



Candidate Interview Tips

Now that you have got to the interview stage you are more than half way there to getting that all important job. Remember, there is no reason not to get the job! Your CV obviously appeals, and now you need to back it up in person and sell yourself!!

The interview process can be broken into 3 distinct parts:

1. **Pre-Interview**
2. **The Interview**
3. **Post Interview**

Pre-Interview/Interview Preparation

Preparation is key to being successful in an interview. No matter how impressive your CV or academic record is, or how confident and friendly you think you are, you need to prepare properly to make the right impression. The key areas in interview preparation include:

- **Dress to Impress** - first impressions count. No matter what the job is - always dress to impress. Wear comfortable clothing, if it's a warm day, bring your jacket with you and put it on the back of the chair. Remember to dress appropriately for the role.
- **Know the job you are going for.** Take a few minutes before the interview in the car or on the bus and review your CV and the job spec. What is similar? What can you expand on?
- Do as much **research** as possible into the organisation you have applied to, and into the available position. Try to find out who is interviewing you, and their position in the organisation.
- This might sound obvious, but make sure you **know exactly where the interview is taking place** and leave yourself a wide time margin for getting there. Arriving late and in a sweat is a bad start to any interview.
- Try and **get the name of the people that are interviewing you prior to the day.** It looks more professional when you call people by name.
- It's a good idea to bring a bag or briefcase with **several copies of your CV** and some examples of your work and references if you have them. It makes you look confident in your previous employers.
- **Review your CV** before the interview, and be careful not to contradict any of its content.



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- **Always check with referees** to see if they are still contactable before giving their names to potential employers.

The Interview

Job interviewing is not an exact science, however we feel that the following points may help you maximise your chances of getting through to the second interview stage and getting offered the job:

- Make sure you're punctual - **try to arrive at least 15 minutes** before your scheduled interview time.
- **Shake hands firmly** with the interviewers and refer to them by name.
- **Listen when the interviewers introduce themselves** – you will need to remember their name so you can address them by name during the interview.
- Remember that an interviewer is **rarely looking for a simple Yes or No answer**, so avoid them. Try to answer clearly and concisely, all the time bringing in your own 'selling points'.
- If you get stuck and don't know the answer to a question, it is probably better to be honest and **ask for further clarification on the question** or explain that you do not know the answer.
- A popular question is 'what are your strong points?' Try to have something appropriate prepared. As for 'weak points', handle this one with care. **Try to find a negative which is also a positive**, e.g. 'I'm inclined to be a perfectionist and sometimes expect too much of others.'
- While you need to give full and detailed answers, **don't forget to listen to the interviewer** too.
- **Don't ever criticize your current or past employers.** Try to always be positive and forward looking.
- If you are given the opportunity to ask questions, **avoid self-serving questions** like 'how long will my lunch break be?' Rather use this chance to show how much you know about the organisation.
- **Do not be the one to bring up salary at the interview.** There will be plenty of time to talk about that if you're offered the job. If the subject does come up, then say what you are looking for but that you're open to negotiation. Remember to convey to the interviewer that while salary is important, it's the job and company that is of primary interest.



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- **Always have questions prepared for the end of the interview.** Show the interviewer(s) that you have carried out research and that you have thought about all aspects of the position.
- Even if you are not interested in the position with the company, do not indicate this and leave the interview – you will never know what opportunities will be available in the future that might suit your experience and qualifications.
- If you are very interested in the role, be **sure to convey this before leaving**, ensuring that you thank them.
- **Enquire about when you can expect to hear back from them** – but be aware not to push this, as some organisations may take a while to ensure they have considered all suitable candidates.

Post Interview

There is no correct etiquette or protocol for after an interview, however the following tips should offer some guidance:

- **Do not forget to acknowledge the receptionist as you leave**, particularly if you have been looked after while waiting.
- If your interview was arranged through a Recruitment Agency, **call your Recruitment Consultant** and let him or her know how it went. This is often a great way of getting real feedback. Also quite often the employer will have contacted the agency to see what feedback the candidates gave of the interview.
- Some interviewers may give you their direct line in case you have any further queries. Take advantage of this if necessary but do not overdo it beyond one telephone call or email.
- **Allow a reasonable amount of time before getting in touch.** Allow at least 1 week as a company may have to interview a large number of candidates and then make a final decision on second interviews.
- Write a letter or email confirming your interest and thanking the company for its consideration. A timely but gentle reminder like this could pay dividends.

For more job search and career tips visit us on www.ism.ie