

Interviewing Skills

Overview

- Preparing for interviews
- The interview experience
- Questions to expect and to ask
- Different types of interview
- Assessment Centers
- Psychometric Tests
- Interview resources

Interviews

- Interview = A meeting with an objective
- Employer's objective is to find the best person for the job
 - Employer: reviews candidate's experience and abilities
 - *Can you do the job? (skills, abilities, qualifications)*
 - *Will you do the job? (interest, attitude & motivation)*
 - *How will you fit into the organisation? (personality)*
- You: impress employer and assess position on offer
 - *What does this position offer me?*
 - *How does it fit with my career plans?*
- Congratulations - you have passed the first hurdle
- You must prove that you are the most suitable candidate for this position

Why Interviews Are Important

Interviews:

- Give you an opportunity to meet job candidates face-to-face
- Help you to assess a candidate's strengths, weaknesses, and suitability for the job
- Provide you with the information you need for making the best hiring decisions

Preparation is the key to success

- Review own skills, experiences and qualities
 - Check CV
 - Anticipate questions and identify relevant examples
 - Prepare key selling points
- Research organisation
 - Websites, reports, articles, company literature, etc.
 - Contacts with knowledge of organisation or sector
 - Relevant articles in the press
 - Personal visit or telephone call
- Research job and occupational area
 - Job description – or similar
 - Current issues
- Prepare your questions
- Practice

Watch the Body Language

- First impressions very powerful
 - *Halo effect or Devil effect*
- Allow time to relax
- Dress appropriately
- Entrance, introductions & handshake
- Smile and make eye contact
- Be aware of own movements
- Watch body language of interviewer

Typical Questions

- About you
 - *Tell me about yourself-Bring me up to date with your CV?*
 - *Why did you choose that particular degree programme?*
 - *What experience have you had that is relevant to this post?*
 - *What would you consider your major achievements to date?*
- About the job
 - *What interests you about this job?*
 - *What do you know about this organisation?*
 - *What other options are you considering?*
 - *How do you see your career developing–5 years?*
 - *If you were Head of Department, what would be your priorities?*
- General knowledge
 - *What do you think of the Government's policy on college fees?*
 - *What's your opinion of the Ryanair bid for Aer Lingus?*

Other Type of Questions

- “What if” Questions
 - ✓ No experience-how are you likely to respond to a situation
- Probing Questions
 - ✓ How exactly did you deal with the situation?
 - ✓ How did you know it worked?
 - ✓ How did you feel about the outcome?
 - ✓ Could you have handled it differently?

Competency-based Interviews

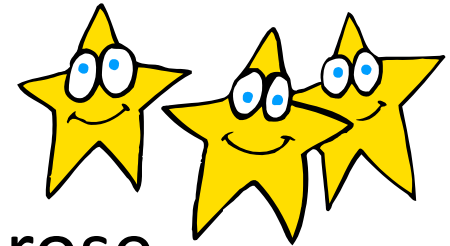
- Company identifies key skills required for job
- Designs questions to elicit evidence of skills
- Emphasis on past behaviour as predictor of success
- Teamwork: *Describe a team project you worked on. What problems arose? How did you deal with them?*
- Communication Skills: *Describe situation when you had to persuade others to support your view. Give an example of any reports you've written which illustrate your writing skills*
- Interpersonal skills: *What kinds of people do you find it difficult to work with? How do you handle those situations?*
- Taking Responsibility: *Describe a time when you took responsibility to achieve a challenging goal*
- Problem-solving: *Tell about a time when you had several tasks to manage at one time with conflicting deadlines.*

Preparing for Competency Interview

- Identify the competencies required for job
 - ✓ Review job description or ask for information
- Define each competency in behavioural terms
- Identify past experience to illustrate how you demonstrated that behaviour
- Prepare examples for each competency
- Practice talking about your experience
- Try to give a complete answer - **STAR**

Responding to Competency Q

- *Q Give me an example of a problem you encountered. How did you approach it. What was the outcome?*
- STAR response (*STAR provides an outline for answers*)
 - **S:** Describe the situation
 - **T:** Explain the task/problem that arose
 - **A:** What action did you take?
 - **R:** What was the result or outcome?
 - What did you learn from this experience?



Effective STAR response?

Q: Give me an example of your ability to use analytical skills?

A: I'm good at Excel and have created several spreadsheets to improve processes.

- Did not describe the Situation/Task
- Actions are missing
- Results are vague

Interviewer will likely ask follow up questions

Matching Skills to Requirements

Employer needs

Communication

Team work

Leadership

Initiative

Customer Care

IT

Commercial awareness

Your evidence

Presentation to class

Example from Coop

Class rep, Committee

Fundraising for charity

Working in Superquinn

Designed website

Business pages

Your Answers

- Listen carefully, seek clarification
- Illustrate answers with real examples and evidence
- Be positive – constructive criticism
- Keep answers specific and succinct
- Take time to respond
- Be alert to interviewer's body language
- Speak clearly, smile and show enthusiasm
- Know what you want to say, and find the opportunity

Qualities Employers Seek

- Good all-round intelligence
- Enthusiasm, commitment and motivation
- Good communication skills
- Team work ability
- Ability to solve problems
- Capacity to work hard
- Initiative and self-reliance
- Balanced personality

Competencies required by X Company

- Adaptability
- Integrity
- Innovation
- Teamwork
- Initiative
- Drive for Results
- Know the Business
- Open Exchange of Information
- Makes Difficult Decisions

Your Questions

- Training programmes
- Career development opportunities
- Types of projects & responsibilities
- Reporting structure
- Performance appraisal
- Profile of staff
- Questions about topics raised in interview
- What happens next?

Interview Marking Sheet

Name	Mark-max 100
Communication Skills	Max 30
Problem Solving	Max 20
Team Fit	Max 20
Relevant Experience	Max 20
Project Management	Max 10
Total Marks	

What creates a bad impression

- Poor personal appearance
- Negative attitude – evasive, using excuses
- Lack of interest and enthusiasm
- Lack of preparation
- Poor knowledge of role
- Failure to give concrete examples of skills
- Over emphasis on money/rewards
- Lack of career plan

After the Interview

Review own performance

- what went well

- what went badly

- what you wished you had said

- prepare for next stage

Invitation to second/final round interviews

- assessment centre

- psychometric testing

- panel interview

Rejection letter/email

- if you can request feedback-use it

After the Interview



- Review & analyze your performance. Take notes, modify any items to improve your next interview.
- Send a thank you note to the manager immediately after the interview. Do not put this off!
- Make a return visit or a telephone call two or three days after your interview.
 - Reintroduce yourself and remind which job you interviewed for.
 - Add any additional thoughts you may not have covered when interviewed.
 - Emphasize your strengths for the job.
 - Find out if a hiring decision has been made. If decision has been made and you're not it, ask for suggestions for creating a better impression.
 - Thank the interviewer for speaking to you & for his time.

Telephone Interviews

- Prepare as thoroughly as for 'real' interview
- Select comfortable, private, quiet place
- Advise flatmates re answering phone
- Have copy of CV and company information
- Have pen and paper at hand
- Prepare for usual interview questions
- Practice on phone
 - ✓ *Record answers*
 - ✓ *Try standing*
 - ✓ *Smile and use gestures*
 - ✓ *Avoid monotones*
- Be yourself

Other Types Of Interviews

- Rotating
 - Like one-to-one with different interviewers
- Group
 - 6-8 candidates
 - Group observed while discussing topic
 - Be aware of group interaction
- Panel
 - 2-5 interviewers, or as many as 13!!
 - Try to identify different roles
 - Respond to interviewer, include others through eye contact
 - May involve presentation

Assessment Centres

- Company premises or neutral venue
- Includes social or informal events
- Meeting with recent graduates or managers
- Activities include:
 - ✓ Group exercises
 - ✓ Practical tasks and exercises
 - ✓ Report writing
 - ✓ Oral Presentations
 - ✓ Psychometric assessments
 - ✓ Interviews
- Simulates real work environment

Psychometric Tests

- Aptitude Tests - measure skills relevant to position
 - ✓ Verbal comprehension - evaluate logic of text
 - ✓ Numerical reasoning - interpret statistical data
 - ✓ Diagrammatic reasoning - recognise patterns
 - ✓ Watch timing – complete as many as possible
- Personality Questionnaires
 - ✓ Look at personality style
 - ✓ No right or wrong answers
 - ✓ Be spontaneous, do not try to second-guess
 - ✓ Tests include built-in checks
 - ✓ Employers may be looking for different personality profiles
- Practice using online tests on www.ul.ie/careers

Summary Deadly Interview Mistakes



1. Arrives late for the interview.
2. Indicates he is late because the directions he was given were not good.
3. Looks disheveled and inappropriately dressed.
4. Slouches in his seat.
5. Does not maintain good eye contact with interviewer.
6. Assumes he will find out about the company in the interview. Asks interviewer “What do you do here?”
7. Does not link what he can do with the needs of the employer.
8. Brags about how great he is , but cites no evidence.

Summary Deadly Interview Mistakes

9. Responses have no clear focus, seem disorganized and rambling.
10. Is low-key; does not project enthusiasm nor appear to want the job; what are you going to do for me attitude.
11. Answers most questions with short “yes” and “no”.
12. Appears desperate for a job – any job.
13. Calls the interviewer by his first name repeatedly or uses the wrong name.
14. Badmouths his former boss and the company.
15. Gives memorized responses and forgets parts.
16. Asks “How am I doing? Are you going to hire me?”

Dear **PersonName**;

Thank you so much for meeting with me to review and discuss my skills for the **X** position. I enjoyed learning more about your company and plans for the future.

The position sounds very interesting, particularly since it would be an opportunity for me to use my skills in **?, ?? and ???**. I am eager to **????, ????? and ??????**.

PersonName, I want this job. I can quickly become a member of your team if you will give me a chance. If I may, let me call you in a few days to see if you have reached a decision favorable to both of us. I look forward to talking with you. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

YourName

Web Resources for Interviews

- UL Careers website: www.ul.ie/careers
- Gradireland website: www.gradireland.com
- Careers4graduates: www.careers4graduates.org
- Doctor Job: www.doctorjob.com (Virtual Interview)
- Prospects: www.prospects.ac.uk
- Realworld: www.realworldmagazine.com
- Virtual Career Coach: www.windmillsprogramme.com
- BBC: www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onelife/work