

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Now that you have got through to the interview, what do you need to consider?

Firstly, let's look at what organisations say about why people fail the interview.

One word..... **'PREPARATION'**

No one person 'plans to fail' but we are all capable of 'failing to plan'.

Here are some of the things that fall under preparation;

- Winging' the interview (lack of thought on what the organisation may ask you and thinking about examples)
- Not asking about the job
- Concentrating too much on what you want
- Not setting yourself apart
- Not researching your potential employer / organisation / department / role
- Not showing enough interest or enthusiasm
- Lacking warmth or personality
- Trying to be all things to all people
- Over-explaining why you lost your last job.
- Presentation of self
- Lack of or over confident

So how can you prepare yourself?

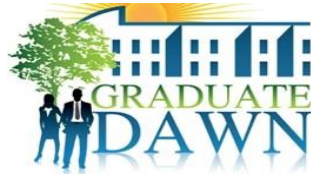
- Job description – ensure you fully understand what the job is and how your skills, qualifications, achievements fit with the culture of the business
- Competencies Framework – Is it a competency interview, if so ask what competencies you will be questioned on so that you can prepare some examples from your work, university or social environments.
- Internet – Research the company and their successes as well as who they operate with (who are their customers / competitors; what does their feedback look like etc.
- Colleagues and ex-colleagues – this can be difficult if you do not know people who work where you have applied. If the job came about from a networking event or recommendation, what do these people say about the company and how they value the employees? When you attend the interview, speak to the receptionist about the company. They are often a good source of information.
- News articles/websites – Has the company been in the press recently? Are there books at reception that you can read before the interview?

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- CIPD / other agencies that give interview advice – research the internet and seek different views on the best approach to your interview.
- The **STAR** approach – Having considered the competencies and / or the job spec to evaluate the types of questions you may be asked; use the STAR approach to ensure you answer everything the interviewer is looking for.
 - **SITUATION** – What was the situation?
 - **TASK** – What was your involvement / Responsibility in the example provided?
 - **ACTION** – What actions did you take to ensure its success? Did you use the expertise of others?
 - **RESULT** – What was the overall outcome? If the situation or task was not fully completed, what else needs to be done? If the situation or task had a negative outcome, what would you do differently to achieve a positive outcome? Could the result have been avoided and if so what would you do?

Often the interviewee will answer the question but forget to outline the overall result and actions taken to achieve it.

The interviewer is looking for an answer that captures what you did as well as how you did it. They are interested in YOU and not what your previous employment / education wanted you to do / achieve. Use 'I' not 'We' unless appropriate.

A final couple of thoughts for you is to make sure you know how you will get to the interview and where it is to be held. You would be surprised how many people do not plan their route or timings and then get lost, turn up late and are that stressed that they 'wing' their way through the interview or worse still are sent away as their time slot has been and gone!!!

So establish where the interview is to be held and the route you will take (times for the bus and train always help). Some individuals will do that run a few days before hand to see how long it takes to allow sufficient time to get there relaxed and ready to go.

Finally, think about what you are going to wear and the environment you are going to be working in. Call the company and ask them what their dress code is in the potential area of work.

Wear what you are comfortable in and do not attempt to be something you are not. Being comfortable in your attire can help you relax in the interview and ensues an air of confidence to your interviewer.