

INTERVIEW PREPARATION GUIDE

Congratulations on your interview with our client.

This document is designed to assist you to perform at your best and outlines a number of tools and techniques that you may find useful.

It is most important to remember that there are two key elements to successful interviewing:

PREPARATION & ENTHUSIASM

PREPARATION

Preparation is essential and greatly enhances your chances of performing well at any interview. Here are some tips on interview preparation:

- Ensure you have a detailed understanding of the Position Description, the team environment and the organisation.
- Conduct additional research regarding the organisation through reading annual reports and researching on the internet. Understand its products/services, size, locations, financial situation and growth potential.
- Dress conservatively and pay attention to all facets of your dress and grooming.
- Know the exact place and time of interview, the interviewer's full name and the correct pronunciation, and his/her title.
- Make sure you know exactly where you're going and be on time. To avoid unavoidable delays aim to be a bit early.
- Review your resume/experience and its relevance to the Position Description. Identify the specific examples in your background that are directly relevant to the position description and demonstrate your ability to do the job. Refresh your memory regarding details of present and past employers and your work history in their companies. You will be expected to know a lot about a company for which you have previously worked. Pay particular attention to how you will describe your most important achievements.
- Be prepared to convey to the interviewer; why this role appeals to you, why they should consider you for this role and what makes you a bit different from other candidates.
- Prepare the questions YOU will ask during the interview. Remember that an interview is a two-way street. The employer will try to determine through questioning if you have the qualifications necessary to do the job. You must determine through questioning whether the company will give you the opportunity for growth and development you seek.

EXAMPLES OF PROBING QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK:

- Why is the position available?
- How would you describe your organisational culture?
- What induction and training programs does the organisation offer?
- What sort of people have done well in this team/organisation?
- What would a normal day in this role look like?
- How is the company positioned against its competitors?
- What is your vision for the future? What plans are there for growth or expansion?
- What are the three things that would make someone an outstanding success in this role?
- How well do you think I match the requirements of the role?
- What is the next step in the process?

EQUALLY IMPORTANTLY, YOU MUST BE PREPARED WITH ANSWERS & SUPPORTING EXAMPLES TO STANDARD QUESTIONS SUCH AS:

- What are your career aspirations?
- Why do you want to work for our company?
- What interests you about our products/services?
- Of your previous jobs, which did you enjoy most and why?
- How have you managed conflict in the past?
- Describe what you have done in your career that shows your initiative.
- What are your weaknesses? Your strengths?
- What does teamwork mean to you?
- What style of management gets the best from you?
- What have been your major achievements to date?

BEHAVIOURAL / COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEWS:

Competency based interviews are the most prevalent style of interviewing. Competency based interviewing, also known as behavioural interviewing, requires you to draw on past experience and describe specific examples of incidents that demonstrate your competence in a particular area. The most effective way of answering these questions is to use the '**CAR**' or '**STAR**' techniques:

C =Context	or	S ituation – briefly describe the background to the situation
		T ask – specifically describe your responsibility
A =Action	or	A ction – describe what you did
R =Result	or	R esult – describe the outcome of your actions

YOUR STYLE & BEHAVIOUR:

During your interview the employer will be evaluating your total performance, not just your answers. Listed below are some mannerisms and attitudes that may help produce a positive reaction from a prospective employer.

- Interested, balanced approach
- Ability to express thoughts clearly
- Career planning and objectives
- Confidence
- Informative replies
- Tact, maturity and courtesy
- Maintaining eye contact
- Firm handshake
- Intelligent questions about the job
- Preparation and knowledge of the company / industry
- Enthusiasm for the role and the organisation
- Positive, 'can-do' attitude

GENERAL TIPS:

Do:

- Dress appropriately and professionally. This usually means a suit (drycleaned) and tie, especially if it's your first interview. First impressions matter.
- Plan to arrive on time or a few minutes early. Arriving late for a job interview is inexcusable.
- Greet the interviewer by his/her first name.
- Wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright.
- Look alert and interested at all times. Be a good listener as well as a good talker.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Follow the interviewer's leads but try to get the interviewer to describe the position and the duties to you early in the interview so that you can relate your background and skills to the position.
- Make sure your good points get across to the interviewer in a factual, sincere manner.
Bear in mind that you're the best person to sell yourself to an interviewer.
- Make him/her realise the need for you in his/her organisation.
- Always conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are interviewing for. Never close the door on an opportunity. It is better to be in the position where you can choose from a number of positions rather than only one.

Don't:

- Answer questions with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. Explain whenever possible, and reveal those things about yourself which relate to the position.
- Lie. Answer questions truthfully, frankly and as to the point as possible.
- Ever make derogatory remarks about your present or former employers, colleagues or companies.
- Over-answer questions. If you're unclear about what you've been asked, it's okay to seek clarification ... "So if I understand your question, you're looking for an example of when I ... ?"
- The interviewer may steer the conversation into politics or economics. Since this can be ticklish, it's best to answer the questions frankly, without saying more than is necessary.
- Let your discouragement show. If you get the impression that the interview is not going well and you have already been rejected, don't show disappointment or alarm. It's not unusual for an interviewer who is genuinely interested in your possibilities to discourage you in order to test your reaction.
- Enquire about salary, bonuses or holidays at the first interview unless you are positive the employer is interested in hiring you and raises the issue first. However, you should know your market value and be prepared to specify your required income or salary range.

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW:

- If you are interested in the position, make sure you tell the interviewer.
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time and their consideration of you.
- You've done all you can if you've answered the two questions uppermost in his/her mind:
 - Why are you interested in the job and the company?
 - What can you offer and can you do the job?

Finally, relax and get a good night's sleep – you've done all you can!

Addendum: How to Prepare for a Video Interview

Step 1: DO YOUR RESEARCH

- See PREPARATION above.

Step 2: SORT YOUR TECHNOLOGY

- Once your video interview is scheduled, begin preparing the tech you need to use while there's still time to sort out any issues that pop up.
- **Find out which program or app you'll be using.** There's a range of video options out there (eg. MS Teams, Zoom, Skype etc) so check which app will be used if they haven't told you. If you need to, download the app or program. You may be required to set up a profile – choose a professional username or email. Video calls can be done on most devices – for example a laptop, tablet or smart phone – so if you can, choose whichever you feel most comfortable with.
- Our recommendation is to use your laptop or PC – the screen is bigger (useful if there is more than one interviewer), you can see yourself (you'll see how you're presenting), and it'll be more stable than a smaller mobile device.
- If you must use your phone or a tablet, try to position it in front of you rather than holding it as your hands could be shaky in the interview.
- **Set up your camera**, whether it's a webcam or a camera built into your device. Check out how it works and clean the lens. For your interview you'll want to be roughly in the middle of the screen, facing front on and not too close to it – far enough for at least your head and shoulders to be in view.
- **Set up the microphone**, whether it's built into your device or separate, and test it to see that it's sounding clear.
- **Do a trial run** by calling a friend or family member. Can they hear you easily? Does your internet connection hold up? Identify any issues now while you can fix them.

Step 3: SET UP YOUR LOCATION

- Next, find a suitable spot for your interview and get it ready.
- **Pick a quiet space** where you're unlikely to be interrupted by loud noises or other people. If you can, arrange to have the space to yourself during your interview.
- **Look at lighting** and make sure there's enough light for the interviewer to see you clearly. Try to avoid harsh shadows or sun in your eyes.
- **Check your background** to make sure there'll be nothing distracting behind you during the interview, or anything you wouldn't want an employer to see.

Step 4: PRACTISE

- At this point it's a good idea to get as familiar with video calling as you can, and to think about how you can present yourself confidently.
- **Prepare your outfit** for the interview. Choose something professional that you'd wear to an in-person interview, ideally solid colours. Stripes and dots can blur over video.
- **Do some practice video interviewing.** Ideally, you'll have been going over your list of practice questions and answers – now try putting them to the test. You could record yourself answering questions then watch it back. This will give you an idea of how you look on screen, what it's like to speak to camera and whether you can be heard properly. Even better, get a friend or family member to "interview" you through a video call, then give you feedback on how it went.

Step 5: FOCUS ON THE INTERVIEW

On the day of your interview, do one final check of your technology and make sure your battery is charged (power cord would be best). Sit down in your chosen location with at least 15 minutes to spare before you start the interview. Have a glass of water at hand, and a notepad and pen. It can be handy to have your resume or other documents there too, but it's not a good idea to read from notes. Close any programs that could affect your internet connection or distract you and disable pop-up notifications. Put your phone on silent mode if you're not using it. Also, depending on your internet bandwidth, you may need other users in the household to shut down their online activity.

Now turn your focus to the interview. Even though you'll be answering questions through a screen, it's important to think of your video interview as a conversation with another person. It can help to:

- **Slow down and take your time to answer.** It might feel strange to hear gaps in the conversation. But pausing a second longer before you answer will help to ensure you don't speak over the top of the interviewer if there's a delay in the video. Taking deep breaths can help you to stay calm as well.
- **Look at the camera when you can.** Unlike a face-to-face conversation it can be hard to know where to look. If you direct your gaze at the camera, rather than the interviewer's face on screen, it's more likely to appear that you're making eye contact. Try to do this when you're listening.
- **Think about your body language** like you would normally – sit up straight, and nod to show that you're listening and engaged.
- If things go wrong, don't panic – you can get back on track.
- **If your technology fails** you may have to close the program, reopen it and start again. If you can't get the program to work, you may have to get in touch with the interviewer via phone.
- **If you're interrupted** by someone or something in your space, apologise, deal with the interruption quickly and quietly, then continue. If there's a loud noise like a siren outside, you may have to mute your microphone for a moment then continue.

- Finally, end the interview by thanking your interviewer – and make sure you've closed the program or app before you breathe a sigh of relief! As with any interview, you can send a follow up email later that day or the day after.
- It's totally normal to feel anxious or nervous before any job interview – and video interviewing can feel strange if you haven't done it before. But by practising, preparing and getting familiar with the format, you'll be ready to make a great impression on screen.

