



MPA Recruitment

Guide to Successful Interviews

Introduction

There's nothing quite like the pursuit of your 'dream job'. To win it, you've got to excel at resending your marketable skills and experience to potential employers. In other words, you have to be an effective interviewee.

If you find interviews intimidating and nerve-wracking, you're not alone. But, like it or not, job interviews are the primary method by which both employers and candidates judge each other.

For employers, the objective of the interview is to qualify candidates. For candidates, the goal is to receive offers. Be sure you make the right impression.

Prepare like a professional

You'll need to be prepared to talk about yourself in order to convince the interviewer that you're right for the job.

The only way to distinguish you from the competition is to present your qualifications and personality more effectively and persuasively than others do. Clear your mind of other matters before the interview. Focus on being energetic, assertive, confident and likeable.

Research the company

Use the Internet as a starting point for your research. Using a reliable search engine, conduct a keyword search on the company name. Find out as much as you can about the organisation, its history, its current situation and its future. Don't expect the Internet to be your only resource. Time permitting; you might also want to check out the library, government offices, professional associations and your recruitment consultant.

Have in mind the characteristics that you would like to get across in the interview

Review everything you've done in the past for evidence of your strongest characteristics and be prepared to address weak areas or gaps in your CV.

Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse

Actors rehearse their lines and moves. Athletes practice their skills. You should do the same.

Know your CV inside out and anticipate the questions you'll be asked. Then put in the time to make your responses flow. Aim to sound natural and conversational, not as though you're reading from a script.

Dress for success

Be sensible about how you dress. First impressions count, so make the effort and dress smartly. Even if the office is filled with people wearing jeans and trainers, your interviewer will expect you to dress formally. Suits are the most acceptable dress code.

Answering questions

An interview involves an exchange of information. Improve the quality of your answers with a few top tips:

- Answer the question that's asked
- Answer questions honestly and directly
- Organise your answers
- Be brief
- Answer questions with interest and enthusiasm
- Be positive about your reason for leaving your current position
- Quantify the confidence other employers have placed in you
- Never speak badly of past supervisors or employers
- Make the position you're interviewing for your chief objective

Handling obstacles

There may be aspects of your career that could present obstacles to employment if not handled correctly. Even the most common causes of concern for employers can be turned into positives.

You were dismissed from your last job

Be sure that when you discuss this during the first interview, you can provide emotionally neutral answers. When you respond to questions about the dismissal always include some lessons learned that will benefit future employers.

You were made redundant

By now, just about every interviewer has had some experience of redundancy situations. Emphasise that the redundancy was unrelated to you as a person and as an employee. Employers are curious about how you will react to adverse situations if hired, and here is a good opportunity to show that you're a survivor who makes the best of every situation.

You don't have enough experience

When employers raise objections, you must be able to identify related experience or transferable skills that will convince the interviewer of your ability to do the job.

You're over-qualified

If you're deemed as being over-qualified, your first defence should be to reiterate your best qualifications for the position. In other words, view the objection as another opportunity to sell your qualifications. If the interviewer is still unsure, probe more deeply into the resistance.

Your main objective is to push interviewers into rethinking their position and keeping an open mind.

Closing the interview

There are only three important things you need to remember about closing an interview (besides the obvious thank you and firm handshake):

1. If you have questions about the company that would affect whether you would want to spend further time interviewing, ask them now.
2. If the interviewer has failed to elicit some important information about you, make that information known before you close.
3. Find out what the next step will be and when it is likely to occur.

Talking money

Your MPA Recruitment consultant is a trained intermediary, so talk openly with him or her. Share your concerns and expectations and call with comments or questions.



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