

## Career Resources

### *Interview Preparation*

## Preparing for an interview

An interview is your chance to present your skills, experience, personal qualities and other strengths as they relate to the position you are applying for. It is also an opportunity to get more information about the organisation or position. This will help you decide if it is the right job for you.

Preparation is essential. It is important to know about the company, the position and how your skills could be used in that company or role. This will help you prepare for what questions you may get asked. And by showing the interviewer you have done some research, you will show how keen you are for the job.

### Research the organisation

What is the public profile of the company? Are you aware of its products and services?

Use the Internet, business or industry magazines and brochures to find out information.

Think about your networks: do you know anyone who works/has worked there?

### Visit the workplace

It is very useful to visit the place of work before the interview. It is best to do this openly. Call the person who arranged the interview and ask to make an appointment to visit. You might say something like:

*'I have been asked to come in for a job interview at your company. My interview is next Friday. I'm going to be in the area today, and I wondered if I could come in for a few minutes to have a look around, and ask a few questions to help me prepare.'*

Even if a visit is refused, it shows you are keen and enthusiastic. Have some questions prepared, present yourself well, and do not outstay your welcome.

A visit gives you some useful information for the interview including:

- the size of the organisation
- what products/ services are offered by the organisation
- what the key markets are
- the dress code
- work place language / jargon
- location for the interview.

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#### **Anticipate the employer's questions**

- Review your CV, covering letter and any application forms you have completed.
- Working from a job description, think of questions the employer may ask.
- Prepare answers to possible questions. Even if these questions are not asked it makes you think carefully about what you are offering.

#### **Have your questions and evidence ready**

Make sure you have questions ready to ask. Your research into the organisation can help, and may give you further questions about the job.

You may like to take physical evidence of your achievements to interviews, such as examples of written work, qualifications or written references. Employers may also ask to see certain documents.

#### **Get your interview outfit ready**

First impressions count. You don't have to wear new or expensive clothes, but make sure you have something smart and simple that enables you to look neat and tidy. Employers will notice whether you've tried to look presentable, even if you're going for labouring job.

Smartness shows you have taken time to look nice, and that may give you the edge over another candidate. Looking good will make you feel good and that will boost your confidence.

#### **Know where the interview is**

Work out how you will get to the interview site and how long your journey will take. Have a contingency plan if something goes wrong, for example, if your children get sick on the day of the interview.

#### **Be mentally prepared for all eventualities**

- You may be asked to take a test before the interview. It might be an aptitude test, or a test relevant to the type of job you have applied for.
- Before the interview itself, you may be required to give a presentation on a topic relevant to the organisation. Check that you will have access to any equipment you may need – overhead projector etc.
- You may be presented with a particular situation and asked how you would deal with it.
- You may have to take part in group activities with other candidates – eg. to test your abilities in teamwork or leadership.

Interviews can vary tremendously. Some may be casual – a chat in a crowded shop. Others may be formal. You could face a panel of interviewers, which may be two or three people – or eight or nine! You could even go through a series of interviews with different people, all on the same day. Some people may be put off by meeting a situation that had not anticipated. It's best to expect that anything could happen!

