

Interview Techniques and Tips

Employment is not a hit and miss affair and it is not a matter of just applying for just any work. It is all about marketing a product (yourself) to a potential employer for a long term future. As the number of people looking for work rises, candidates need to spend valuable time preparing themselves for an interview to ensure they stand out from the rest. Below are some tips and techniques to get the most out of an interview:

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

- **Prepare and Research** - Research the company by reviewing their website and any company literature. By doing this you are demonstrating that you have taken the time to understand the core function of the company.
- **Questions** - Have a couple of questions prepared to ask about the company.
- **Plan your journey** - Establish location of company, parking and how to get there. Be at least 5 minutes early but no more than 10 minutes early.
- **Personal presentation** - Ensure you are presented in a professional manner with a clean/pressed suit or smart jacket with skirt or trousers. No leather or denim. Ensure neck lines are appropriate and if you are wearing a skirt ensure the length is suitable. Makeup, jewellery and perfume should be kept to a minimum and facial jewellery should be removed.
- **What to take to the interview** - Take a copy of qualifications, certificates and any other relevant material. Your consultant will provide the client with references.

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- **Switch off your mobile** - Always remember to switch off mobile phones before entering the interview. If you forget and your phone rings during the interview DO NOT under any circumstance answer the call. Switch the phone off and apologise to the interviewer for the interruption.
- **Language** - Regardless of the environment, DO NOT under any circumstance use profanities or slang words. Be professional in your speech and manner.
- **First impressions** - Create a good first impression, on average you have approximately 30 seconds to impress.
- **Smile** - It is natural to be nervous during an interview but do remember to smile.
- **Shake hands** - Always give a firm handshake on introduction.
- **Eye Contact** - Maintain natural eye contact with the interviewer and remain attentive throughout the process.
- **Body Language** - Sit comfortably with both feet on the floor or cross legged. Put hand bags on the ground and maintain an open body language. Playing with your hair or putting your hands in your pocket creates a poor impression. Never over exaggerate using your hands or sit with your arms crossed.
- **Do not look at the time** - If you are on a time limit, inform the interviewer when you first arrive. Looking at the wall clock or watch during an interview will be regarded as rude behaviour.
- **Focus** - Be genuinely interested in the company and the role; concentrate on the interview – nothing else. If you are well organised and have planned for the interview your confidence will naturally increase.
- **No criticism of former employers** - Never give negative comments or criticism of a former employer during the interview; this will make you appear unprofessional.
- **Don't discuss salary** - Your consultant will discuss salary levels with you and what the role is paying. Unless the interviewer brings up the subject this is not a topic for discussion during the preliminary interview. If the interviewer does mention salary, be prepared to ask for what you want.
- **Be honest** - Speak up when answering questions, respond clearly and directly – provide an example where possible. Don't mumble or over talk, if you don't understand a question or know how to respond, be honest.

Aston Recruitment
ABN: 641 657 10744

8 Bermondsey Street, West Leederville WA 6007
Tel: (08) 9380 6077 Fax: (08) 9380 9788
Email: info@astonrecruitment.com.au

www.astonrecruitment.com.au



UPON CONCLUSION:

- **Express your interest** - Show interest and enthusiasm; know why you want the position and be able to express, specifically the marketable skills you have to offer the organisation.
- **Thank the interviewer** - When concluding the interview, thank the interviewer for their time, shake hands and smile. You can express genuine interest in the role at this time and speak positively affirming you look forward to speaking with them again.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

- **What's next?** - It is imperative that you give feedback to your recruitment consultant as soon as possible following the interview. This will ensure that the consultant can pass the information onto the client, who may, and often does, decide on their next course of action within a 24 hour timeframe.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED AT INTERVIEW:

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Where do you want to be in five years time?
- Why do you want to leave your current employer?
- Why are you interested in joining this organisation?
- Why should we choose you?
- What do you know about us?
- What are you looking for from your next company/job?
- Are you a team player? Give examples.
- How do you respond under pressure / boredom?

QUESTIONS YOU MAY ASK AT INTERVIEW:

- What are your expectations of the person who takes this role?
- Are there other skills that may be required in the future?
- What is the office / team culture like?

If you have any further questions or would like to discuss your interview preparation further, please do not hesitate to contact your consultant.

Good luck with your interview!

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