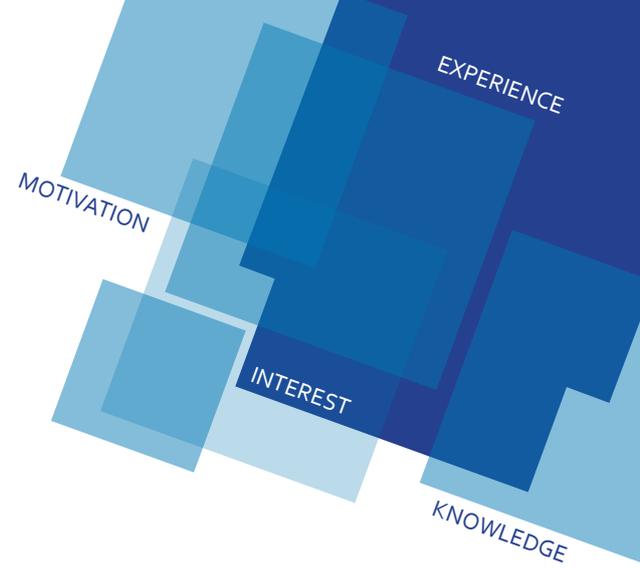


APPROACH PEOPLE RECRUITMENT

INTERVIEW PREPARATION TIPS & ADVICE



You are certain to be asked specific questions about the company you'll have the job interview with, so make sure you know the basic facts and figures such as the last year's profits and latest product launches. Try to find information about the corporate culture and values. The employer will expect you to be able to talk about his company and explain to them why you are interested in working for them.

Here are some pieces of advice on how to get ready for your interview.

AN ONLINE SEARCH

Log on to the company's website. This is the best place to start. You will find plenty of information about the products or services they offer. Keep in mind it shows the company as the directors want it to be seen. Use what they say and the way they see their business in your interview to explain why you fit in the company. If they have a press room section, take advantage of it to check out the news. Try to filter the information to keep the ones that are related to the job offer. For instance, if you apply for a marketing position, emphasize on the marketing strategy and communication actions the company is taking. In the case you know the names of the people who will be interviewing you look for them on business-related social networking sites to find their profile and discover more about them.

Remember to take down 4 or 5 key important points you have found out about the company.

INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

You not only need to have information about the company, you should also have a good background knowledge of the industry. Browse through business publications and websites to see what they are writing about the industry news and get some general information.

PREPARING YOURSELF

This is an important point. We advise you to spend some time preparing the interview and the questions the employer may ask you. This is like going into an exam, you feel more confident if you studied hard enough before. Don't get caught out by basic questions you haven't prepared. Preparing yourself is a good way to be more confident.

Make sure you prepare detailed examples about your experience and how it relates to the role. If you are interviewed for a sales role, you should know your targets and revenue. For a customer service position, have in mind an example of a situation where you had to deal with a difficult customer.

BE SURE OF WHAT YOU WANT

Sit down with your CV and analyse what you have achieved. What have you done? How do you see yourself in 5 years? What are your ambitions? Do this out loud, even if it makes you feel weird. Try to relate specific areas of your CV back to the job description. It will make it clear to the interviewer why they should hire you. Be positive, dynamic and keep smiling. Remember they want to see if you can fit into their team!



MOST COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Although there is no set format that every job interview will follow, there are some questions that you can almost guarantee will crop up. Here is a list of the most common questions. The responses below are only suggestions. Personalise your responses as much as possible and avoid giving generic answers. Keep it brief and to the point.

Remember to stay calm if you're facing a difficult question and take a moment to think about it before answering.

Tell me about yourself, your qualification and most relevant experience.

This is usually the opening question and, as first impression is key, one of the most important. Keep your answer to under five minutes, beginning with an overview of your highest qualification then running through the jobs you've held so far in your career. You can follow the same structure of your CV.

Why do you want this job?

Think carefully about it. Your answer is very important for the interviewer. Quote the aspects of the job that you like and explain why it matches with your career path and your expectations. Do not mention the negative aspects of your current job or the job you are being interviewed for.

Why do you want to work for this company?

The interviewer is waiting for an answer that indicates you've given this some thought. If you've prepared for the interview properly, you should have a good inside knowledge of the company's values, mission statement, development plans and products. Use these information to explain why you like this job and why it matches your career ambitions.

What would you say are your strong points?

Pick the three biggest attributes that you think are the most important for this job and explain how these strengths are useful in work situations. They could be tangible skills, such as proficiency in a particular computer language, or intangible skills such as good man-management. If you're not sure where to start, take a look at the job description. There is usually a section listing candidate requirements, which should give you an idea of what they are looking for.

What would you say are your weak points?

Pick three weaknesses you have been working on and tell the interviewer the positive steps you have made to redress. For example, if your IT ability is not at the level it could be, state it as a weakness but tell the interviewer about training courses or time spent outside work hours you have used to improve your skills.

Why are you looking for a new job?

Explain your reasons for moving. Do not say negative things about your current employer.

You have not done this sort of job before. How will you succeed?

Show your qualities that will enable you to be successful in this position. That can be your capacity for adaptation or your strong interest for the field for instance.

How much does your last job resemble the one you are applying for? What are the differences?

The interviewer is trying to see how well you would fit in to the position. Point out the similarities rather than the differences.

What would your ideal job be?

Again, remember where you are! Describe the job with the help of the job description. Quote things such as challenging projects, interesting career opportunities, good team atmosphere, learning and mastering new skills etc.

How do you handle criticism?

Mention the positive aspects of criticism and think of an experience you had where it was useful to get criticism. Your answer should be along the following lines: "I always think that it is important to get feedback on how I am performing so that I can improve my work."

Can you act on your own initiative?

Think of an example where you have had to do something on your own initiative in your current job.

What motivates you?

List your motivations such as: career growth, opportunity to learn new skills, good co-workers etc.

Can you work under pressure?

Think of when you have had to work under pressure and how you reacted to it.

What are your career goals?

Link in all your goals and the ones that are relevant to the company that is interviewing you.

What interests do you have outside work?

Your hobbies and interests can tell an employer a lot about you, including whether you are sociable or solitary, and whether you can take on leadership roles. Think about which interests can be a plus for the position you want.

What level of salary are you looking for now?

You should know what the average salary is for the position you are being interviewed. You can find surveys on internet that will enable you to have an idea of the salary bracket. Once you have that information, decide on a salary you think is fair for the experience and skills you have. Keep in mind that companies know their competition's package so do not go overboard with your current salary package as they can check this.

What will your referees say about you?

Include one thing that shows your ability to do the job, one thing that shows your commitment to the work and one thing that shows you are a good person to have in a team.

Do you like working in a team environment or do you prefer working alone?

Think about your experience in a team environment and about a time where you had to be autonomous. Describe both.

Where do you see yourself in 2 years time?

It's best to talk about both short-term and long-term goals. Talk about the kind of job you'd eventually like to do and the various steps you will need to get there, relating this in some way back to the position you're interviewing for.

Why should we hire you?

What makes you special? You should be able to find out what they are looking for from the job description. Stress the similarities between your profile and your experience and their requirements. Explain what you would bring to the company and why picking you and not someone else will be strategic for us.



QUESTIONS YOU MAY WANT TO ASK THE RECRUITER

The interview is a two-way process. Most interviewers will give you an opportunity to ask questions after they are finished, so be prepared to make the most of it. Try to concentrate on issues that are important to you and combine an interest in the company with an interest in the job.

Regarding role specific questions, look through the job description to see if there are any areas that you would like more information about.

Here are some good examples of the questions you could ask about the role:

- What aspirations do you have for me at the company?
- Can you tell me a bit more about career progression in your company?
- Where will the job fit into the team structure?
- What is the size of the team?
- How is the team atmosphere?
- What's the best thing about working at your company?
- What is the main thing the organisation expects from its employees?
- Are there any plans for expansion?
- How would you describe the company culture and management style?

For more interview questions and advice on how to succeed in a job interview log on to:
www.approachpeople.com/candidates/interview-advice