



Guide to *Preparing for an Interview*

Face to face interviews represent a reasonable commitment for both parties. Not just in terms of time but also in energy. Every time we meet a candidate in an interview, we are hoping that they will be the perfect person to join our team. We know that the candidate will be feeling the same – firstly that this is a good position for them and secondly that we will want them to join us.

It is important that you make the most of this time. Here are some tips for interview preparation:

Be clear on our expectations

So far you will have seen our ad, a position description and most likely the questions asked in the online interview. These are your best guide to what we're looking for in the position.

We sometimes find that candidates try to make our role into what they want to do or what they have done before. They look past our real expectations. Please read the PD and the ad carefully and consider the following:

- Are you really clear on our expectations? One way of assessing this would be to ask what a typical day or week would look like.
- Have we used any terminology that you don't understand? If so, make a note to check this in the interview.
- Be clear on which aspects you have experience in and which might be a stretch. Be ready to discuss how you might tackle the more challenging aspects.

Also keep in mind that we may ask you what interests you about the position, so be ready to put into your own words what you think it entails. That will help both parties to be sure they have the same understanding.

Being able to paraphrase rather than quoting word for word also helps when describing what appeals to you about the organisation. Talk as if you are describing the company to a friend. Just don't quote our website stats to us!

Ensure depth in your history

Most likely you have already completed an online interview and you are facing at least two face to face interviews in the recruitment process (even more for senior roles!). It helps if you can provide some different examples throughout the interview process to add a bit more depth and flavour to your working history.

Look through your own resume and try to recall some of your key experience or projects. Some of your roles may feel like ancient history! By reading through the roles and thinking about who you worked with, you may find it easier to recall some more detail. This should help you to quickly recall these examples during an interview.

That said; only use those additional examples if they are good examples that illustrate your skills to the same degree.

Reviewing your resume thoroughly in preparation for the interview will also help you to identify any aspects of your past roles that you might need to explain in more detail for us to have a better understanding of your past experience.

We're talking about you

The principle of behavioural interviewing is that we need to be clear on what you have done. Many people naturally say “we” rather than “I” and it can be a very difficult habit to break. If this is your habit, in your preparation it may help to practice talking out loud (in the shower or to a mirror), making a point of relating everything from your point of view.

If you can't break the “we” habit, then try to follow up with a statement saying “my part of this was to...”

Other interview tips

We hope to create an interview environment in which we have a full and open discussion and each come away with a good understanding of the other and how well the working relationship is likely to go. Here are some additional tips for the interview process:

- Please don't be afraid to let us know if you don't understand a question. We would rather you asked us to repeat or clarify the question than to have you respond with an answer which is completely unrelated to what we actually wanted to know.
- The factors that led you to look for a new role may include frustrations with your existing employer or manager. While we want you to be honest with us, it is still a risk to be too harsh or critical of your past or present employers, it generally doesn't leave a good impression. It is worth taking time to practice a response with your reasons for leaving your current employer that expresses your concerns in a more diplomatic way. If in doubt, test your response on a friend whose opinion you trust.
- The other circumstance that can be difficult to express, is explaining that your employment was terminated for performance reasons. And yes, we are expecting you to be honest about this! If you say that you have left of your own accord and it later turns out that you didn't, it can cause us to question whether we can trust you and whether you might not have been honest about other aspects of your working history and experience.
Be upfront with us about losing your job and ensure that you have thought about what might have contributed to that outcome. For example, did you feel that the role wasn't as it had been described and as a result you weren't really suited to it. Was there something going on in your personal life that caused you to not give the role your full attention. Wherever possible show that you have reflected on the circumstances and help us to understand how that will be different if you are successful in a role with us.

Final consideration

If a job really doesn't feel right for you, then don't pursue it. The time and energy spent in interviews doesn't compare to that spent in the actual role. If it's not right, you are potentially setting yourself up for a struggle.

