

PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW



POSITIVE CAREER ADVICE

First things first, congratulate yourself on securing a formal interview! What a great accomplishment, especially as there will have been considerable competition.

No doubt you will be listening to great advice from those closest to you saying “just be yourself, you’ll be fine” however, you know that this will not be enough to secure the job you want.

Hiring Managers are looking for the best person to fill their vacancy, and they are interviewing you to find out if you are the best person. However, a job interview is always a two-way street. Not only do you need to convince an employer that you are right for their job, but you also need to feel assured that they are right for you.

Fail to plan, plan to fail. This phrase couldn’t be more pertinent when it comes to preparing for an interview.

INITIAL PREPARATION

Being organised will alleviate some of those 'on the day' nerves and so that you set yourself up for success.

Firstly, test out the journey to the interview. If the position is office-based, sit outside in your car and observe people entering and leaving the building. Dress code has changed considerably over the years and what people wear to work nowadays varies by culture. While you need to opt for the smarter version of the company's standard dress code, first impressions will make a big difference.

In light of current circumstances related to COVID-19, and the above is not achievable, take a look at the 'About us' section of the website. There are often pictures of the team found on this page which will provide you with an insight as to the suitable dress code.



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Next, consider who you know who already works for the organisation or someone who may be able to advocate you in the organisation. LinkedIn will be a great tool in this instance. Set up a time to speak with them and have an in-depth conversation to find out more about the organisation, the role and your potential interviewers.



COMPANY RESEARCH

Your interviewer will ask you specific questions around their business, so make sure that you do your homework.

- Visit the company's website to ensure you fully understand the nature of their business
- Review the careers pages to understand and appreciate the company's values, vision and mission statement

- Follow the corporate social media pages (LinkedIn & Facebook) to review recent posts and recent news and press releases, which could educate you on their growth and stability
- Research the company's and industry's challenges, trends and opportunities
- Review the company's Glassdoor Reviews. Bear in mind that people will only usually comment if they have had an excellent or poor experience working for the organisation, so ensure you are reading the reviews in this context
- For more senior roles, go onto Company's House to review their last financial results. This may bring light to a potential problem you may be able to help them to solve.

Develop a list of insightful questions about the organisation based upon your research. This will show the employer that you have done your homework and that you are genuinely interested in working for them.



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FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR INTERVIEWERS

Ensure you know the format of the interview and who and how many people will be interviewing you, their names and job titles.

To help to put you at ease and to demonstrate how well you have prepared, aim to find out more about the people who will be interviewing you. Look on LinkedIn and also the company website. Try and find out more about their background, how long they have worked for the company and what their role is. Also, link in with the interviewers before your interview, this will allow them the opportunity to view your optimised profile and your LinkedIn activity, which will give a positive view of you before they meet



UNDERSTAND THE JOB

Your ability to talk simply to the interviewer about your relatable experience and transferable skills will be essential.

- Where possible, ask for a copy of the Job Description and Person Specification. If the company cannot provide you with these documents, review the job advertisement and look for people on LinkedIn who may be in a similar role with the company
- Make a list of the knowledge, skills, behaviours and abilities required. How does your experience and personality traits compare to the attributes they will be seeking?
- Talk to anyone you may know who is familiar with the kind of work you may be doing and aim to find out what qualities the prospective employer will be seeking. Particularly important if you haven't done this specific role before.

Prepare some examples of relevant experiences you have encountered and successes and achievements you have had. Don't forget to provide data and evidence to back up each one.

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PREPARE AND PRACTICE FOR THE INEVITABLE QUESTIONS

There are three questions which will feature in every interview you attend and mastering your answer to each one before your interview will help you to showcase your best self.

1. Tell me about your career journey to date?

This question sets the tone of the interview, but so many interviewees can spend far too long answering this question, losing the interest of the interviewer very early on. Ensure you craft a response which is concise, natural, involves some story-telling and filter in your successes along the way.

2. Tell me about your achievements?

The employer is looking at the value you can bring to their organisation, and they are looking for reassurance and evidence to substantiate this. You need to know your numbers when you are delivering your answers. Ensure you go into detail around sales, profit, new client wins, cost savings and KPI performance, whichever is relevant to your background and the role. Show ownership of the part you played in your impactful response.

3. What questions do you have for us?

Never reply with "you seem to have covered everything". It's a weak response and will give the impression that you are not interested in the role or organisation. Instead, hold back some insightful questions from your research to ask at the end which demonstrate your genuine interest in working for them.

