



Interview: what you need to know

Simple preparation steps will make all the difference

Analyse Yourself

Do you know the biggest thing that companies are looking for in their applicants?

Self awareness!!

This means an ability to communicate both your strengths and weaknesses and to give examples to illustrate your point. Most applicants will be qualified for the position. The only way you can differentiate yourself from others is in your personal skills and approach.

Companies love people who can show that they have learned from experience, people who explain with examples how they are adaptable, and people who are willing to change.

Regardless of the position, most companies require a generic set of skills in their employees.

Prepare examples that demonstrate the following skills:

- Team Working Skills
- Organisation Skills
- Problem Solving Skills
- Communication Skills
- Planning Skills

When preparing it is useful to complete the following table

	Team Working	Organisation	Problem Solving	Communication	Planning
What role did I play in my example?					
What action did I take?					
What was the outcome?					
What have I learned from this experience?					

Analyse The Company

It is almost certain that you will be asked some questions about the company you are applying to.

The interviewer wants to know that you are serious about the position you are applying for.

Questions you may be asked include:

- What do you know about the company?
- Have you done any research about this company?
- Why do you want to work here?

Do some basic research beforehand. (Consider the following):

- What are the values of the company?

- What is the company's main market?
- What are their key product/service lines?
- Who are the company's biggest competitors?
- Recent new initiatives or advertising

Information about a company can be found on their website. Annual reports prove particularly useful in summarising key company information and are usually downloadable. It is a good idea to type the company's name into a search engine to find recent news of its activities, or go onto a shares website to get latest financial news.

It sounds very impressive in an interview to say that you have made a few telephone calls before the interview. This makes you stand out against other candidates who may only have searched their website.

Analyse The Job Role

You will also be asked questions about the role you are applying for.

Questions you may be asked include:

- Why do you think you would like this type of role?
- What interests you most about the job?
- What do you think this position will involve?

Consider the following topics, and prepare your personal expectations and opinions before your interview:

What technical, organisational and communication skills are required for this role?

What level of responsibility is involved with this role?

What training is required for this role?

What likely career progressions will result from this role?

KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. LEARN YOUR APPLICATION FORM

Make sure you know what you wrote on your application form. The interviewer will probably use your form as a basis for the interview.

2. SHOW CONFIDENCE

A lot of people don't know how to do this, and it is very simple. Three things to remember: SMILE, NOD (when they are talking to you) ASK them questions.

3. ASK THE INTERVIEWER QUESTIONS THROUGHOUT

The company is likely to be looking for future managers, so make sure you show some initiative and confidence. When you have finished an answer, immediately go on to ask a question instead of waiting to be invited.

Here are some areas you could ask about:

The opportunity to work on different projects	The qualities they are looking for
The appraisal and assessment system	Any opportunities to be responsible

4. TAKE YOUR TIME

Rushing to give answers will make you sound nervous and will increase the likelihood of you making massive mistakes. Always give yourself time to think. Pause after the question, clarify it if necessary and then answer.

When thinking about the question you have been given, consider the following:

- Why are they asking me this question?
- What skills can I demonstrate in my answer?
- Which of my experiences can I discuss to demonstrate these skills?

5. TREAT IT LIKE A CONVERSATION

The best candidates don't treat it as an interview. They treat it as a conversation where both sides are finding out things about each other and sharing information. Don't think to yourself 'I am going for an interview'. Instead think 'I am going to have a conversation with them about work opportunities'. This will help you come across as relaxed and confident.

20 GREAT QUESTIONS TO ASK!!!!

Interviewers are looking for people who ask them sensible questions. When you ask questions at an interview it is a great opportunity to stand out from the others.

Here are 20 great questions you can ask the interviewer to make you sound professional and confident:

1. Could you explain whether the role will involve a variety of types of work to give me a range of experience in my early career?

2. Could you outline for me how I might interface with H.R. during my first years or so?
3. Does the company find it easy or difficult to obtain the right skill levels for the success of the business?
4. Has the company been increasing or decreasing its graduate intake over the past few years?
5. I would like to agree work prioritisation with my manager, is this something you would expect to happen?
6. Could you outline for me any facilities available for self learning outside of working hours?
7. I understand in many companies you are asked to be involved in several projects at once, will that be true here?
8. Will the company provide opportunity for professional qualifications?
9. Will there be opportunity to learn processes and methods in this area or work?
10. Could you explain to me in what direction the company wants to move over the next few years?
11. Could you outline for me the main pressures of the job that I will face?
12. Will there be opportunity for me to use recent office technology such as remote emailing and working from different locations?
13. Could you explain to me how new ideas are generated and assessed in the company?
14. Will there be opportunity for me to deal directly with customers?
15. Could you outline for me the main values of the company?
16. Could you explain to me how I will be assessed?
17. Will there be opportunity for me to meet colleagues from different areas of the company?
18. Will there be opportunities in this role for decision making?
19. Could you explain to me how you retain your staff?
20. Could you outline for me the training I can expect to receive?