

CHALLENGE 6

SMASH THAT INTERVIEW!

Woo-hoo! Well done... You've been invited to the interview stage!

There are several different types of interview here's a few:

- **Panel** - There may be two or more people interviewing you
- **One-to-one** - You will be interviewed by one person
- **Group** - You will be interviewed / tested alongside other candidates
- **Telephone/skype** - You will be interviewed over phone or Skype in the comfort of your own home
- **Assessment centres** - You may undertake a range of different exercises alongside other candidates, including tests, roleplays and presentations

A panel interview is the most common and this will involve you being interviewed face to face with two or more people from the organisation/company.

REMEMBER!

Your interview may be made up of a two or even three stage process. Most commonly this involves an interview and a test or presentation.



FOLLOW THESE TOP 10 TIPS FOR SUCCESS!

1. Do your research

- Research the company. Find out their ethos/ company values, what services they provide, their customers, products etc.
- Understand the company and how your role fits in
- Prepare your answers and showcase your knowledge of the organisation which is guaranteed to impress the panel
- If you can't find all of the information you would like online, phone the company and ask any questions you may have. This can also help to build rapport with the interviewers before you meet them
- Where appropriate, take the time to visit the place before you go for your interview to get a better idea of where you will need to go on the day, but also to get a feel for the 'culture' of the place

2. Prepare and practise

- Read and re-read the job description, person specification and your CV/application
- Research common interview questions and prepare your answers. Remember interviewers are always looking for real life examples where you have demonstrated that you have successfully used your skills in a work place environment. You can find a list of common interview questions in the 'Reserves' section lettered K
- If you can, ask someone to set up a mock interview for you
- Once you've done your preparation, don't forget to relax and look after yourself! Rest will help you to do your best on the day

3. Dress to impress

- Choose your outfit in advance– make sure it is smart, clean, ironed and appropriate. Rocking up in sunglasses and a Hawaiian print shirt will not give a good first impression!
- Don't wear anything too distracting (e.g. something revealing or brightly coloured)
- Don't forget good personal hygiene. Make sure you have showered and brushed your teeth. If you are a smoker, be aware that if you have a cigarette right before the interview, the panel will most likely smell it on you

4. Be punctual

- Plan your route in advance – Maybe even do a test-drive or practise trip on the buses
- Give yourself extra time to get there – If driving, make sure you know where the nearest car park is and that you have change for car parking
- Make sure you arrive 10 minutes before the interview – arriving too early is unadvised
- Now unfortunately we can't control the traffic, so if you are running late ensure that you phone the company to explain and apologise. Don't forget to take their phone number with you and to make sure your phone is fully charged!



5. First impressions count

- When you accept your invite to interview (either via phone or email) make sure you are professional and obtain all the necessary information
- Be polite (to all employees you meet)
- Smile
- Offer a firm handshake (not too floppy, not too hard!)

6. It's not always what you say, but how you say it!

- Make sure that you have positive body language. Sit upright, maintain good eye contact and use your hands to express yourself
- We know it's nerve wracking, but avoid crossing your arms, slouching, biting your nails, hiding behind your hair, or fiddling with a visitor's badge

7. Be professional

- Do not swear
- Do not talk about personal problems
- Do not lie
- Never bad mouth your previous employer/colleagues
- Make sure your phone is turned off or on silent!

8. Sell yourself!

- Answer questions clearly and concisely
- Make sure you understand the question before you answer it. If you are unsure, ask for them to repeat it. If you're still unsure, ask for them to rephrase it
- Think before you speak, we advise you to take a pause to think about your answer
- Provide work related examples to highlight your skills, abilities and qualities. Use the STAR technique. You will find out more about the STAR technique under 'Reserves' lettered J.
- Always paint yourself in a positive light, and try to balance this with being humble and sincere
- Use 'I' not 'we' in your examples!
- Use lots of positive words to describe yourself and your experiences

9. Ask questions!

- At the end of the interview it is likely you will be asked 'Do you have any questions for us'. This is an excellent opportunity to show that you are enthusiastic and motivated for the job. Ensure that you ask at least one or two questions
- Questions you could ask include:
 - Can you describe a typical day for someone in this position?
 - What will my main priorities be in the first three months?
 - Will there be any training opportunities available?

As tempting as it is, do not ask about salary at this stage!

10. Get Feedback

- Whether you are successful or unsuccessful at interview stage, always ask for feedback. This is **really** important as it will allow you to better prepare for your next interview, and learn what you could do better or differently next time, and to know where you did well. This could make all the difference in you acing your next interview!

