

## Interview Tips

Interviews are the least efficient (and least scientific) way of recruiting the right person. Unfortunately, they are still the single most important and widely used tool for recruiting. Just consider - who would want to take a job without first meeting their boss and perhaps a few colleagues?

Psychologists have shown that the problem with interviews is that people like to recruit in their image and they tend to accept or reject candidates within a few minutes of meeting them. This means that while you may spend a whole hour sweating it out, your fate has probably been decided by the time you've shaken hands and sat down. First impressions really do count.

### *Preparation*

#### **Do:**

- Research the organisation and its business sector - look at the web site, read the annual report, look out for articles in daily newspapers - quiz anyone you know who has worked there.
- Prepare answers to standard questions - such as why you want the job, where it fits in with your career plans, and what are your strengths and weaknesses. How would other people describe you?
- Be ready with a few questions for the interviewer which show that you have done your homework about the organisation and its business. The recruiter wants to know that you are on the ball.
- Check who will be interviewing you - it could throw you if, instead of the one to one you had imagined, you are faced with an interview panel of six people.
- Dress smartly – many companies do not stick to the shirt and tie rule anymore but it is still important to always make a good first impression. As a general rule dress one level up.
- Prepare your journey well in advance to arrive 10 minutes early.
- Avoid the last minute cigarette or alcoholic drink.

### *At the interview*

#### **Do:**

- Shake hands firmly but not vigorously
- Turn up on time and be nice to everyone you meet from the receptionist onwards - you never know who might have a say in your appointment. It's easy - just smile.
- Make the most of your research - mention some of the facts you have gleaned from the media, etc.
- Accept tea or coffee if offered – helps to relax
- Make sure you talk to everyone if it is a panel interview rather than directing your answers at one or two people only.
- Find out as much as you can about the job - how else will you be able to decide if they make you an offer?

### **Don't:**

- ✘ Be late - in fact arrive 15 minutes early so you have time to go to the loo, wash your hands and mop the sweat from your brow.
- ✘ Be negative in any way – especially towards current or previous employers.
- ✘ Answer a question with another question.
- ✘ Interrupt the interviewers - although they may interrupt you.
- ✘ Forget to ask about the next step in the recruitment process, and what that entails.

### ***Some questions you may get asked:***

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. What did you like or dislike about your last job?
3. Describe a difficult problem you have had to deal with?
4. Why do you want this job?
5. What are your outstanding qualities/areas for development?
6. What would you like to be doing 5 years from now?
7. What are your strengths? – try to think of three and avoid the common ones: hardworking, honest & trustworthy, good communicator
8. How does this fit into your career plan?
9. What are your weaknesses? Two ways of answering:
  - Being aware of weaknesses means you are able to take sufficient action to rectify it
  - All personality traits are double edged and weaknesses can often be “disguised strengths” (ie, meticulous v. time management)

### ***Some questions you may like to ask the interviewer:***

1. How will my performance be assessed exactly?
2. How has the position arisen?
3. How is the role likely to develop over the next 18 months?
4. What opportunities for further training exist?
5. Are there any aspects of my application you would like me to clarify?
6. When might I expect to hear from you?
7. Can I meet some of the team? (This is a great question that always impresses!)