

CLARK RECRUITMENT

INTERVIEW TIPS

No one is hired without making it through at least one interview. An interview is an opportunity to sell your wares to a potential customer - the interviewer. To interview successfully, to sell yourself, you will have to do three things:

- Prepare
- Practice
- Perform

The basic topics that are covered during an interview and the order in which they are most commonly dealt with are:

- you and your skills and work history
- the company
- the position itself
- compensation

1. Things to do at home before your interview

- Make sure you have the exact month and year for each position you have held - these details should also be on your CV.
- Make sure you can talk about every detail that you have listed on your CV.
- Make a list of your strengths (about 5 key strengths). Write down examples of real-life situations where your personal contribution to a situation, project or task at work had a positive outcome. Practise talking about these real-life situations and concentrate on the positive effects of your personal actions. This is possibly the most important preparation you can do for your interview.
- Write down your limitations (one or two is enough). Be honest. Prepare yourself to be able to talk about your weaknesses. Think of real-life situations that illustrate your limitations. Recognising your limitations is in itself a strength
- Prepare some questions that you want to ask about the new position. This will confirm to your interviewer that you are serious about the opportunity they have.

2. Background Information on the Company

- Find out everything you can about the Company
- How many employees does it have?
- What is its annual turnover?
- What type of organisation is it?
- Who owns it?
- Does it have a parent or sister company?
- Find out everything you can about the industry?
- What issues are currently affecting the industry?
- What companies are its competitors?
- Keep up to date with the news
- Make sure you are aware of current affairs and how it may impact the company's business.

3. Presentation for Interview

- Dress appropriately, preferably in smart business clothes. Be well groomed. Make sure that your clothes are smart and clean, if you are wearing a skirt remember to bring a spare pair of stockings in case of last minute disasters, make sure your clothes are comfortable, and dress appropriately for the Company.
- Don't wear too much make-up. However, wearing light natural makeup rather than none at all will enhance your appearance.
- Don't wear strong smelling perfume/aftershave, or jingly bangles/dangly earrings.
- Don't smoke even if invited to do so – it is also advisable not to smoke in the car on the way to the interview.
- Smile and be confident
- Research has shown that an interviewer's impression of you is made up of 55% how you look. 38% how you sound and only 7% on what you say. First impressions are all important, they're quickly formed and hard to change
- Maintain eye contact & listen to what the interviewer has to say (looking down or away can suggest nervousness and dishonesty)
- Don't fidget or slouch in your chair.
- Speak clearly, sound enthusiastic and interested and don't forget to smile.

ACCOUNTANCY • **EXECUTIVE** • **OFFICE** • **SALES & MARKETING**

Property of Clark Recruitment Ltd, The Atrium, John's Lane, Naas, Co. Kildare. Tel : 045 881888

4. How to plan your perfect interview

- Plan on arriving 10 minutes before your scheduled interview time. **Don't be late!**
- Greet the interviewer by last name. If you are unsure of the pronunciation, ask the employer to repeat it.
- Listen carefully to the questions you are asked. You will create a negative impression if your answers do not focus clearly on the questions that were asked. Don't be afraid to ask the interviewer to repeat the question.
- Follow the interviewer's leads, but try to get the interviewer to describe the position and duties to you early in the interview so you can apply your background, skills, and accomplishments to the position.
- When asked for your strengths, give real-life examples of situations, tasks or projects in the workplace that you were involved in. Make sure you use examples where you are able to honestly describe the positive outcome of decision you made or actions you took. This is a vital part of your interview. **This is the best way to sell yourself.** When asked: "Tell me about yourself?" limit your answer to 1 to 2 minutes. Focus on your background and a few professional and personal accomplishments. Think "highlights".
- Make sure you ask some questions as well. Intelligent questions about a new position impress future employers. i.e.: What would I be expected to accomplish in this position? What are the greatest challenges in this position etc? Remember lack of questions may be mistaken as lack of interest
- Answer questions by speaking in terms of the position. Emphasize what you can do for the company. Mention specific accomplishments that show your abilities and determination to succeed in this job. Your answers should tell the employer why you would be an asset to the company, not why you need a job.
- Explain whenever possible; don't answer with a simple "yes" or "no."
- Never say that you have no weaknesses or limitations. Talk openly about them when you are asked to do so – use real-life examples, particularly examples from the workplace.
- Be assertive, not aggressive, about your abilities
- Stress achievements. For example: sales records, processes developed, systems installed, etc.
- Show enthusiasm. Enthusiastic feedback can enhance your chances of being further considered.
- Emphasize your strengths and stay positive; focus on experience and personal qualities that would be beneficial for the position.
- No matter how good you are or how great the demand for your skills, you must sell yourself
- Don't criticise previous employers. Be professional at all times.
- If you are asked why you want to leave your current job, be careful to remain loyal to your current employer.
- **Bring an extra copy of your resume for the interviewer if necessary.**
- Don't talk about your salary expectations unless you are asked to do so. But when the time comes to discuss salary, be prepared to state the amount you feel you deserve.

5. Closing the Interview

It is important to leave the interviewer(s) with a positive impression of you, no matter how you feel the interview has gone.

- remain confident and determined to the end; each question the interviewer asks is important, including the last one;
- ensure that you are aware of all conditions of employment (travelling, medical, security, etc.); you may want to discuss these conditions with the interviewer at the end of the interview;
- Ask when you will be notified of any decisions or the next steps in the process
- **If you are interested in the position, let the interviewer know.** If you want the position, you can say: "I'm very impressed with what I've seen here today; your company, its products and the people I've met. I am confident I could do an excellent job in the position."
- If you get the impression that the interview is not going well and that you have already been rejected, don't let your discouragement show. Once in a while an interviewer who is genuinely interested in you may seem to discourage you as a way of testing your reaction.
- **Don't leave the interview without finding out what happens next.**
- **Thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration.** If you have answered the two questions: "Why are you interested in this position?" and "What can you offer?" you have done all you can.

6. Negative Factors that most often lead to rejection

- Poor scholastic record, low grades without reasonable explanation, low level of accomplishment.
- Poor attitude, lack of poise, lack of self-confidence, timid, hesitant approach, too introverted.
- Lack of goals / objectives, poorly motivated, lack of interests, indecision, poor planning.
- Lack of interest in the company or its business.
- Inability to express yourself, poor speech, inability to sell yourself.
- Unrealistic salary demands, more interested in salary than in opportunity, unrealistic expectations, over emphasis on what the next promotion will be as opposed to learning the role on offer first.
- Poor personal appearance, lack of neatness, careless dress.
- Immature attitude.
- Lack of preparation for the interview - failure to get information about the company.
- Excessive interest in salary and benefits.
- Unable to explain items on CV in a detailed manner

7. Typical Questions Asked

Fifty Questions Asked by Employers During the Interview with University and College Graduates:

1. What are your long range and short range goals and objectives, when and why did you establish these goals and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
2. What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself for the next 5 years?
3. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
4. What do you really want to do in life?
5. What are your long range career objectives?
6. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
7. What are the most important rewards you expect in your business career?
8. What do you expect to be earning in five years?
9. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
10. Which is more important to you, the money or the type of job?
11. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
12. How would you describe yourself?
13. How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
14. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
15. How has your college experience prepared you for this particular position?
16. Why should we hire you?
17. What qualifications do you have that make you think that you will be successful in this position?
18. How do you determine or evaluate success?
19. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
20. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
21. What qualities should a successful manager possess?
22. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her.
23. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
24. Describe your most rewarding college experience?
25. If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you be looking for?



26. Why did you select the (specify the program) at (specify university or college)?
27. What led you to choose your field of major study?
28. What subjects did you like best? Why?
29. What subjects did you like least? Why?
30. If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
31. What changes would you make in your college or university? Why?
32. Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
33. Do you think that your grades are good indication of your academic achievements?
34. What have you learned from participation in extra-curricular activities?
35. In what kind of a work environment are you most comfortable?
36. How do you work under pressure?
37. In what part-time or summer jobs have you been most interested? Why?
38. How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
39. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
40. What do you know about our company?
41. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
42. Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?
43. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
44. Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
45. Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?
46. Are you willing to travel?
47. Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?
48. Why do you think you might like to live in a community in which our company is located?
49. What major problems have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
50. What have you learned from your mistakes.

WE HOPE THESE TIPS PROVE HELPFUL AND WE WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS WITH YOUR INTERVIEW.

WWW.CLARK.IE

ACCOUNTANCY • EXECUTIVE • OFFICE • SALES & MARKETING

Property of Clark Recruitment Ltd, The Atrium, John's Lane, Naas, Co. Kildare. Tel : 045 881888

www.clark.ie