

How to master the interview

So you have scored yourself a job interview. Now comes the hard part. Here are some tips on how to ace your first formal meeting with an employer and some commonly asked questions you can prepare for. All the best!

Arrangements

Confirm the date, time and location of the interview, if it's at an area you are unfamiliar with plan to get there early or go for a trial run.

Research the Organisation and the Industry

There are a number of sources of information available about companies and industries. Try their own Internet sites, annual reports, and other resources available online.

Be prepared to talk about yourself

Know what skills you have to offer an employer. Be ready to give examples of how you've demonstrated these skills, rather than a yes/no answer.

Anticipate their questions

Have answers ready for the common questions such as those below. You should also be aware of current developments in your field, you should also have a view of what's likely to have an impact in the future.

Have Questions Prepared

An interview is a two-way street. Ask questions about seeing a job description, training and development opportunities, the culture of the company and what future is planned for you / your role in the company.

Appearance

Remember first impressions count, your clothing for an interview should be professional, tidy and leaning towards conservative. If you are going for the position via a recruitment agency ask what the style of dress is – they will have visited the company and can give you some pointers.

Finally...

Smile. Shake hands firmly. Treat all members of interview panels equally and respond to whoever is asking the question. Be enthusiastic. Be polite to everyone you have contact with at the organisation. Be punctual. Don't smoke or accept refreshments even if offered, nothing is worse than trying to answer a question with your mouth full! Smile and thank the interviewer for their time. If you are interested in the position restate your interest and ask about the next step. Make a follow up call if you haven't heard from them in the timeframe discussed at interview.

Commonly asked Questions

- 1. Q.** Tell me about yourself?
A. Don't give your entire life history. If they're interested in specific personal information they will ask. Start with your degree, mention your work experience, or the key subjects that you've studied.
- 2. Q.** Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?
A. Your answer should be appropriate to the position you are currently seeking eg moved into a team leadership role. If you have longer term goals eg. CEO of company, or principal consultant, it doesn't hurt to mention them.
- 3. Q.** What are your strengths?
A. Identify at least 3. You should have some technical strengths as well as skills in generic areas like communication.
- 4. Q.** What are your weaknesses?
A. Have three prepared. Make them work / personality (not food) related. Try and focus on those you're doing something about, so your answer sounds more positive.
- 5. Q.** Why do you wish to work for our organisation? Or What interests you about our products / services?
A. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the company and the work it is doing.