



# Excelling at Interview

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## Excelling at Interview

Congratulations! If you have been invited for interview, you've already persuaded someone who has significant influence over the final appointment that you are of potential value. So use this knowledge to inspire you and bolster your confidence when you come to the interview itself.

### Preparation Prevents Poor Performance

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Preparing for the interview is absolutely critical. You should have a detailed brief before you meet your interviewer, or at least you will have had an in-depth conversation about the appointment and the challenges faced by the company we are working with. Use this information to prepare thoroughly for the interview.

Generally, you really can't go too far, although it's probably a good idea to stop short of approaching people currently in the business for guidance. Research the organisation, its financial position, its products, markets and target customers as much as you can, and make sure you know exactly what you will be talking about with your interviewer. Make sure that you are familiar with your CV and decide what your main strengths and weaknesses are - you will almost certainly need to discuss these.

*“Think about where you have made a significant positive impact and be prepared to discuss it”*

Working with the brief or the advertisement, take the time to identify the key aspects of the role and the competencies being sought, and make sure that you are in a position to give a choice of recent examples from your experience to demonstrate as many of these as possible. For previous roles think about where you have made a significant positive impact and be prepared to discuss it. Think carefully about your motivations for applying for the position - what are you looking to achieve with this move? Consider how a recent employer might describe you.

If you have any questions about the opportunity, give these some thought and make a list. You'll usually have the chance to discuss these during the interview.

### What will your interviewer ask?

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We will want to know how you will perform in the role and how you will help to develop the company in the longer term, and we'll probably cover the following points:

- What is your knowledge of the company?
- Have you done something similar before and if so how can you demonstrate success?
- What differences did YOU make in that role?
- How you would apply your skills and experience within the new post and what difference do you think you could make?
- How quickly will you be able to establish yourself?

- How would you fit within the organisation?
- What are your motivations – why this company, why now, what are your goals and aspirations?

Remember that past performance is one of the best indicators of likely future performance, so we're likely to go into detail and want to know specifics. Please know your key numbers as appropriate for your function – quantifiable indicators of success such as increase in revenue or profits, reduction in staff turnover and so on.

Most senior interviews are competency-based. During a competency-based interview we will be looking for evidence from you to illustrate when and how you have demonstrated the skills needed to do the job we're interviewing for well.

### Interview etiquette

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There are a few dos and don'ts:

- As a general rule be smartly dressed. If you absolutely have to appear in casual wear, make sure your interviewer knows in advance.
- Make sure that you have allowed as much time as you need to arrive at the interview at the scheduled time. It is better to arrive early and have a coffee than to arrive late and be flustered.
- Be concise and don't waffle - answer the question asked, not the one you would have preferred. When you've finished answering the question, stop talking! This gives the interviewer time to consider their next question.
- Remain confident and alert. Keep good eye contact and be conscious of your body language.

*“Remember that we're all on your side... so relax, be yourself and enjoy the discussion”*

### That something extra...

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Really good interviews move along easily and well, and are much more like business discussions than a Q&A session. The movers and shakers of the executive world know their value and their potential worth to an employer, but don't tend to shout about it. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't take credit where it's due, and certainly don't fall into the trap of being too self-effacing. Your interviewer may have already held four or five interviews that day; be interesting and interested, be ready to talk about the general market, topical business issues or your leisure pursuits; remember that your interviewer wants to get to know your personality just as much as what you've achieved.

### A few final points

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Remember that we're all on your side – yes, we're selecting a shortlist of the very best candidates, but everyone wants you to be the right person for the job. So keep on top of any nerves, relax, be yourself and enjoy the discussion.