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Top tips for job interviews

Be prepared for a successful job search

Prepare

You should make sure you have a good understanding of the company and the position you are applying for. It is also important to know what your strengths are as your interviewer is likely to ask, so think of these in advance. Take time to consider how best to describe and promote your professional knowledge, skills and experience. **Arrive ten to fifteen minutes early.** Remember to take an extra copy of your CV.

Practice

You can improve your interview technique by talking with trusted friends and family. This is particularly important if you have not been through the interview process for some time. Practice your delivery of statements about yourself that are truthful, concise and direct.

Address the job description and competencies

Competency based interviews are used to make the process as standard and fair as possible. The premise is that your past performance is the best predictor of future performance.

The word 'competency' refers to the skills necessary to achieve an effective performance level in the job. Most jobs will have a set of key competencies, some are essential, others desirable, required to do the job properly. Many employers list competencies as part of the 'person specification' within the job description or application information.

Examples of questions

An example of competencies include:

- Communication skills
- Delivering results
- Interpersonal / customer focused skills

The interviewer could ask questions relating to each competency. These usually start with phrases such as:

- **Tell me about a time when you...**
- **Describe a time when you...**
- **Give me an example when you...**

The interviewer is looking for specific information about an event, task or project and, in particular, your involvement.

For more advice
www.rtpi.org.uk/careers



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Base your answers on real experience

Prepare answers relating to achievements on your CV or application form. A useful technique to help frame your answers is called **STAR**:

S= Describe the SITUATION

T= Talk through the TASK that evolved

A= Talk about ACTIONS you took

R= Describe the RESULT- use figures/data to illustrate

Impress with your responses

Try to remain calm and always be truthful. Ask for clarification if you're not sure what is been asked and remember it is acceptable to pause to think about your answer.

Don't criticise former employers. Instead, explain you had a difference of opinion in work philosophies or styles. Don't dwell on employers where things did not go well for you and keep your answer short.

End the interview with a thank you to the interviewer and reiterate your interest in the position.

Ask your own questions

Prepare questions you want to ask the interviewer. You are not simply trying to get the job you are also interviewing the employer to assess whether this company and position match your expectations.

Other points to remember

- Dress appropriately – it's better to be overdressed than underdressed
- Wear shoes that are clean and well polished
- Don't overdo perfume, makeup or after shave and limit your jewellery
- Maintain eye contact with interviewers when talking
- **Switch off your mobile phone**
- If you are unsuccessful, contact the employer and ask for feedback.



Prepare answers
relating to your CV,
using the STAR
technique

Practice answers with
family and friends

For more advice
careers@rtpi.org.uk