

## INTERVIEW PREPARATION

1. Put your hand out to shake first – a firm handshake. A hand shake is an expected form of greeting and portrays confidence.
2. Ask the first question immediately upon shaking hand. This acts as an 'ice breaker' – sometimes the person conducting the interview will be more nervous than you as they are outside their comfort zone.
3. Focus the interview on **what YOU can do** for the company, not what they can do for you.
4. Look the interviewer in the eye while you talk to him/her.
5. Do not answer questions with a simple 'yes/no'. Explain wherever possible and convey information about yourself that relates to the position. Remember to stay focused and not go off on a tangent.
6. **Do not lie.** Answer questions truthfully and 'to the point'.
7. **Do not** make derogatory remarks about your present or former employers.
8. The company is trying to overcome a problem, concentrate on the problem and what **YOU** can do to solve the problem – do not concentrate on your background. Stay focused, and don't **over answer** questions.
9. **Ask questions.** Asking questions is very important as it indicates to the company that you are showing an interest in the job and the company. It is also important to find out as much as possible about the position and the company to enable you to make an informed decision as to whether this is a job you would like and a company you would like to work for. Ask questions such as a detailed job description, the reason for the vacancy, anticipated training period, cultural/team environment, where the company sees themselves in 5 years time etc. It is important to "interview the interviewer." By asking questions in a positive, thoughtful and articulate manner, you'll make a positive impression, demonstrate your interest in the role and differentiate yourself from other applicants. Prepare a list of about six questions beforehand so you are confidentially equipped with some responses to the perennial "Any questions?"
10. **Do not discuss salary,** as this is our role. If the subject of money does come up, resist the temptation to get involved. If they ask what you want, say you'd rather hear what they think you are worth, and repeat, "Please discuss this further with the Recruitment consultant".
11. **Be suitably dressed and groomed for the interview,** first impressions are important

## **BEFORE THE INTERVIEW**

### **What are employers looking for?**

Many job-seekers do not understand that to an employer hiring staff, a positive attitude can be just as important as the right skills for the job.

These are examples of the qualities that an interviewer is looking for:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reliability</li><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Commonsense</li><li>• A sense of humour</li><li>• Persistence</li><li>• Ability to get along with people</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cheerfulness</li><li>• Self-motivation</li><li>• Enthusiasm</li><li>• Self confidence</li><li>• A conscientious work attitude</li><li>• Moral ethics</li></ul>
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How would you rate? How would you convince an interviewer that you have these qualities?

### **Preparing yourself mentally**

In applying for a job, you are competing against other people. Just as in sporting competitions, you want to have everything going for you. And that includes your own state of mind.

Many psychologists believe that unless you feel good about yourself and confident in your ability, you will not succeed. This is partly because you are unconsciously sending subtle signals to other that you are not good enough.

Some simple techniques to help you increase self-confidence and self esteem include:

Write down on paper all your good points and why you deserve to get this job. Rehearse the interview in front of a mirror or with a friend. Think of difficult questions you could be asked and then practice giving the answers confidently. Practice the body language that you think will give the best impression. Prepare a list of questions to ask about the job and the company.

### **Your appearance**

Never underestimate the importance of first impressions, which are largely based on what the interviewer sees. If you really want the job, the safest course is to assume the interviewer is prejudiced against non-conventional appearance.

**CLOTHES:** Should be appropriate, flattering, clean and ironed, NO scuffed, scratched or dirty shoes.

**BODY LANGUAGE:** Upright, attentive, eye contact.

## **The Interview:**

Start the interview with the expectation that the interviewer will be friendly and interested in you.

It is important to remember that even if you don't get the job, this experience is valuable for improving your interviewing skills for the next interview.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be courteous, interested, alert, attentive, friendly and positive</li><li>• Listen carefully to the questions you are asked, and answer them clearly with appropriate detail</li><li>• Ask intelligent questions about the organisation and the job</li><li>• Stress your previous successes rather than failures</li><li>• Look the interviewer(s) in the eye (but not fixedly)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sit upright and face the interviewer(s) in an appropriate way</li><li>• At the interview's conclusion thank the interviewer for his/her time</li><li>• Leave a lasting impression by telling the interviewer how interested you are in the position. However, don't 'gush', as you may sound false or over aggressive.</li></ul>
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### **Don't...**

- Don't criticise your previous employer
- Don't talk at length about your personal problems
- Don't adopt an apologetic air (If you were late, apologise sincerely at the beginning and then forget it)
- Don't swear or use slang
- Don't interrupt the interviewer
- Don't chew gum
- Don't arrive at the interview more than 5 minutes early
- Don't leave your mobile turned on

"Most managers make their mind up about a job applicant within 14 seconds of meeting a candidate, new research shows.

A poll of nearly 1000 employers showed most knew within a minute of meeting someone if they would be suitable for the job.

A minority said they did not know whether they would hire someone until an interview had ended.

Reasons for not offering someone a job included inappropriate dress sense, lack of enthusiasm, bad manners, lack of preparation, being interested only in the salary or giving one-word answers to questions".

## **NINE COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED IN AN INTERVIEW BY AN EMPLOYER**

**1) What are your strengths and weaknesses?** (There is no excuse for being unprepared for this question, always admit your short comings).

**2) What do you know about our company?** (Always go fully informed about the company, research their website if they have one).

**3) How do you keep up with new developments?** (Belong to a professional association, newspapers, network etc, and further education.)

**4) What are your career goals?** (Prepare your career objectives before the interview, objectives are the path to obtaining goals).

**5) What is your understanding of the job?** (No candidate should go to an interview without a full briefing of the position).

**6) What will you bring to the Company?** (Don't just say I'll bring this and this...Demonstrate that the skills needed that you have already applied elsewhere).

**7) How have you resolved a difficult situation in a previous position?**

**8) Why did you leave your last job?** (An interview is no place to vent your spleen, even if you have a genuine reason to do so. Always stress that it was your decision to leave).

**9) Do you have any questions?** (Asking relevant questions shows that you are interested in the position and the company. This is part of preparing yourself for the interview. Write the questions down and take them with you).

### **In Summary: An ideal candidate should:**

- **BE CONFIDENT**, happy and have a positive attitude.
- **HAVE** strong presentation, in terms of communication skills, dress and handshake.
- **INCLUDE** examples to demonstrate your ability.
- **BE ABLE** to illustrate how you stand out as a candidate.
- **HAVE** a clear career plan or aspirations.
- **BE ENTHUSIASTIC** and passionate about the role.
- **COMMUNICATE** the benefits you can bring the business.
- **DISPLAY** a good understanding of the role and be an active listener.

### **The top 10 turn-offs are:**

- **POOR** verbal communication skills.
- **NOT** answering the question asked, and using a 'one word' answer
- **NOT** researching the company or role before the interview.
- **LEAVING** a mobile phone on.
- **INABILITY** to provide solid examples of previous experience.
- **EXAGGERATING** experience or skills.
- **FOCUSING** on the negative rather than the positive in situations or experiences.
- **INABILITY** to answer technical questions.
- **ARRIVING LATE / TOO EARLY**
- **NOT** displaying an interest in the role.

## **EIGHT TOP REASONS FOR NOT ACCEPTING A COUNTER OFFER**

It has been reported that more candidates than ever before have accepted a counter offer from their present employer when handing in their resignation to take up a new job. A high number of these people have come back to us a second time and told us that accepting the counter offer did not work out. Below is a summary of their experiences.

Please take time to consider your actions from this point forward as we have put in a lot of time and effort to obtain an interview for you with our client.

1. Consider what type of company you are working for if you feel pressured to resign before they give you what you are really worth?
2. Where is the money for the counter offer coming from? Is it your next pay rise early? All companies have strict wage and salary guidelines that must be followed, ask the question.
3. Your company will probably immediately start looking for a new person at a cheaper price, you risk becoming a stop gap measure.
4. You have now made your employer aware that you are unhappy. Your loyalty will always be in question.
5. When promotion time comes around, your employer will remember who was loyal and who wasn't.
6. When times get tough your employer will begin the cutback with you.
7. The same circumstances that now cause you to consider a change may repeat themselves in the future, even if you accept the counter offer.
8. Statistics show that if you accept a counter offer, the probability of voluntarily leaving in six months, or being let go within one year is extremely high.

## **SAMPLE LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Dear Ronald,

*I am sorry to inform you that I am leaving ..... Ltd. This was a difficult decision, as working for ..... Pty Ltd. has been a positive experience and one for which I am thankful. I have learned a lot working here and have enjoyed working for you. However, I have accepted a position with a company that offers career enhancement. This final decision was reached only after thorough consideration. The date of my resignation is... according to the terms of my contract. I wish you and the Company all the best, and continued success.*

*Yours sincerely,*