

Preparing for an Interview

We all know it is daunting being invited to an interview. Much excitement, relief and anticipation, yet also a lot of anxiety, trepidation and fear of the unknown.

A positive nervous energy will help you to present the best version of yourself during the interview, but a negative energy could make or break the opportunity afforded to you.

By being prepared, it can make all the difference how you show up for the interview, present yourself and whether you can showcase the best and most accurate version of you are and what you bring to the prospective role and company.

Remember to research the company, know the job spec and also know your cv (Dates, Companies and Job titles).

Online / video / virtual / Teams / Zoom / Google Meet Interviews

- Check the internet connection and stability.
- Please be mindful of Load Shedding, it is advisable to ensure you are in an area that has no load shedding or one that has back up power, you don't want to cut off mid interview!
- Please check that you have Teams/Zoom/Relevant package loaded onto your computer/phone well in advance of the interview so that you can avoid last minute stress trying to download the app.
- Please remember to have your interview in a well-lit environment with a plain background. It is best to sit in front of a plain wall as this offers the least distractions for the Interviewer.
- Check the lighting. No darkness or shadows. But no 'halo' or spotlights shining on you either.
- Keep the camera/phone/laptop as still as you can for the interview. Try not to move from side to side as this could show unexpected background scenes (Washing, towels hanging up, colleagues, dogs, cats etc...)
- Check for other noises and distracting / unprofessional sounds. Your output setting should be set onto high, and your input settings to medium. Check microphones and speakers. Use headphones if possible and try keep other noises to a minimum.
- Test, test, test it.
- Be ready at least 5 minutes before your scheduled time.
- Dress code. Smart, professional, comfortable. The same as you would've dressed if it was an in-person interview.
- Be aware of your body language and if you might have distracting mannerisms.
- Maintain eye contact and do not be distracted or constantly shift your eyes to other points in the room (or computer).
- Speak clearly, do not interrupt the speaker and make sure you are understood.
- Listen well and make sure you understand the questions being asked of you.
- Be yourself, and maintain a sense of being relaxed, prepared, friendly, conversational yet professional too.
- Take notes should you wish to ask something at a later stage.
- Answer questions with relevant examples where possible.
- Do not hesitate to ask questions when they give you the opportunity to do so.
- Thank the interviewer for the opportunity for the interview.

In person / Face to face

- Make sure you are familiar with where the interview is taking place, and the logistics that go with it – which building and entrance, where to park, who to ask for, what to take with you.
- Be sure to be there at least 30 minutes before the scheduled time.
- If applicable take your portfolio or examples of your work and career with you, or any other required documents.
- Remember to greet your interviewer warmly and professionally. A handshake will do.
- Remember to smile often, look warm, friendly and interested.
- Ensure you maintain appropriate levels of eye contact.
- Remain interested and be interesting.
- Dress appropriately. If you are unsure, ask the person who has set the interview up with you. And if unsure, rather err on the side of being over dressed, yet still comfortable and professional.
- Take notes should you wish to ask something at a later stage.
- Answer questions with relevant examples where possible.
- Do not hesitate to ask questions when they give you the opportunity to do so.
- Thank the interviewer for the opportunity for the interview.

Panel Interview

- A panel interview could take place online or in person.
- Yet some different things apply to an individual or one-on-one interview.
- Try and maintain eye contact with the person asking the questions.
- Do not hesitate to smile at and engage in eye contact with anyone else on the panel too. Feel free to direct your answers to each member too.
- Do your best to note each panel members name and role in the company. Ask again if you're not sure.
- Answer questions with relevant examples where possible.
- Do not hesitate to ask questions when they give you the opportunity to do so.
- Thank the interviewer for the opportunity for the interview.

Preparation that you MUST do

- Preparation is key.
- First impressions count a lot and will make or break the interaction and interview.
- You need to sell yourself as to why you are the best candidate for the role. The chances are great that there are at least another 4 candidates they are talking to for the same role – all with similar skills, qualifications and experience.
- Research the company. Their website, Facebook, LinkedIn pages; and google any other articles or information that might be relevant.
- Be very familiar with the job description and what the role expects of you.
- Have your CV in front of you and know your cv should they ask you specific cv related questions
- Have a short, informative, relevant, friendly introduction prepared on how you would best like to introduce yourself to the interviewer (the 'elevator' pitch).
- Use the STAR technique to answer the questions. S (Situation), T (Task), A (Action), R (Result). Describe the context or the Situation for the example you wish to share, what the actual Task was, what your Action

was to it, and what the outcome or Result was. Use this to prepare for any anticipated questions and to answer them as they arise.

- Always best describe your role in situations. Not those of others. Show how you behaved, and what the outcome was. Give evidence and proof of your experience and capabilities.

General questions you can expect to be asked:

- Tell me about yourself?
- Tell me about your experience and why it is a fit for this role? (And more importantly for you to link it to the job description).
- Tell me why you want to work for this company?
- What type of work environment do you prefer?
- What do you believe are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- How do you like to work with your manager? Colleagues? Subordinates? Clients?
- What are your short and long term career goals?
- And then Competency based questions linked to problem solving, innovation, conflict management, stress management, teamwork, time management, to name a few.

General questions you may want to ask:

- Avoid asking questions where the information would've been easily accessible on the company web or social pages. It shows a level of unpreparedness.
- Avoid bringing up salary immediately – unless the interviewer does. Better to leave it for a follow up interview or your employment consultant to assist you with that conversation.
- How could I make an impact in this role in the short term? And the long term?
- Can you tell me a bit about the team I'll be working with?
- How would you describe the company culture?
- Why did you join the company?
- What is your favourite part of working here?
- How does this role fit into the bigger company picture and goals?
- What opportunities does the company offer for training and development?
- What makes your most successful employees successful? What do they do differently?
- Why is this role vacant? What roles have previous employees in this role moved into? Or what would their reasons have been for moving on?
- To close the interview – asking what the next steps would be?

Above all, just breath, you've got this! Do your best and let it be....

Good Luck!