

## INTERVIEW TIPS – HOW TO WIN YOUR JOB!

### INTERVIEW PREPARATION

The first essential step towards a successful interview is careful planning. Make sure you know:

- The exact time and place where the interview is to take place.
- The interviewers full name and position within the business.
- Will you be required to perform any tasks and do you need to take anything to the interview with you.
- Research the business, its structure and the people involved.
- Thoroughly review the advertisement and position description again (if you have one) to familiarise yourself with what the employers are looking for. Try and determine the main focus, challenges, opportunities, tasks and responsibilities involved. Knowing this will help you predict questions for the interview and will help show that you have the right competencies to succeed in the role.
- Refresh your memory on the facts and figures of your present/former employer.
- As the employer is determining whether you have the qualifications and experience for the job you must decide if the opportunity offers the growth and development you need. Prepare the questions you will ask during an interview – remember an interview is a two-way street. Examples include:
  - A detailed description of the position
  - Reason the position is available
  - Career possibilities
  - Whether on-going education is supported
  - Company growth plans
  - Avoid direct questions on salary, hours of work & leave
- Think about replies to questions you may be asked such as:
  - Tell us a bit about yourself
  - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
  - Why do you want to work for this company?
  - What do you have to offer us?
  - What are your career goals?
  - What do you see yourself doing in five years from now? Ten years?
  - At the end of the first year, if you got this job, how would you measure your success?
  - Are you willing to relocate?
  - How much do you expect to be paid?
  - What are the most important considerations for you in choosing a job?
  - Provide an example of how you resolved a problem within a previous role?

## THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

Interviews can be won or lost in the first five minutes!

### **INTERVIEW DO'S**

- The general rule is to dress as if you were already working in the job, and then go one notch higher. Impressions are formed in the first 30-60 seconds of an interview. Employers will notice details about your clothing (such as dirty shoes, extremes in fashion or very casual clothing) and personal presentation. Look neat, clean and industry appropriate.
- Be on time. Few things ruin your chances more than being late to an interview. Organise reliable transport and if travelling to an out of town interview, ensure you know the exact location of the interview. Take your phone in case of emergency delays and if you are going to be unavoidably delayed ring and let them know. Ensure you do not arrive more than ten minutes early for your interview.
- Make sure you turn off your phone or set it on silent prior to entering the interview
- If you are asked to fill out an application form do so neatly and completely
- Shake hands and address the interviewer by name
- Wait until you are offered a chair before sitting down. Sit upright, look interested and alert at all times, listen as well as talking and smile!
- Make eye contact and express yourself and your views clearly
- Let the interviewer "drive" the interview but try to get the details of the job at the beginning so that you can relate your experience and answers to match what the interviewer is looking for – be prepared to give examples
- Be confident and show enthusiasm for the business and the position
- Be relaxed yet professional
- Answer questions truthfully and as to the point as possible

### **INTERVIEW DON'TS**

- Do not make negative remarks about past or present employers
- Do not under sell yourself
- Do not interrupt the interviewer before they have finished asking you a question and never finish their sentences for them
- Avoid any politically loaded questions
- Don't talk about salary, holidays or bonuses unless the interviewer(s) bring them up – be aware of your market value
- Do not answer questions with a simple "yes" or "no"
- Do not worry if you answer one question badly. Treat each question individually.

### **CLOSING THE INTERVIEW**

- If you are interested in the position confirm it. If the position is offered to you, and you want it, accept on the spot. If you wish to consider the offer be courteous in asking for that time – set a date and time for your answer.

- Do not be discouraged if you do not get an offer at the end of an interview – more often than not an interviewer will need to communicate with other staff or may still have further applicants to interview
- If you get the impression that the interviewer is not interested in you do not be discouraged as your reaction to it may be a test
- Thank the interviewer for taking the time to interview you and consider you for the position

## **REMINDER**

During the interview keep in mind the impressions gained from the following:

- Poor personal appearance
- Over bearing, know-it-all personality
- Poor communication and grammar
- Lack of career planning – no goals
- Lack of interest and enthusiasm
- Lack of confidence
- Fixation towards salary – only interested in remuneration
- Lack of maturity and respect
- Negative comments of past employers
- Failure to maintain eye contact with interviewer
- Limp handshake

## **AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

- Review your experience. What went well? What could you improve upon?
- Consider writing or emailing the interviewer/s to thank them formally for the interview and reinforce the fact that you look forward to hearing from them. This is a courtesy and also reminds them who you are.
- If you are applying to a number of companies keep a record of applications, responses, interviews, outcomes and what you have learnt from each interaction/opportunity.