

Types of Interviews

An interview is the most critical tool in assessing whether or not a candidate is the right person for the job. Thorough preparation prior to the interview may make the difference between winning a new job and coming off second best.

Interviews can vary depending on the nature of the role, the size and “culture” of the company involved, and the personal style of the interviewers. The main types of interviews you may be faced with include:

Structured Interviews

- One-on-one interview between the client and the candidate.
- Candidates are assessed by the same person and have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their strengths.

Panel Interviews

- More formal approach usually comprising 2–5 interviewers.
- Often used in large organisations, particularly in the public sector.
- Address each interviewer politely and professionally. Do not appear to “favour” one interviewer over the others and always make eye contact with whoever asks you a question.

The Very Important 2nd Interview!

- You can assume that the company is interested in you for the role and that you have been short-listed.
- Prepare to “sell yourself” and to really demonstrate why you are the best candidate.
- Reinforce your strengths and ask questions about the company and the role.
- If the job is through a recruitment agency, let your consultant negotiate the salary package on your behalf.

10 Tips For a Successful Interview

Listed below are some helpful tips on how to maximise your chances of success in an interview situation.

1 Confirm the details of the interview carefully

- Check the date, time and venue of the interview.
- Find out who will be interviewing you – make sure you know how to pronounce their name(s) and what their role is in the company.
- Check how long it will take for you to get to the interview. Make sure you know exactly where it is and how to get there.

2 Research the company

- Do as much “homework” on the company as you can – interviewers are always keen to know that a candidate has done some research!
- Find out about the business, and the people involved – ask your consultant whether they have any information available.
- Check the website or look through an annual report.

3 Prepare yourself

- Make a copy of your resume and any supporting documents (eg tertiary qualifications) to take with you to the interview.
- Look at the job description or advertisement and review the skills and attributes the company is looking for – how does your background and experience fit in?
- Prepare to answer some of the more common interview questions and to describe yourself in terms of how suitable you are for the role.
- Prepare some questions that you would like to ask about the company. Remember, an interview is a two-way process!
- Rehearse the interview – you can never be too prepared.

4 Dress to impress

- Dress professionally – assume that the company will be corporate and conservative.
- Wear business clothes (preferably in dark colours) and clean, unscuffed shoes.
- Pay attention to personal grooming.

5 Make a good first impression

- Remember, you will never get a second chance to make a first impression!
- Arrive a little early if possible and take a moment to calm down.
- Be polite to everyone you meet – you never know who you are speaking to in the lift or at the Reception desk.
- Always be friendly and professional. Never criticise former employers.
- Try to appear confident and relaxed. Use a firm handshake when you greet the interviewer(s).
- Don't forget to turn off your mobile phone.

6 Answer & ask questions

- When asked a question, answer it directly and stick to the point. Never lie about anything – you will nearly always be found out.
- Avoid yes/no answers.
- Offer information that supports your answer, or examples from previous positions you have held.
- If you don't understand a question, ask the interviewer to repeat it or to clarify what they mean.
- Ask questions yourself – you need to feel comfortable with the job and the company too!

7 Sell yourself

- Highlight your good points and be honest about your ability and experience.
- If you feel that you haven't had a chance to "state your case", ask for an opportunity to explain why you feel you are suited to the role.

8 End on a high note

- Ask how many other people are being interviewed and when you can expect to hear from the company regarding your success or otherwise.
- You want the interviewer(s) to remember you favourably – thank them for their time and give a firm handshake.

9 De-brief after the event

- Call the consultant who referred you for the role (if it was through an agency) and let them know how it went.
- Seek feedback on your interview from the consultant if it is available.

10 Stay positive

- If you are not successful, use the interview experience as a learning opportunity and stay positive – don't let a 'knock back' adversely affect your performance in future interviews.

Frequently Asked Interview Questions

Listed below are some of the more frequently asked interview questions – take some time to think about them in advance and how you might respond if asked something similar.

- What are the main responsibilities in your current (or most recent) role?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you know about our company?
- Why would you like to work for us?
- Do you prefer to work as an individual or as part of a team?
- What interested you in this position?
- What skills can you bring to the position?
- Can you describe a time when you've faced a difficult challenge and how you overcame it?
- How have you handled conflict in a previous role?
- Why are you leaving your current role?

Questions you might ask in an interview:

- Is this a newly created position or are you replacing someone who is leaving?
- Who would I report to in the role?
- Where would I fit in the organisational structure?
- What type of training and induction will be provided?
- What attributes would you hope that I could bring to the role?

Evaluating Candidates

Behavioural/Situational Style Questions

A common technique in interview settings is the use of behavioural style questions. These questions refer to your past experience and are used to gauge how you might behave in the future.

The questions are generally phrased along the lines of “Tell me about a time when...” or “Give me an example of when you have ...”. The key is to answer the questions fully, provide examples of what you have done in previous jobs and to be specific about your actions. Generally, give 3 part answers; what the situation was, the action you took and the outcome. Keep your answers as relevant and as recent as possible.

Skills Testing

Depending on the organisation and the role, if particular skill levels are required skills testing can be a very useful way of evaluating candidates. Recruitment Edge offers skills testing facilities which might involve a test of your competence in certain software packages, such as Microsoft Word, Excel or PowerPoint, or it may, for example, involve a typing speed assessment. Candidates can also use the results of the tests to identify skills that may need to be developed.

Psychometric Assessment

Some companies use psychometric assessments to predict how a candidate would perform in a specific role and Recruitment Edge is often asked to conduct such assessments on behalf of clients.

This type of assessment does not mark you on right and wrong answers – it is more a guide as to how you will “fit” in an organisation or role. It looks at your interpersonal style, work style, and critical thinking ability as well as what motivates you and what you find important in the work environment.

If you are unsure about a type of assessment that is being used, or what it is intended to do, contact your Recruitment Edge consultant. We're here to help!