

Prepare To Succeed At Interview

Employers want to fill their vacancies with the best possible person – we hope this person will be you. We have compiled these guidelines to assist you with your preparation prior to your interview and trust they will help you to present yourself well.

Some of us are confident in an interview situation. Some of us, however capable, dread the thought. There are so many different kinds of interview and in fact, interviewers. You will need to remember that an interview is a two way meeting; for them to find out about you and for you to find out about the job on offer and the company.

You have been chosen to attend an interview. Please read this booklet it is designed to give you the preparation and confidence you need during the interview process.

Getting Organised

Knowing yourself is the first step when getting organised for the interview. If you have spent time considering, what you have to offer a prospective employer you feel more confident when delivering these strengths, skills and aptitudes to an interviewer.

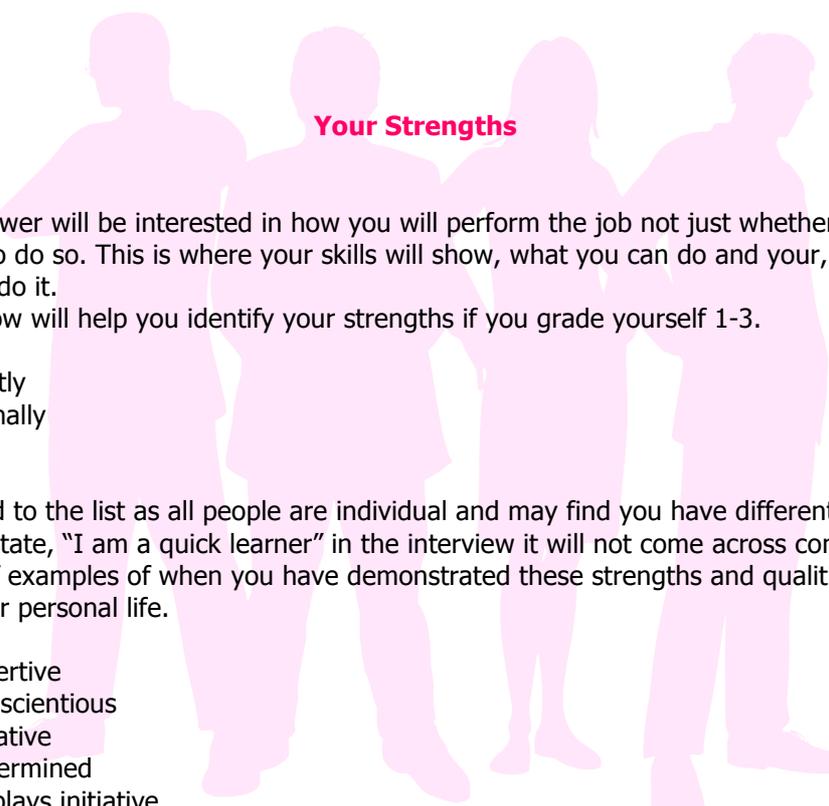
Taking the time to think through the following areas will help you to understand yourself better. If you ask someone you trust for their opinions when completing the exercises this will help you understand others perceptions of you.

- Your skills and aptitudes
- Your strengths
- Your achievements past and present
- Areas for improvement
- The big picture

The opportunity has arisen for you to stand out and get noticed by getting to the interview stage. Remember the interviewer will see a lot of candidates in one day. The person who will be remembered is the one who had something interesting to say and left a definite impression.

Your Skills and Aptitudes

An interviewer will be looking to see what skills and aptitudes the candidate has to offer and to what extent these match what they are looking for. You should prepare yourself ready to expand on your c.v. and giving examples when you have performed well on your skills and aptitudes in the past. Remember that you may have gained skills and aptitudes outside the work place either personal or in a social capacity. If you write down all the skills and aptitudes you believe you possess then look at the job you are being interviewed for and see which ones are a interviewer. You might find it useful to practice in front of the mirror or in front of friends who can give you positive feedback.



Your Strengths

The interviewer will be interested in how you will perform the job not just whether you have the ability to do so. This is where your skills will show, what you can do and your, strengths in how you do it.

The list below will help you identify your strengths if you grade yourself 1-3.

- 1= Frequently
- 2= Occasionally
- 3= Never

You can add to the list as all people are individual and may find you have different strengths. If you just state, "I am a quick learner" in the interview it will not come across convincing. If you think of examples of when you have demonstrated these strengths and qualities in either your work or personal life.

- Assertive
- Conscientious
- Creative
- Determined
- Displays initiative
- Enthusiastic
- Flexible
- Quick to learn
- Self Motivated
- Self reliant

Your Achievements

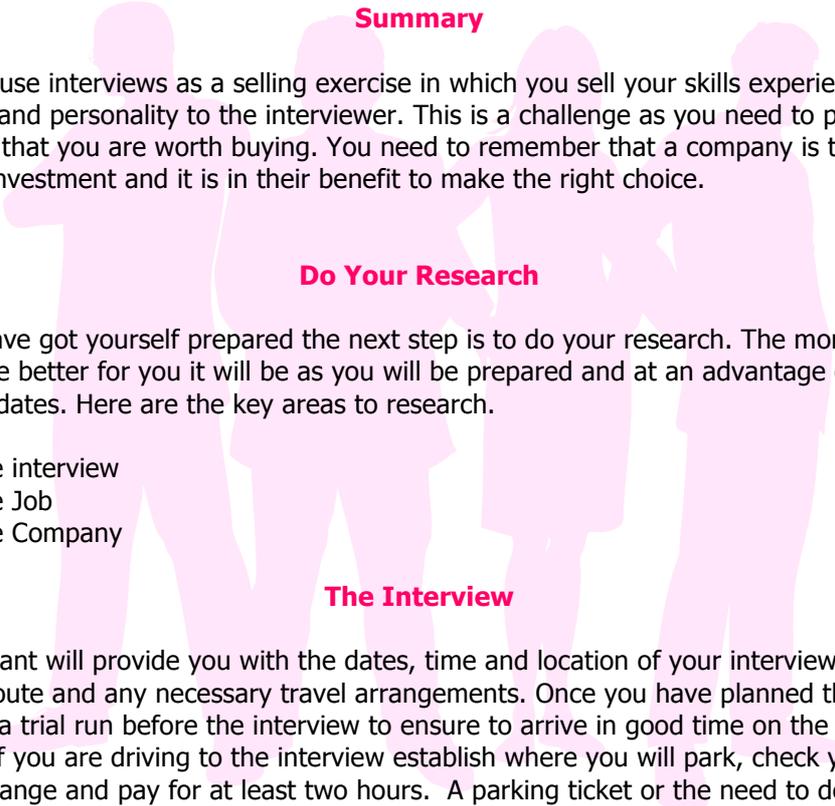
When considering your achievements you might find it easier to do a list of all your accomplishments in life. These just don't have to be work related they should be anything you think people should know about you.

Areas for improvement

When attending the interview you may be asked about your weakness. You need to look on these as areas for improvement and present them back to the interviewer in a positive manner. For example it could take you longer to accomplish some tasks as you are conscientious and like to avoid errors. This way you are being realistic about ways in which you still need development but in a positive manner. Remember no candidate is perfect and all of us can improve.

The Big Picture

Now you have given thought to your skills, strengths and achievements and been realistic about your areas for improvement. By putting all this together you will have a bigger picture of the kind of person you are. All this will come in useful when at the interview stage. If you write down some points that you can use in the interview this will help you present yourself positively. Remember always give specific examples that match the job.



Summary

People can use interviews as a selling exercise in which you sell your skills experience knowledge and personality to the interviewer. This is a challenge as you need to persuade an interviewer that you are worth buying. You need to remember that a company is taking on a long-term investment and it is in their benefit to make the right choice.

Do Your Research

Now you have got yourself prepared the next step is to do your research. The more you research the better for you it will be as you will be prepared and at an advantage over the other candidates. Here are the key areas to research.

- The interview
- The Job
- The Company

The Interview

The consultant will provide you with the dates, time and location of your interview so you can plan your route and any necessary travel arrangements. Once you have planned this you may want to do a trial run before the interview to ensure to arrive in good time on the day of the interview. If you are driving to the interview establish where you will park, check you have the right change and pay for at least two hours. A parking ticket or the need to depart from an interview to feed a meter must be avoided.

The Job

It is vital that you know as much as possible about the job which you are going to be interviewed for. Make time to discuss this with your consultant prior to your appointment. If you have been sent a job description prior to the interview then please ensure you read this at least several times over so you have a good understanding and knowledge of what the job involves. If you know anybody who does a similar or the same job then talk to them to gain first hand information about the position?

The Company

At the interview you are likely to be asked what you know about the company. This can be one of the easiest ways to demonstrate that you have taken time to find out about the company and therefore stand out from the other candidates. You should try and find out as much information possible from all different kinds of sources. You should aim to discover the size structure and geographical area of the company as well as a brief company history. You could also find out if the company has a good reputation and how it is doing its profitability and if it has any competitors. The company itself should be able to provide you with this information, alternatively visit the companies website, your consultant will aim to supply you with as much information as possible.

At The Interview

We all tend to make initial judgments about other people within the first few minutes of meeting them. People who are conducting the interviews are trained not to make too much of those first few minutes, your initial impact will still be important if you want to create the right impression. Your appearance can show the interviewer a good deal about yourself, by your image and it is important to dress appropriately for the interview you are attending.

As you are aware non-verbal communication can reveal a lot more about you than you think, through your voice tone and body language, remember this at the interview when answering questions what tone of voice are you using and what type of body language are you displaying; Research shows;

- Words account for 35% of the message
- Tone of voice and body language 65% message

It is important to remember the interview should be a two way discussion and you should try and feel relaxed and comfortable, you could do this by nodding to show you are listening and smiling to show your interest.

We would advise you take a note pad with you with a list of questions you would like to ask, this shows you have organised yourself and are showing an interest in the position.

Answer Questions

As we said in the interview it is a two way discussion and as with any discussion there will be questions such as;

- You as a person? These questions will get you talking about yourself this is an open question and would require more than a one word answer this is your advantage to sell yourself with your body language and your voice tone.
- What do you think your strengths are? You should reflect on your skills and aptitudes at this point don't just give a list of things this is where you can go into details and give example of when you have demonstrated this in the work place.
- What are your weaknesses? You need to interpret your weaknesses for areas of improvement. Having prepared yourself as outlined give examples of how you have already overcome that weakness in certain situations.
- Why do you want to work for this company? This is when you should think of about several reasons why you want to work for the company. Try and make these about the company not just yourself.
- Work History, This is where they will want to know what you have done in the past and what your responsibilities were, the interviewer will use you c.v as a guide.
- Why are you leaving? You need to avoid becoming defensive or negative at this point if you have left your previous job under difficult circumstances, focus on the opportunities for development and improvements.
- Why should we appoint you? From your preparation you should have a clear idea of your strengths and how this will benefit the company if they employ you.
- What do you do in your spare time? This will more than likely come at the end of the interview. This is indication that the interviewer is interested in you as person not just a potential employee.

Ask Questions

You will get the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the interview if it has not been possible to ask as the interview has gone on.

There comes a point in the interview when you will be asked if you have any questions. The worst answer you can give is **NO** so please ensure you have some questions already put

together. Even if the interviewer has answered all of the questions you had thought of at least when your checking your list it is evident the questions existed.

The above list is not an intended script but will give you idea of what kind of questions you may get asked.

What Questions Could You Ask

Here are some questions you might find useful to ask the interviewer. This will show that you are interested.

The People

- What can you tell me about the people I will be working under as well as my peers?
- How would you describe the management style of the company?

The Company

- Have they been any changes in the company recently/are there any planned?
- What are the company's profit and turnover projections over the next few years?

About The Job

- What are immediate priorities
- What obstacles might I encounter
- How can the successful candidate best contribute to the company?
- Is this a new position? If it is, why was it created?
- Where would you see a successful person in this position progress in the organisation?

At the End of the Interview

Research shows that the way in which you leave an interview has a major effect on your chances of getting a job offer. The job offer will go to the candidate that has shown more interest. If you want the job say so at the end of the interview. There are many ways to ask for the job and you need to feel comfortable with what you say possible.

- Ask if there is anything you have said today that would prevent you from being offered the job
- Ask when you will know if I have been successful
- Inform the interviewer you would like the position – often an interviewer is unsure whether a candidate is still interested make sure this doubt is removed .
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time and ask when can I start.

Good Luck from the mpeople team

