

THE FIRST FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW



KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING

This is obvious, but it is vital to check out where you need to be, including the parking situation if you are driving. It's sometimes worth doing a test run, which will make you feel less flustered on the interview day.

WHAT TO WEAR

Appearances shouldn't count as much as they do, but that first impression is vital! Make sure you look the part and feel comfortable. A few pointers:

- ✓ Neat hair and no chipped nail varnish.
- ✓ For gentlemen, the best option is to wear a shirt and tie.
- ✓ Don't smoke before the interview as the smell is off-putting for many.
- ✓ Wear plenty of deodorant, especially if it's hot, as you will perspire more in an interview.
- ✓ Take off any casual jackets or hoodies before going in.
- ✓ Retain your style.

PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

It will help if you start by understanding the company and what they specialise in and value. You can never do enough research before an interview, and company information updates all the time. Also, research the role you have applied for. Think about why you are applying for it to convey your passion and interest in it. If it's in a new sector, try to think about how your skills transfer.

KNOW YOUR CV

It's time to remind yourself of your CV and your achievements. What you have done and what you enjoy. The interviewer is likely to focus on your CV and delve into your experience and career development. You may be asked about problems you have encountered and how you have dealt with them. Remind yourself of any career gaps or why you left any previous roles. Think about why you are building towards this new challenge. You will need to be positive about previous employers as your future employer will want to know that you are a team player.

TIMINGS

Aim to walk into reception no later than 10 minutes before the interview time. This will give you enough time to get checked into reception in case you have to sign in. Don't be late under any circumstances but also don't be too early. There is nothing worse than waiting for ages in reception, and your interviewer will not be any more impressed. Take any extra time to breathe and relax.

THE GREETING

Greet your interviewer with a warm smile and shake hands firmly (Covid dependant!). Make sure you make eye contact and, above all, stay relaxed.

INTRODUCTIONS

Interviewers are people just like you, and they will want to put you at ease. Listen carefully from the start as the format of interviews can be flexible. However, your interviewer will typically start by introducing you to the company and the job role. You will sometimes be asked to describe yourself or be asked what you know about the vacancy or the company. It is good to prepare a top-line summary of your skills, and what you can offer so you come across as confident and self-assured.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Try to answer questions fully with examples without over talking. One line answers will not get you very far, but some people talk too much when they are nervous, which can be just as distracting. Think of your answers to questions as short paragraphs rather than short sentences or essays. When using examples of past accomplishments, make sure they are positive ones that demonstrate your clear thinking and the results you achieved for your employer.

A few areas to have a think about;

- ✓ What do you know about the company?
- ✓ What do you expect from them?
- ✓ What can you bring to the team?
- ✓ What do you know about the work culture?

Expect some tough questions in your one-to-one interview, but it's nothing personal. The interviewer may want to see how you think on your feet and can prepare for everything. It is ok to take a few seconds to formulate an answer, and this is often preferable to answering immediately.

HAVE A THINK

You will always be asked, "do you have any questions?" at some point in the interview. Anything to do with salary and benefits is a no-no at this stage. Do, however, ask questions when you are genuinely interested in the answer. Most people want to know about the role and environment they will be working in and the team vibe and company culture. It is also wise to ask about the future direction of the organisation. You should have more than one question prepared if any of your questions are covered during the interview.