

## INTERVIEW PREPARATION INFORMATION SHEET

### INTRODUCTION

Going for an interview can be pretty nerve racking, however the more prepared you are, the more confident you will feel and appear. At Bond Williams we can provide you with valuable and practical advice to prepare you for the toughest questions and interview scenarios that you are likely to face. This information will help you feel confident and ready to answer any question that may be thrown at you and ultimately secure your ideal job.

It is surprising how many people go for interviews without knowing anything about the role, what suitable skills they have or even anything about the company. You only ever get one chance to make a first impression and therefore it is crucial that you are well prepared. During the interview the interviewer is looking for you to sell yourself and it is vital that you know your CV, have read the job spec thoroughly and know why you are applying for the role.

### INTERVIEW PREPARATION

**Research:** Make sure you conduct some initial background research on the company before your interview. It is really important that you are aware of exactly what the company does as the interviewer is highly likely to ask what you know about them. They will take this as an initial sign of your interest in working for them. It will also demonstrate your ability to use your own initiative. Company websites are an excellent source of information and you should aim to gain as much information as you can from them. Individuals who have spent time researching the company always impress interviewers.

**Plan your route:** Know where you are going and if possible, do a trial run to the company beforehand. Don't be late by trying to find the company as it shows you are disorganised and have failed to plan.

**Familiarise yourself with your CV:** Read through both your CV and the job description beforehand making a note of your relevant skills and attributes - the interviewer will ask you questions around your CV so be prepared to explain your reasons for leaving each job in a positive light.

**Prepare:** Prepare any questions for the interview in advance as the interviewer is likely to ask if you have any questions at the end of the interview. Asking questions shows interest, people skills and emotional intelligence.

### THE INTERVIEW

#### Personal Presentation

- Ensure you always wear business attire irrelevant of what role you are going for. First impressions last! If you are not smart enough initially this could go against you, so dress in a professional manner; for gentlemen we would suggest a shirt, tie and suit (if you have one) and for ladies skirt/trousers and a shirt or again a suit if you have one. If you look smart, the interviewer will know that you are taking your job search seriously and that you have a professional attitude to your work.

## Be Prepared

- Make a note of who you are seeing and know who you need to ask for.
- Make sure you arrive on time, it is better to be early than late, although don't arrive too early, 10 minutes before is fine.
- Anyone you meet from this moment forward may directly or indirectly influence the final decision maker therefore ensure you are polite to the receptionist, secretary etc.
- Take a copy of your CV with you so you can go through it with the interviewer.
- If you smoke try not to smoke before you go into the interview.

## Body Language

- Body language plays a big part during the interview. Be aware of how you sit during the interview, ensure you have good posture and you don't fold your arms for example. Many candidates can jeopardise their chances because they look disinterested at interview, but positive, open body language will make sure this doesn't happen.
- Make sure you shake hands firmly with your interviewer and smile; your initial greeting, as with your presentation, will create an important first impression.
- Look interested. If you are nervous keep your hands on your lap under the table and try not to fidget as this will distract the interviewer and may show that you are nervous and possibly not right for the role.
- Try to maintain eye contact, candidates who are unable to maintain some eye contact can again make the interviewer think they are not interested or may indicate they are not being honest with the information they are giving. If there is more than one person present during the interview, which is often the case, ensure you respond to both parties when answering questions to show you can build relationships.

## GENERAL INTERVIEW ADVICE

- During the interview be confident, be yourself and be enthusiastic. The client has taken the time out to read your CV and has put time aside to interview you so they are obviously interested in what you have to offer. Remain courteous throughout the interview and try not to use slang or abbreviated words. You are looking to show the interviewer that you are motivated and that you will be a good fit for their team and organisation.
- During the interview you should look to convey your accomplishments and strengths and relate them to the role you are going for. You will need to focus on the positives and steer clear of any negatives, be it previous managers or previous positions, as this can really go against you at interview.
- Avoid answering just 'yes' or 'no' answers and instead give good relevant answers. Do not underestimate your abilities if you have not had previous work experience - relate the questions to your studies instead i.e. working to deadlines- course deadlines etc. Be careful not to oversell yourself and come across as over confident as again this can be a deciding factor for the interviewer.
- During the interview show that you are knowledgeable about the company and ask relevant questions about the company to show that you have prepared for the interview i.e. is training given? What are they looking for in the successful applicant?
- Listen - sometimes people actually forget to listen to the questions. Don't be afraid to ask for something to be repeated if you don't understand or need clarification and take time to consider your answer.
- The interviewer is very likely to ask you why you are interested in the job and be able to explain clearly and articulately about why you are well suited and what skills you can bring to the position.
- The interviewer will ask you lots of questions and may at times need you to clarify certain information. This is just trying to ascertain whether you are right for the role so try not to get flustered and give as much information as you feel they need.

# QUESTIONS

When attending interviews it is a good idea to have a list of relevant questions prepared beforehand regarding information that you would be keen to know more about. Relevant questions show the interviewer that you have taken time to think about the role and show that you are serious about the position on offer.

Here are a few examples of questions that you could ask:

- What is your induction process and what training do you offer?
- Why is the role available?
- When are you looking for someone to start the role?
- What are you looking for in the successful applicant?
- How do you feel I compare with other candidates you have seen?
- Who would I report into and how would you describe them?
- What is the company culture like?
- Does the company have any future plans for growth?
- How will I fit into the overall organisational structure?
- What would you expect from me during the first three months?
- Who are your customers and main competitors?

Here is a few examples of questions that are likely to be asked to you during interview:

- Talk me through your CV.
- Describe your current job and responsibilities.
- Describe your greatest achievements in your current job. (Give me an example)
- What are your greatest strengths and also weaknesses?
- What motivates you?
- What management style gets the best results out of you?
- Are you able to work under pressure? (Give me an example)
- Do you have a flexible approach to work (hours/travel)?
- Do you work better alone or within a team?
- Where do you see yourself in the next couple of years?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How long have you been job hunting?
- What do you know about the company?
- Why are you interested in this role?
- What do you feel you can bring to this role?
- Why do you want to change roles?
- Do you have any reservations about the role?
- What could your existing employer say or do to keep you?
- What would your ideal job be?
- How often were you off sick last year?
- Is there anything your current employer could say or do to convince you to stay with them?

## Closing the Interview

At the end of the interview let them know if you are interested in the job and ask when you can expect to hear from them, when they expect to make a decision and when are they looking for someone to start in the role? You could ask how many people they are interviewing and what the next stage will be if you are successful? If nothing else, ensure that you thank them for their time and leave them knowing that you are interested in the role. Don't forget to say goodbye to the receptionist as you leave, particularly if he/she have taken care of you whilst you were waiting.

## After the Interview

Our partnership works best when there is good open communication, therefore please call Bond Williams with feedback as soon as possible after your interview and let us know what you thought of the role and the company. We ask clients for interview feedback for your information and we like to give them feedback too. Clients can be disappointed if we have not received feedback from candidates and could take it as a sign you are not enthusiastic about the job or the company. There may also be questions resulting from the interview, we can help sort out the finer details so that both parties are happy and hopefully arrange a successful outcome for you both!

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