

Utilita's TOP 10 Tips

Interviews

You've found a fabulous role; you've applied and well done! You've been invited to an interview – hooray!

It's what happens next that will see you either celebrating or trying to work out what went wrong.

Here are some of our Top 10 Tips to consider when attending an interview.

1. First impressions

When you meet with new people, we all, naturally, make a first impression. This includes:

- ✓ The way we dress
- ✓ The environment we are in
- ✓ The tone and the words we use

There are a few things we can do to enhance the experience, which could leave a lasting positive impression.

Virtual Interviews – consider your surroundings. You don't want to be interviewing with last night's leftovers or laundry visible. Probably not the lasting impression you want to leave, so ensure the background is professional and tidy.

If you are having a virtual interview, consider the below:

- ✓ Internet connectivity – ensure you are in the right place to receive good signal;
- ✓ General Interruptions (Family/Animals, Radio, TV, mobile phone);
- ✓ Lighting – avoid sitting with the light behind you as it will make you look like a silhouette and your interviewer will won't to be able to see you;
- ✓ Background – if the software your using has

the option to select a background drop, use one which is appropriate;

- ✓ Clothing – what you wear can also have an impact on first impressions. Check the company culture, casual or formal?

If you are having a face-to-face interview, consider:

- ✓ Going on a trial run to the location of the interview.
- ✓ Arriving 15 minutes early

Remember to research the brand and image of the company you are interviewing for; this includes the expected work attire of the organisation or department in question. Reflecting styles will remove any visual barriers that might arise between you and the interviewer if these don't fit.

2. Research the company, internal department or team

Some people miss the opportunity to impress the interviewer by not researching the company. One of the first questions an interviewer is likely to ask is:

What do you know about the organisation?

Letting the interviewer know a fact or two that you've found out about the company can go in your favour and shows how keen and interested you are in the company.

Before going to a job interview you can learn about a company by visiting their website and checking out their social media profiles such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Linked In.

Just doing a Google search can provide some great information as can reviews of other sites such as Glassdoor, Indeed and Trustpilot.

3. Understanding the role you have applied for

An interviewer will ask you your understanding of the role. If you are unable to answer this question this could be seen as a lack of interest or even make the interview question why you have applied in the first place.

You should be able to describe the purpose of the position and what experience/skills you can bring to be successful in the role.

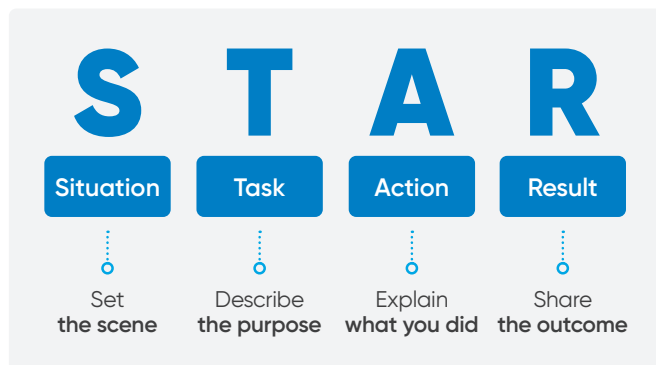
You can learn about the role from the job advert, the job description, also by looking at the LinkedIn profile of someone currently in the role. If you are put forward by a recruitment agency, be sure to ask questions to find out as much as possible about the organisation, the role and the culture including any company values they may have.

4. Responding to a question

If you struggle to give concise, tangible answers to questions, then using the STAR technique can help.

STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action and Result.

Using this approach is helpful when asked by the interviewer to provide an example of when you have demonstrated a skill or behaviour. For example: "Describe a time when..." or "Can you provide an example where..."



5. Do not lie

You may think, that trying to cover up that one little lie is ok... but recruiters and hiring managers have a way of uncovering the truth. What may seem like a little thing, could lose your credibility.

If you are asked to complete any psychometric questionnaires be honest. Don't over think the question and do not give answers that you think people want to hear. The result could be the report providing inconclusive or conflicting information.

6. Language

Be mindful of your language throughout the interview. Some interviewers will very quickly put you at ease. Do not use inappropriate language and make sure you use the appropriate level of technical language for the role you have applied for.

7. Keep your cool and be prepared

Let's face it, interviews are not the most relaxing human interaction and it's easy to let nerves get the better of us. The best way to alleviate interview anxiety is to dedicate plenty of time to your preparation.

Another tip for staying calm is managing your physiological state. Mindful breathing techniques are a powerful way to bring you back to the moment.

Try taking a series of calming breaths while you're waiting to go into the interview. Simply breathe in through your nose for a count of six and out gently through your mouth for a count of ten. This will bring the oxygen back to your brains and help you to think clearly. Three deep breaths should see you feeling calmer, centred and in control.

Keep your internal saboteur at bay and go in with a positive mindset. Picture yourself having an enjoyable and interesting conversation with your interviewer before you start. If you are concerned your mind will go blank, then having a list of examples or key words to remind you of situations will help trigger your memory.



8. Try not to talk too fast

One of the biggest challenges you will face, is how to articulate your response to interview questions concisely. This is particularly difficult if you are feeling nervous.

Listen carefully to the questions being asked and don't be afraid to ask for a question to be repeated or for further clarification. It's better to answer the question effectively than make assumptions and answer incorrectly. Once you have understood the question, allow yourself a few moments to consider your response.

9. Ask relevant questions to show your interest

Remember an interview is a two-way process. It is a chance for the interviewer to get to know you and what you can bring to the company/role. It is also a time for you to ask questions and understand if the company/role is right for you. Make sure the questions you are asking are relevant, appropriate to be asked at that stage and put forward in a positive manner.

It is helpful to spend some time ahead of the interview practicing some of the questions you anticipate will be asked.

Look at the requirements (in the job advertisement and job description) and develop three to five possible questions the interviewer might ask around your skills and experience relevant to the role.

Print a copy of the job details and write down key words to help you remember examples. Often people when put on the spot could freeze and can't remember.

10. Talking negatively about a previous employer

Finally, do not speak negatively about your previous employer(s). This can come across unprofessional and potentially could be slander, which could make the reason for you leaving that company come into question and have an impact on your credibility with the person interviewing you.

Instead, focus on what that role didn't offer and what the role you are applying for does.

We hope these hints and tips help you in an interview process and help you secure that dream job

Good luck!

