

# Interview tips for Professionals

You may not have had a job interview for a while but it's no cause for concern. In fact, it's an exciting opportunity as long as you are amply prepared.

All interviews are different. Different people. Different companies. Different jobs. So the real trick is to be yourself and let your personality shine through.

Here's a refresher on how to prepare and present yourself.

## Before the interview

- ✓ Double-check the date and time, perhaps confirming the interview by phone or email
- ✓ Plan your journey and don't be late. You should aim to arrive ten minutes early
- ✓ Have the contact details of your interviewer with you and phone if you're held up and likely to be late
- ✓ Plan your outfit in advance, make sure it still fits and is clean
- ✓ Most importantly, research the company. Read their website, articles and brochures if you can. One of the most common interview questions is 'tell me what you know about our company'. Really demonstrate your interest by knowing all about them
- ✓ Likewise, understand the role you are applying for. Read the job description and/or person specification and think about how you suit each point in it
- ✓ Think about some of the questions you might be asked and practice answering them. Ideally, conduct a mock interview with a trusted colleague
  - What do you know about this company?
  - Why do you want to work for this company?
  - What skills and abilities can you bring to the role?
  - What have you done over and above your job description?
  - What projects have you been involved in and what was your contribution to the outcome?
  - What problems did you solve?
  - What are your personal strengths/weaknesses?
  - Where do you see your career in five years' time?
- ✓ Prepare a list of questions to ask at the end of the interview. These should be about the company and the opportunity. Try to avoid asking questions about salary and other perks
- ✓ Prepare a pack to take with you on the day including:
  - A portfolio of any relevant training or work projects
  - Your CV/application form/covering letter
  - Job description/person specification
  - Contact details of who you're meeting
  - Copy of the interview invitation
  - Full address/map to the company
  - Bus/train timetables if travelling by public transport

## At the interview

- ✓ First impressions are very important so smile, relax and be yourself
- ✓ Use a firm, dry handshake and try to keep good eye contact with the interviewer
- ✓ If you're offered a drink, politely accept some water (even if you don't want it). You may get a dry throat later in the interview, or want to buy yourself a few moments of time while taking a drink to consider the answer to a question
- ✓ Speak clearly and slowly, don't rush your responses
- ✓ Look alert and interested, don't slouch or cross your arms
- ✓ There is nothing wrong with asking the interviewer to clarify or explain a question or taking a moment to compose yourself before answering
- ✓ Ask relevant questions during the interview, or use your prepared list at the end
- ✓ Don't be disparaging about past or current roles, even if you're keen to leave them
- ✓ If you're in work, be prepared to explain why you're looking for another job
- ✓ Be honest about your current salary
- ✓ Switch off your mobile phone before entering the building and don't touch it again until you leave

## After the interview

- ✓ It's a nice touch to send a short email to the interviewer, thanking them for the interview and reiterating your interest in the role
- ✓ If you don't get the job, don't be too despondent. Politely request feedback from the interviewer as to why you weren't right for the role and how you could improve your interview technique
- ✓ There may be further opportunities in the future, say if you would like to be considered for future vacancies