

Interview Guidance Notes

Preparation

Preparation is essential to remaining calm under pressure and is the first step toward a successful interview. Give yourself plenty of time to get there. Ask about parking availability before you go. Know the exact place and time of the meeting, the interviewer's full name and job title. Research the company through the Internet to learn relevant facts such as annual sales revenue, principal lines of business and locations.

Look your professional best. Wear business attire in neutral colours and be conservative in your use of fragrance, cosmetics and jewellery. Re-read your CV before the interview and bring several copies to the meeting.

The Interview

Greet your interviewer with a firm handshake and an enthusiastic smile. Wait until you're offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright, look alert and interested at all times, listen carefully and respond concisely and articulately. Early in the meeting, try to get the interviewer to describe the job and the duties to you so you can focus your responses on your background, skills and accomplishments that relate to the position. Be sincere and truthful while focusing on communicating your specific professional achievements.

Examples of frequently asked questions:

Tell me about yourself. Be prepared to respond to the question by creating a 15-second "sound bite" that describes your professional background and strongest skills in two or three sentences. Vary your response according to the specific job opportunity and offer a brief description of why you would be a good fit for the position.

Tell me about your background, accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses. Employers who ask this question are usually looking for a short synopsis of your experience. Be sure to demonstrate how you've developed professionally and be objective when listing your strengths and weaknesses.

How would you describe your most recent job performance? Hiring managers tend to ask this question in order to gauge your level of enthusiasm for the work that you do. They're also looking for a direct connection between your current position and the one for which you're applying.

What interests you about our company? This question seems straightforward, but it can sometimes be difficult to answer if you haven't thought about it beforehand. There are two important factors to include in your answer. The first is to use your

knowledge of the company to show your sincere interest. Second, give a specific reason the position for which you're applying appeals to you.

Areas to watch out for

Don't answer with a simple "yes" or "no." Explain whenever possible.

If you don't understand a question or need a moment to think about it - say so. Never pretend to know something or someone when you don't.

Don't make negative remarks about present or former employers. When explaining your reasons for leaving, communicate your rationale professionally.

Don't inquire about salary or package at the initial interview unless you are sure the employer is interested in hiring you. If the interviewer asks what salary you want, give a range, but indicate that you're more interested in the opportunity for continued learning and professional development than in a specific salary.

Closing

Confirm your level of interest in the opportunity.

Ask the interviewer if they wish to return to any point for further clarification.

Enquire how the interview gone, asking how relevant your skills and experience are to the job and company.

Ask about the next step in the process.

Further to your interview please telephone your consultant at Personnel Placements (01722) 334433 to advise on how it went to provide detailed feedback on how the interview panned out, advising on any areas of confusion or points where you could have presented yourself in a more positive light.

GOOD LUCK