



# **The Step By Step Guide To Interview Success**



**Telephone: 01895-443181**  
**Email: [staff@gsarecruitment.co.uk](mailto:staff@gsarecruitment.co.uk)**  
**Web: [www.gsarecruitment.co.uk](http://www.gsarecruitment.co.uk)**

# Introduction

- **Interview Techniques**

- If skills and knowledge were all that counted in getting a job, there would be no need for interviews. Companies would simply look at your CV, verify its accuracy and make a decision based on that alone.
- This is obviously not the case as companies want to meet the person they will employ. They will want to assess your skills, and gain a measure of your personality as a potential employee to determine whether you are the kind of individual that would benefit their company.
- In the following pages we will give you a general guide which will help you gain the skills and confidence to attend a professional interview. You will have useful tips for on **how to prepare, Interview do's and don'ts plus questions and answers** and an overall idea of what to expect.



# The Steps

- Do Your Research
- First Impressions
- The Interview
- The Interview Process
- The Interview Relationship
- Their Q&A to You
- Your Q&A to Them
- Things To Avoid
- How To Finish
- The Follow Up

# Do Your Research

- **Know the location.** Be clear on where the company is located and plan on how you will get there. Do not leave this to the last minute, as rushing could not only make you late but also make you arrive in the wrong state of mind.
- **Learn as much as you can about the vacancy and the company.** One of the first questions you may be asked is “how much do you know about our company?”. Having knowledge of what the company do as well as the vacancy will indicate you are prepared and organised. Typical information may include the service or product they provide, the size of the company, turnover and client base. Much of this information is readily available from the company’s own website and the internet in general. If all else fails telephone the company and ask them directly.



- **Job matching yourself to the vacancy.**

If you are clear in your mind as to why you would be a good choice for the job it will come over in an interview. So assess which of your skills you think would be the greatest asset to both the job and the company prior to attending. If you do not fully match the requirement, think how you could adapt to the role through in-house training or learning “on the job”. In addition think of what skills you have that could benefit the company in general.

- **Be relaxed.** It may be easier said than done, but it may help to remember two points. They are already interested in you, or else you would not have been selected for interview in the first place. Additionally it is also about you liking them. Many job offers are actually turned down, which means the selection is a two-way process.



# First Impressions

## Arriving for Interview

- First impressions count! It has been shown that most of an interviewer's opinion is formed in the first five minutes of an interview. So always try to make a good start.
- **When to arrive.** As a rough guide it is advisable to arrive between ten and fifteen minutes early for the interview. If you arrive too early it may be best to wait before going in. Arriving late is to be avoided at **all** costs, as this would suggest future time keeping could be a problem.
- **Mobile Phones.** Always turn your mobile phone off during an interview. Do not just turn it to silent as vibrating phones can still be heard in a quiet environment.



- **Dress code.** Always dress smartly for the interview, and if possible ask about the format of the interview before hand to give you an idea of how formal it will be. If you are going for an office based position, a suit or formal attire is recommended. If you are going for a more manual position, casual dress code may be acceptable, but it is still important to be clean and tidy, i.e.no ripped, dirty or creased clothing and keep jewellery to a minimum.
- If you are a coffee drinker, smoker or have a meal prior to an interview be aware of your breath. If necessary, have a mint or brush your teeth prior to going in, never chew gum during the interview.
- **The initial introduction.** Start the interview in the right direction by means of a confident introduction. Know whom you are seeing, introduce yourself, make eye contact, give a polite greeting and a firm handshake. Also don't forget to smile.



# The Interview

- **The Format of the Interview.** It is always best if you can find out beforehand the format it will take by simply asking the company or agency. Some interviews may be multi-stage, having an initial skills based assessment with successful applicants going through to a second interview. If you know there will be a written or practical test, then revise or practice before you go. Other interviews may be primarily verbal and more informal. On such occasions the interviewer may be able to give you an instant decision at the end of the interview, although this is not always the case.
- **The Balance in the Interview.** Interviews can take many formats, dependent on the job, the company and the interviewer. In general the interview will be lead by the interviewer with 30% of the conversation coming from them and 70% from you.





# The Interview Relationship

- It is always best to place yourself on the same level as the person interviewing you. If you take a subservient approach they will take the more dominant position, which could affect their confidence in you. Similarly if you take a more dominant approach the interviewer may be concerned about you taking direction from them in the future.

# Their Questions – Your Answers

To get you to speak the interviewer may ask more open than closed yes/no type questions. Some are designed to simply find out more about you and others may be test you.

Below is a sample of typical questions you may be asked:

- Q: Can you tell me about yourself?
- A: *Avoid a long rambling reply and make your response as relative as possible to the job you are applying for.*
- Q: What did you do in your previous jobs?
- A: *Start with the main responsibilities and only go into great detail if they seem particularly interested in something.*



- Q: What did you excel at?
- A: *Don't be modest, everybody is good at something, so show confidence in what you know without being arrogant.*
- Q: Why did you leave your previous companies?
- A: *Always give a positive reason. i.e. leaving because of what you were looking to gain from a new job is better than being negative about your old job or company.*
- Q: What were your achievements in your last positions?
- A: *Again, don't be modest, show off a little.*
- Q: What made you apply for this position?
- A: *An ideal opportunity to show enthusiasm in both the job and the company.*



- Q: What do you think you could offer our company?
- A: *This answer should be based around both your skills and you as a person. Characteristics like enthusiasm, loyalty, attitude and professionalism play just as big a part as your skills.*
- Q: What did you enjoy most in your previous jobs?
- A: *Think why they are asking the question and how the answers would relate to the job you are applying for.*
- Q: Why do you want to work with us?
- A: *If you can't answer this one they will wonder why you are there. Think of the positive things about both the company and the job and you will have your answer.*
- Q: What are your strengths?
- A: *As before, don't be modest.*



- Q: What did you not enjoy in your previous jobs?
- A: *Be careful, if you mention a task which could be part of the job you are applying for you could shoot yourself in the foot. The best approach would be to try and turn this in to a positive. e.g. "I found my previous job limited me in that I felt I was able to take on more responsibilities."*
- Q: What are your weaknesses?
- A: *You can either go for the typical positive response of "I get bored if I am not kept busy", although this can be a little transparent and clichéd. It would be better to pick on something you feel would not be an interview breaker. i.e. More of a minor weakness than a major character flaw.*



- Q: Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?
- A: *It is always best to show a little ambition but don't overdo it. Your answer should be relevant to the company and the job. If you are applying for a pressurised sales role you would need to show more drive. In a more steady background role you may need to show that doing the job you will be taken on for would suit you fine. And be honest, as an experienced interviewer will see through you.*
- Q: Why do you think I should offer you the job?
- A: *Again, use both your skills and character traits in this answer. Even a little flattery can go a long way. Saying "how well you could fit in" would both compliment them personally and also suggest you would be good to work with.*



# Scenario Questions

- You may also be given scenario questions such as “If a client asks you to deliver the product and it will not be ready in time, how would you respond?” These questions are not usually asked in the hope of getting an exact response, but more aimed at seeing how you think. They may also be trying to assess your behavioural patterns. You may even be asked how you have handled these situations in the past.
- *There are no perfect answers, so the best way to respond is to be honest and present your answers in a positive light. Be clear and concise and avoid being vague at all costs.*



# Your Questions – Their Answers

- Asking questions of the person interviewing you serves two purposes. Firstly it will tell you what you need to know about the company and the job. Secondly it will show your enthusiasm and interest in the job. Many of your questions should be in response to what they are saying as it will show you are listening. Having no questions or response would suggest that you either do not understand or are not paying attention. For example, a response to “you will be dealing direct with clients” may be “will that be over the phone or in person?”





## **In general typical questions may include:**

- Can you tell me more about the day-to-day duties?
- How has this position become vacant?
- Can you give me more detail on the company?
- What would be my main responsibilities?
- What are the prospects for promotion?
- What training will I be given?
- What are the future plans for the company?
- Who will I report to?
- Would it be possible to see more of the Company?



# Things To Avoid

- Do not be over chatty. *If you talk too much in an interview they will be concerned about you being over chatty in the workplace.*
- Do not heavily criticise previous employers. *No matter how justified, you will just come over as a malcontent.*
- Do not make your first question about holiday or sick pay.
- Never show aggression or frustration and never argue with the person interviewing you.
- Do not argue or criticize the way the company works.
- Don't show lack of interest through your body language. *Look at the person speaking to you, react to what they say and don't fidget.*



# How To Finish The Interview

- When the interview is coming to a close, it is good psychology to finish on a positive note. If you feel an interview has gone well, there is nothing to be lost by asking “do you feel I could be of interest to your company?” If the answer is “No” it would probably always have been a “No” regardless. If they feel you could be suited, they will likely answer “Yes” and if this is the last thing they say to you it will be the last thing they remember. You can also ask the question “when could you expect to hear from them?” as this may avoid a more delayed response. Statistically, the more someone delays making a decision the more likely it will be a “No”.



# The Follow Up

- Another way of showing your enthusiasm is with a follow up call to the interview. The interviewer will usually give an indication of when you should hear feedback, if not... it is acceptable to call a few days later (although not less than four days). The sensible approach would be one of an proactive candidate, keen on the job rather than an impatient candidate demanding to know what is happening. Under no circumstances sound pushy or aggressive as this may induce a negative response.

## **Finally...**

- When all is said and done, your overall personality will play a large part in the selection process. In most cases the person interviewing you will be your future boss. If they like you as a person they are more likely to want to work with you.



**Good luck, now it's up to you.**