

## General Advice

Been shortlisted for an interview? It's now time to prepare yourself. Here's how...

Firstly, well done on being shortlisted for interview. That's the first hurdle over, and you should remember that the company wants to meet you based on having seen a piece of paper with your name at the top. You are going in at an advantage.

### 1. PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS

Some basic practical advice:

- Ensure you know where you are going, and do a trial run if possible to eliminate stress on the day. They may need to reserve a parking space, or have an unusual entrance. If there is an unforeseen delay, contact your consultant immediately so they can let the interviewer know.
- You should you know the names of the people you are meeting.
- Dress smartly. Whatever the dress code of the company, an interview is a formal situation and you should be well presented.
- Body language – remember that interviewers make up their mind quickly. Sit up straight; don't cross your arms, make eye contact and smile.
- Turn off your mobile phone - It sounds like common sense, but when preparing for the actual interview and the nerves which can accompany this, it can be easy to forget.

### 2. RESEARCHING THE COMPANY

- You should find out as much information as possible about your prospective employer in advance.
- Look at their website, and familiarise yourself with mission statements, past performance, future goals and current status. Be aware that if your prospective employer does have a comprehensive website, you may seriously compromise your chances if it becomes apparent you have not taken time to research it.
- If there is no company website, you can still find out information. All national newspapers and professional magazines have online sites with archive articles; check your local paper for business news. Enter their name in web search engines and see what comes up. You may know someone who has worked at the organization you can ask questions of.
- You could also just try phoning the company and requesting general information. Let them know you are coming for an interview and ask if they can they send you some company literature to

prepare.

### 3. PERSONAL PREPARATION

A standard interview will generally start with an introductory chat, moving on to questions specific to your application and experience.

General information about the company and role may follow, finishing with an opportunity for you to ask your own questions.

- Be Familiar with your CV and able to elaborate on and answer questions about what you have written. Make sure you have also read the job description thoroughly, and have linked the skills and responsibilities on there to your own experience.
- Listen to the question, and make sure you answer in a concise and relevant manner. Do not waffle, or wander away from the subject, as each question will be asked in order to find out something specific about you.
- Always relate as much of the answer as possible back to your own experience. Where this is not possible, try and answer in a practical way. Instead of the usual spiel of:  
“I haven’t done this before but I’m a fast learner”, try:  
“Although I haven’t had the opportunity to take responsibility for that part of the role, I did X, Y and Z which involved me using A, B and C skills. I am keen to develop this further, which is part of the reason I am interested in this position”.
- Be ready to ask pre-prepared questions of the employer. However if you have a questions part way through, don’t be frightened to ask it at an appropriate pause, as it can allow the interview to take on a conversational feel. Your questions should be open (beginning what, when, where, how, why...) to gain as much information as possible.

Show your enthusiasm for the role, even if you have some reservations. These can be discussed at a later stage.