

# INTERVIEW ADVICE

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PEOPLE

If you are reading this you've either got an interview, or you are preparing in advance. We know how stressful interviews can be, we've been there, and watching the days tick down until it's time can make it seem worse. The advice contained here should help make sure that you don't just turn up to your interview, but that you get hired.

If you are worried about an upcoming interview, hopefully preparation can calm your nerves. Remember, the wait until an interview is by far the worst part, so try not to worry too much.

## Appearance

Let's just get this out of the way first, which is fitting because this will be the first impression you make to an employer. People can try to be as objective as they like but it's almost impossible to throw away your thoughts and opinions, or repress your immediate reaction to something. Especially since an interview is all about judging you.

Unless otherwise stated, casual wear is a bad idea, and even if it says you can dress casually whilst you work there, you will still want to be smart for an interview. Default to professional formal wear, people like to see that you have taken the meeting seriously and hopefully you will create a positive bias from the start.

## Behaviour

As for how to act in the interview, there are a few pieces of advice that can be given but mostly it comes down to how you are as a person. Try to act confident but not like you aren't taking this seriously. **DO NOT TALK OVER THE INTERVIEWER.** Try not to repeat your answers so it's obvious you rehearsed them, just talk as normally as possible, the interviewer/s are human too.

You should try and look them in the eye, or at least the face, but avoid staring them out as it seems very aggressive. Keep a straight back and maintain an upright posture so that you give off body language of attentiveness and avoid slouching.

It is worth ensuring that you treat all staff as if they were your interviewer. Besides basic human decency, you never know whether they will ask the receptionist or someone else what you were like outside the interview.

## The Questions

The next two points go hand in hand, you will want to prepare for the common types of questions asked at interviews, and you are going to want to research the company/role. The reason why is because you need to not only answer the question, but in doing so prove that you have the skills, experience or aptitudes that they are looking for. To get the job is less about just making it through the interview, but demonstrating and explaining why they should hire you to get their job done.

The answer to what they want from you is contained in the job advertisement and company information. Look carefully through the job description, picking out the key skills that they are looking for. Demonstrate as many of these as possible in your answers and if you need time to think, say something like "please give me a moment to decide which is the best example".

Don't lie, they have your CV and even if your CV matches your lie, people are statistically much worse at lying than they think they are. Eventually, you will be caught out and even being doubted could lead to mistrust.

Competency, behavioural, situational or strength-based are all types of interview questions. However, there are only so many relevant questions that can be asked. Ultimately they all aim to understand whether you will be a good fit for the position. Review your past experience for examples of how you meet the key skills, read through common interview questions and decide what you will say in response.

You are unlikely to guess the questions exactly, but as long as you have planned what you are going to talk about, it won't be difficult to adjust your answers to meet the questions. For example:

- "Give an example of a time when you dealt with a difficult situation involving a colleague" (demonstrate how you are able to deal with conflict or difficult conversations at work),
- "Why do you think that you will be a good fit for this position?" (explain how you meet the key skills and examples of times you have done this in previous work)
- "Explain step by step how you would handle a disagreement between your team" (demonstrate key management skills).

These are all questions that are asking for you to explain your competency for the position. You can ask a question in a variety of ways, competency being the most likely, but what they want to know is whether they should pick you. Practice the reasons why you are a good fit, and you will have a good answer.

## S.T.A.R.

You can prepare for behavioural questions using the S.T.A.R. method, which stands for Situation Task Action Result. To prepare for questions like "Tell me about a time when..." or "Have you ever...", first set the scene by describing the Situation that you were in. Then describe what Task you were required to do and then, step by step, what Actions you took to complete it. Finish up by explaining the Result of your actions and what you gained from the experience. This should make your answer clear and concise.

## Your Questions

They will be expecting you to ask some questions of them, and not doing so can be seen as you lacking interest in the role.

Prepare 1-3 questions in advance such as "Who would I be reporting to?", "Is there anything you wanted me to clarify?" or "What are the next steps of this process?". By asking questions like these you demonstrate your enthusiasm, gain more information about the future and help demonstrate your value to the interviewer.

## Travel

You will want to decide your plan well in advance, especially if you are using public transport. Work out when you have to leave by in order to arrive 15 minutes early at least. Account for traffic if you will be traveling during rush hour. It is worth doing a trial run to check the timings and traffic.

If you are taking a bus, have a backup plan and try to catch the bus before the last one you can take to arrive on time. I've had buses break down/get hit on the route, come past full or arrive over 20 minutes late. In order to guarantee that you will be there on time, eliminate any risk in advance and you won't automatically fail by not turning up or by being late.

## What to bring

Usually you will be told ahead of time what to bring, but there's no harm in bringing along your CV, job spec and proof of identity in a folder, along with a drink of water.

A drink may be provided, and you will need one because you will find your mouth or throat dry in a way that just doesn't happen when you are just talking to family.

## Final words

Now that you've heard some interview advice, hopefully, you have a clearer idea of what you can do in order to prepare for the future. By working on your responses beforehand you can improve your chances and help make sure that all the work you put into your CV pays off.

We wish you the best of luck with your interview