



Guidelines for Interviews

Your CV is just the first step to securing a new job. Your performance through the interview process can make all the difference so we aim to provide you with the tools you need to perform better than the rest. Following a few simple guidelines like the ones below will help you to impress!

What do Employers Expect of You?

1. Excellent Preparation
2. Punctuality
3. A strong first impression
4. Demonstration of core skills and experience
5. A match to their needs

1. Preparation

Good preparation is crucial. Preparation is evidence of professionalism and displays an interest in the company. It is also indicative of the way a candidate is likely to work.

1. Research the company you are meeting with via company websites, recent news articles in the press/ trade publications, read their corporate brochure and annual reports if available.
2. Completely familiarise yourself with the job description and gain as much information as possible about the role/ team structures etc.

Good background understanding of a company enables you to discuss relevant issues meaningfully with the interviewer. Wherever possible Expect consultants will help you with preparation for your interview.

2. Punctuality

If you arrive late for an interview, no matter how genuine your reason might be, you are making an impression about your ability to plan and prepare for the unexpected. It also means a lack of respect for the interviewer's time. It is better to be early than late so try to be on the premises at least 15 minutes in advance before the interview begins. This affords you the time to relax prior to the interview. In the unexpected event of you being late for an interview, contact the company to advise them.

3. A Strong First Impression

You never get a second chance to make a first impression so ensure that you approach all the people you meet at the company with politeness, respect and enthusiasm. Interviewers will often ask the receptionist or other staff who you have met, for their feedback including how you behaved when you reported to reception. Anyone you meet during the interview is a potential future colleague so remember that.

4. Demonstration of Core Skills and Experience

Ensure that you devote preparation time to thinking about the possible questions that you might be asked. Study your CV and list some question that could arise from it. Many questions will be based around the core competencies and skills required for the job. You will probably be asked to give some examples of situations you have been in to demonstrate your skills.



This will vary depending on the type of job you are applying for but some typical areas to think about are below:

- Team working
- Logical Thinking
- Problem-Solving Ability
- Resourcefulness
- Lateral Thinking
- Prioritisation skills
- Organisation skills & planning
- Meeting Objectives
- Decision-Making
- Pro-Activeness
- Initiative
- Analytical Ability
- Motivating Others
- Confidence
- Communication
- Leadership Skills (does not only apply to managers)
- Ambition & Drive
- Commercial Awareness

Also give some thought into your motivations, expectations and long-term career plans and how they fit in with the role you are being interviewed for.

Matching Needs

Most candidates go into an interview and concentrate on their skills, experiences and past job duties. They often fail to make a connection between their core skills and the job for which they are being interviewed i.e. the employer's needs. Go into the interview thinking about what you can bring to the company. You should be able to identify the employer's requirements, read between the lines of the job description and demonstrate the added value that you bring to them.

Example Question: How would you describe your strengths?

Answer 1: I am a good communicator, hard-working, flexible and a team-player.

Answer 2: I am very hard-working and flexible, which means that if a customer calls at 5.30pm and they need something done urgently I will ensure that I give 110% and will stay late to get the job done, this helps the team as it is one less thing for them to do the next day and ultimately ensures that the customer is happy.

Answer 1 is a list of attributes which are probably already on your CV. Answer 2 demonstrates commitment, flexibility, strong work ethics, a hard-worker, the importance of the customer to the candidate, and awareness of the team.



Use benefit statements which relate back to the job description such as...

which means that...
therefore...

which demonstrates...
which shows...

for example...
so I can...

Body Language

An increasing number of candidates slouch during interviews, rather than sitting upright. Good posture projects energy and enthusiasm, sitting forward slightly shows interest in what the interviewer is saying. The inability to look directly into the interviewer's eyes could be interpreted as a lack of professionalism or a lack of honesty. Crossed arms can be seen as defensive and often suggests lack of receptivity to new ways of working or ideas.

Other ways to impress

Prepare Questions for your Interviewer: By preparing a few relevant questions for your interviewer you will demonstrate eagerness for the job, enthusiasm and an interest in the company. Some of your questions may be answered by your interviewer as part of the interview so always prepare more than you need so that you do not ask questions about subjects which have already been discussed.

Send a thank-you note: You can make a good and lasting impression by sending a thank-you note after an interview. In an email you can thank the interviewer for their time, and offer to provide any additional material that may be required and say that you look forward to hearing from them. You will be surprised how many candidates do not do this and it can really set you apart from your competition.

Switch Off your Mobile during the Interview: It is very irritating to clients and interviewers to have your mobile telephone ringing during an interview session. It does not give a good impression of the candidate no matter how urgent the call is. Always remember to switch off your mobile telephone during interviews. In the unlikely situation of your phone ringing during an interview never answer it, always reject the call and apologise to your interviewer.

Recommendation letters and testimonials: To support your CV, take along documents to support your CV such as copies of recommendation or thank you letters from previous managers, customers or clients.

30 Example Interview Questions to practice with:

1. What do you think is the most important thing to remember when dealing with customers?
2. Can you tell me about a time when you have had to deal with an angry customer? How did you handle the situation? What could you have done differently?
3. What was the last suggestion you made in your company to improve a process or procedure?
4. How many people are in your current team? What role do you play in the team?
5. How do cope with stress?
6. How would a fellow colleague describe you?
7. How would your current manager describe you?
8. What contribution could you make to this company?
9. What do you know already about our business?
10. Which achievement are you most proud of?

11. How do you get things done?
12. Do you consider yourself successful? Why?
13. What has been your biggest failure to date?
14. How could you improve yourself?
15. Describe your ideal work environment..
16. What are you looking for in a new job?
17. Describe how you typically approach a task / project
18. How good is your time management?
19. What motivates you?
20. Can you give an example of when you had to deal with a difficult situation?
21. What attracted you most to apply for this position?
22. Which parts of the job might you find difficult to handle?
23. Which parts of the job would you be particularly good at?
24. What other positions have you applied for?
25. What are you really good at? What are your core strengths?
26. Describe your personality to me.
27. What role do you play in a team environment?
28. What are your IT skills like?
29. What is your desired career path? What do you see yourself doing in 5 years?
30. What do you want to achieve outside of the work environment?

For more advice on interview techniques or for information on our expert Career Counselling service, please contact us at admin@expect-talent.com.