a good response to this question?

If you can link your skills to what the company or organisation does and its business goals and objectives, you're on the right track. Aim to give practical examples of your past experiences and where your skills can add value. The more you understand about the role and have researched the organisation, considering its stakeholders, customers, business strategy, goals and objectives, the more you'll be able to talk about how you can contribute.

2. What's your understanding of the role and why are you interested?

Why employers ask this question?

This question helps recruiters gain a genuine understanding of which aspects of the role you are most interested in, in order to assess if you're well suited to the role.

What's a good response to this question?

Recruiters are seeking an interpretation of the role in your own words, not a regurgitation of the job ad. The best answers are those that clearly demonstrate which aspects of the role you will be able to do well and how this will add value to the organisation and help achieve organisational goals.

3. Why are you interested in working at this organisation?

Why employers ask this question?

Have you done your homework? This question shows how much research you have done, demonstrating motivation for the job and providing recruiters with an insight into your own values to ensure they align with the hiring organisation.

What's a good response to this question?

If you can build a connection with the organisation's people, strategy and values and your own values and aspirations, you will show the potential employer why you're an ideal fit.

4. At times you will be asked to do many things at once. How do you prioritise your tasks?

Why employers ask this question?

This question aims to reveal your time management and decision-making skills. Employers want to understand how you prioritise things and the way you engage with people during that process.

What's a good response to this question?

A good way to answer this question is to give an example of how you prioritised things in a previous role.

5. What parts of your current role do you really love?

Why employers ask this question?

This shows the recruiter what is most important to you and how and why you gain satisfaction from different aspects of your career. The response helps guide the interviewer on how you can make a difference and what gives you the most energy, for example, people management, processes or innovative thinking.

What's a good response to this question?

Good answers are less about tasks and more about showing your passion, what you are most proud of, and how you have made an impact in your current role.

10 MOST-ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS OF 2019 (ANSWERED)

What parts of your current role frustrate you?

Why employers ask this question?

Employers accept that there will be elements of every job that may be frustrating so it's important to be honest when answering this question. By asking this question they are wanting to find out if you're compatible with the role you're applying for.

What's a good response to this question?

Rather than just venting things you find frustrating about your current role, try to frame your response in a positive light by talking about how you manage your frustration. Also, remember to think about the job description – for example, you don't want to say you find dealing with difficult customers frustrating if the role is customer-facing.

7. Give me an example of a time when you made a mistake or didn't deliver on expectations, what happened? What did you learn?

Why employers ask this question?

Most businesses accept that people make mistakes. What is more important is that you learn from them. Employers are trying to establish what processes you use to analyse problems and how you go about solving them.

What's a good response to this question?

The key here is to focus on the take outs from your mistakes. It's a good idea to give an example of a past mistake – what were the circumstances? What was your decision-making process and how did you move forward from the mistake?

8. What is the one professional and/or technical skill you would most like to develop?

Why employers ask this question?

Employers want to find out if you have an appetite for self- development and improvement.

What's a good response to this question?

An answer that shows a desire to improve behaviour and continuously learn and grow is important. Always offer a reason for why you want to develop a particular skill. For example, you might say you're interested in developing your photoshop skills in order to enhance your marketing ability.

9. Talk us through your professional and technical skillset.

Why employers ask this question?

This question aims to understand your full skillset to do the job. Articulating technical skillsets is a straightforward science, however talking about professional or 'softer' skills such as communication and leadership are often more difficult, so it's important to come equipped with examples of these skills in action.

What's a good response to this question?

Authentic answers work best – this is not a laundry list of generic traits. Substantiating traits with real examples is important. This question is a great opportunity to share your technical know-how by demonstrating how you used a particular technical skill in a past job and how this skill will be relevant to the job you're applying for.

10. You disagree with the way your manager and supervisor says to handle a problem. What would you do?

Why employers ask this question?

Employers want to find out how you handle confrontation. Are you someone who is argumentative or do you stay silent? Or perhaps you are someone who calmly states your case and offers alternatives in a constructive way, accepting that not everyone will agree with your point of view.

What's a good response to this question?

This type of behavioural question is best answered using an example. E.g. this was a time when I didn't agree with my boss. This is how I handled it, this was the outcome and this is what I learned.

ANSWERING BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS EFFECTIVELY

WHAT ARE BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS?

Behavioural interview questions discover how you handled specific situations in the past and indicate how you may perform in the future. Follow the three steps below when preparing answers to behavioural interview questions:

1. REVIEW THE KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Take a close look at the skills that are needed to be successful in the role so you can tailor your answers accordingly. The selection criteria can be found in the job description or the job advertisement.

2. PREPARE EXAMPLES

Relate your examples to the essential or desired skills in the position description. We recommend preparing your answers using the star structure. This structure allows you to provide concise, well structured responses and helps you avoid drifting off-track. **Situation** - what was the context? **Task** - what did you need to do? **Action** - what were the steps you took? **Result** - what happened?

3. PRACTICE RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS

The quality of your answer is often related to the delivery of it. Practice giving answers to behavioural questions to ensure you speak clearly, do not rush and are as concise as possible.

Check out how we would answer these at:

www.whitebaysearch.com/videos

EXAMPLE BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below is a list of commonly asked behavioural interview questions which highlight specific competencies and behavioural traits in the workplace.

Initiative

- Tell me about any ideas or processes that you have implemented in your current job.
- Have you ever suggested a new way to improve your team/project's performance?

Problem Solving

- Tell me about a complex problem you have solved. Walk me through the process you took.
- Tell me about a potential problem you have prevented from occurring.

Leadership Skills

- How do you go about allocating work for your staff? Can you give me an example?
- Tell me about a time when you have provided coaching to one of your staff.
- Tell me about a time when you have had staff members resist your leadership. What did you do to overcome this?

Decision Making

- Tell me about a recent decision you have made in your role. Walk me through your thought processes.
- What is the most difficult decision you have made in your current role?

Team Skills

- Tell me about a time when you had to work with a team of people you did not know.
- Tell me about a specific situation where you were able to help out a team member or colleague.

Project Management

- Tell me about a project you have managed recently. Walk me through your planning and tracking process.
- Tell me about a project you managed that didn't go to plan.

Analysis Skills

- Tell me about a project where you were asked to gather and evaluate complex information.
- Tell me about a time when you were asked to make a recommendation based on statistical information.

Time Management

- Tell me about a specific situation when you managed conflicting priorities. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when the project you were working on seemed in danger of missing a deadline. What did you do?

Building Rapport

- Tell me about a time when you have had to deal with a difficult customer/colleague. What happened? What was difficult about them?

Quick Learner

- Tell me about a time in your current role when you had to learn new skills quickly.

Negotiation Skills

- Tell me about a difficult negotiation that you had to handle.