

Advice on interviews

Any interview, no matter what the state of the job market, is a competition. You may show you have the technical ability, qualifications, experience and a proven track record and still lose out to a candidate who performs better at interview. Your interview skills are key and we hope that this basic advice will not only help you perform better but enable you to approach the meeting with more confidence. We hope you may even enjoy the experience!

Research

If you are interviewing via Asterley Clarke, your consultant should be able to furnish you with all the information on the following check-list:

- Directions of how to get there and an idea of how long does it takes in rush-hour etc.
- Allow an hour, check with your agency if they set up the meeting.
- The name and position of the interviewer, the name and position of the line manager that the position reports to and the names and positions of anyone else who would be part of the recruitment process either now or at a later date.
- An overview of the company including its products and services, competitors, turnover etc.
- A full technical job specification covering duties and the ratios of time the job-holder would allocate to the main functions of the role.
- An idea of the reporting structure within the department.
- Key challenges in the role.
- Skill sets required.
- What form should the interview take? (Will there be tests? Who else might I meet?)
- Any reservations the interviewer may have concerning your application
- The key reasons and areas of your experience that have gained you an opportunity to interview for this role.

The agenda

You would never ask for a meeting at work and not be prepared with some sort of agenda. Incredibly people can approach interviews in this way. You won't be chairing the meeting but there will be key points you need to define beforehand and communicate when you are there.

- With the information gained from your preparation, you should have a clear idea of the role and the skills and strengths a successful candidate needs. Once again, concentrate on experience and achievements that prove you have the qualities and skills they seek. Use multivalent examples that will demonstrate a variety of skill-sets. Be prepared to talk about 3 *relevant* achievements. For help with this see the CV advice document.
- Make sure you know your CV thoroughly without having to physically refer to it. If you have to look through it to answer questions, this never reflects well.
- There will most likely be some areas where you do not have the relevant experience/skill set. Look for experiences that may be associated to that area. If nothing else be prepared to talk about achievements where you have had to climb a steep learning curve in the past, proving that you can do so again.
- Questions on industry should be asked at a reasonably general level re market forces, outlook etc. and should demonstrate some of your research into the sector. Make sure more specific questions relate to the role you are interviewing for. Write down some good questions to ask and commit to ask a minimum of three, (save a good one for the end of the meeting).
- Generally speaking it is best not to discuss salary packages until second interview stage.

Debrief

- After the interview, we will debrief everyone as quickly as possible and, as such, we will need your feedback as soon as possible, (same day is ideal). Frankly we feel feedback any later than 24 hours is impolite and we will speak to you within this time period. Decisions may take a little longer but we will at least give you a timetable of when you will next hear news.