



Interview Guide

We are here to help

Once your interview has been arranged the Jobshop UK team are always available to answer any questions you may have and provide any further information you might need. If you are unable to make your appointment or you run into difficulties during your journey to your interview, please call us and we will ensure that the company is notified of the delay. The information in this booklet will help you to prepare for your interview and also provides you with some practice questions and answers.

Before your interview

- ✓ **Research the Company.** Look at their website and find out what they do, who their main competitors are and any other information which may come in useful during your interview.
- ✓ **Make sure you know where you are going and how long it will take you to get there.** Plan your journey; visit the Company a couple of days before your interview if you are not familiar with their location.
- ✓ **Make sure you know who you are seeing.** When you arrive in Reception you will need to know who to ask for, make sure you make a note of the interviewers name and job title.
- ✓ **Do you need to take anything with you?** It is unlikely that you will need to take anything other than yourself to the first interview, but always ask the question.
- ✓ **Know the job.** Read the role profile/job description for the position you have applied for. Make sure you know the responsibilities and what the job involves.

On the day of your interview

- ✓ **First impressions count!** Make sure you dress appropriately, if you look smart it will make you feel more comfortable and confident in yourself.
- ✓ **Be on time.** Make sure you arrive in plenty of time, being late for your interview will create an extremely bad first impression before you even meet the interviewer. **If you are stuck in traffic** always call ahead, take the relevant contact details with you and ring the company (or your agency) to let them know that you will be there as soon as possible.
- ✓ **Remember the interview starts from the moment you arrive on the premises.** Greet the receptionist/secretary with a smile and eye contact. Tell them your name and who your appointment is with, be polite and friendly while you are waiting for your interviewer to collect you, the receptionist/secretary might be asked what they thought of you.
- ✗ **Do not smoke on the way to your interview.** If you are a smoker wait until your interview is over before lighting up a cigarette.

At the interview

- ✓ **Begin with a firm handshake.** Shake the interviewer's hand, look them in the eye, smile, say hello and introduce yourself if necessary.
- ✓ **Sit up straight and look at the interviewer.** Pay attention to the interviewer, nod and show interest in what they are saying.
- ✓ **Speak clearly.** Speak clearly and don't just give "yes" and "no" answers, explain yourself and be confident.
- ✓ **Be yourself.** The interviewer wants to find out about you, so relax and answer the questions honestly.
- ✓ **Be positive.** Never offer any negative information about yourself, be positive at all times if possible. Make sure you are positive about your reasons for leaving your current job.
- ✓ **Never lie in an interview and do not complain about your current/previous manager or employer.** Do not lie about your previous experience, it will only come back to haunt you. Never complain about your current or previous manager/employer, the interviewer will be wondering what you will say about them when you leave their employment.
- ✓ **At the end of the interview.** When the interview is coming to an end, the interviewer will most probably ask if you have any questions, always have some questions in mind to ask at this point. Ask about the job, the organisational structure, who you will report to, will you receive any training, will they be holding second interviews and when are you likely to hear from them.

Interview questions and answers

There are hundreds of interview questions that you might be asked, here are a few hints and tips to help you when preparing your answers.

- **Tell me about yourself**

This is a common opening question, this is your opportunity to positively introduce yourself. Focus on your career history and refer to skills, qualifications and achievements which may be relevant to the job you are being interviewed for. Always start with your previous work experience and work back in time, do not include your "school days" unless this is absolutely necessary. Then briefly speak about yourself on a more personal level, so where you live and what you like to do in your spare time.

- **What do you know about our company?**

This is an excellent opportunity to show the interviewer that you have done your research and that you are keen to work for the company. When preparing for the interview look at the company's website and find out as much as you can. It is surprising how many candidates let themselves down by simply not knowing anything about the company, so do your research; it could get you your dream job!

- **What is the understanding of the role you have applied for?**

Make sure you read the position profile in respect of the job you are applying for so when the interviewer asks what you know about the vacancy you can answer the question with confidence and enthusiasm.

- **What are your strengths/weaknesses?**

Strengths – pick things that are relevant to the role you are being interviewed for. It may be that you are an excellent communicator, that you are able to keep calm in a hectic working environment, that you are reliable, punctual or assertive.

Weaknesses – try to use weaknesses which can also be seen as positives where possible. You could say that you can be a bit of a perfectionist at times or that you sometimes become very opinionated with regard to the job in hand. If you tell the interviewer that you don't like getting out of the bed in the morning or that you can be disorganised, they may not want to give you the job!

- **What did you like best and least about your previous job?**

This question reveals a lot about you, when answering with regard to what you liked least about your previous job be as brief as possible and try not be negative. "What I liked best about my last job was the fact that there was good on the job training, I was able to develop some very valuable skills which I know would be beneficial to me in the role available here" "What I liked least about my last job was that the management style was pretty hands off, which was fine for me because I am self motivated, but the lack of structure allowed some of my team mates to slack off occasionally and I often had to pick up the extra work"

- **Why do you want to leave your current job?**

Be professional when answering this question, do not personalise any grievance or be negative about your current employer. You may be simply furthering your career for greater challenges.

- **Why did you apply for this job?**

Highlight skills and experience here which you think makes you suitable for the vacancy, tell the interviewer what attracted you to the company as well. It may be that the job offers an opportunity for career progression and new challenges.

- **Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?**

The interviewer wants to know how the company can benefit from the plans you have for yourself. You could mention your desire for career advancement, taking on new challenges and greater responsibility.

- **Why should we employ you?**

Be honest. The interviewer is not trying to catch you out or embarrass you, just tell them that you believe you have the right skills for the job, you are very interested in what the company does and that you think you could bring a lot of enthusiasm and new ideas to the job.

Handling difficult topics of discussion

There may be aspects of your career that present obstacles to employment if you do not handle them properly. Even the most common causes of concern for employers can be turned into positives.

You were dismissed from your last job. When you discuss this at your interview provide emotionally neutral answers, do not become guarded or aggressive when questioned about this. Always be sure to include lessons you have learnt from this which could benefit your next employer.

You were made redundant at your last job. Most interviewers are aware that redundancy is an unfortunate business requirement in most companies these days, emphasise that the redundancy was unrelated to you as a person and an employee. This is a great opportunity to show that you can make the best of every situation and remain positive at all times.

You don't have enough experience. Try to identify transferable skills and experience which may help to convince the interviewer of your ability to the job and remember, they invited you in for an interview so they must believe that you are capable of doing the job.

Summary

It is important to remember that the preparation beforehand is as important as the actual interview, the more prepared you are the more relaxed and confident you will be on the day. So know the company, know the job and as obvious as it sounds; - know your CV! Go through some practice interview questions and answers in your mind to help you and try to be yourself. Remember you are not alone, no-one likes being in an interview situation and everyone gets nervous. Once your interview is over please call your Jobshop UK consultant to let them know how it went.

Good luck!