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THE PATH TO SUCCESS:

Congratulations, now that you have reached the interview stage, this document will assist you in turning interviews into job offers.

Pre-interview

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The interview is an opportunity for you and the company to gather information. The company wants to evaluate your skills, knowledge, self-confidence and motivation for the position. Your goal is to evaluate the position, organisation and whether you will fit into their corporate culture.

Success is not necessarily what you say, rather “how” you say it.



PRE-INTERVIEW

This is the preparation, planning and presentation - all the facts you need to know before the meeting.

1. Researching the company, position and interviewer

Get extensive information about the company, position and interviewer prior to the meeting. Remember to take a business folder to keep notes during the meeting. Please note information below:

Company Information: Research their website, latest articles on the company, their products, size of the company, department size, financial results, international connections, to which group or holding company they belong to, their market share, culture, mission statement and values.

Location: Plan your travelling time to arrive 10 - 15 minutes prior to your appointment time. Know the address and exact location. Get a map or use GPS coordinates for clear directions. Make sure you are informed of where to park and which floor to go to.

Interviewer: Know the name(s) and business title(s) of the person or panel you will be meeting with.

Position: Familiarise yourself with the job description or details of the position including responsibilities, reporting lines and key performance areas. Ensure that you prepare pertinent business questions.

Please discuss your preparation and any further information you need with your Consultant.

2. What can you offer? Self assessment

The first impression lasts, so make it your best. Most employers believe that people who look as if they care about themselves are more likely to care about their job. Your goal should be to come across in the best possible light - professional in the way you dress, in your gestures, facial expressions and in your communication.



Dress code

As a general rule of thumb, the way to dress for the first meeting is clean-cut and conservative. Dressing appropriately is important in establishing credibility and being seen as a person who can be part of a team.

Ensure that your appearance is neat and tidy. A suit with smart shoes is the best form of dress for both men and women. Your most professional colours are black, dark blue or charcoal with a light coloured shirt or blouse and for men a professional tie. The more clothing you have on, the more credible, persuasive and business-like you will appear.

Ladies: Being professional is important. Avoid short skirts, daring necklines and bare shoulders. Ensure that you are impeccably well groomed as follows: light make-up, well groomed hair and nails, deodorant/light perfume, conservative use of jewellery and remember to put your handbag down beside you.

Men: Avoid wearing jewellery, floral print shirts, white socks and overly bold ties. Nails are short and clean, hair is neatly groomed, facial hair is neat and tidy, deodorant/light aftershave.

Etiquette: You should always greet the interviewer by their first name (unless otherwise indicated) with a smile, a firm handshake and good eye contact. Don't be worried if you show signs of nerves, they indicate that you are taking the interview seriously. Should you be nervous, take a tissue with you to dry possible damp brows or clammy hands before meeting your interviewer.

Wait until you are offered a chair before you sit down. Refrain from smoking and chewing gum until you have left the premises. You may accept a non-alcoholic beverage if offered as it does relax the atmosphere. Ensure you use professional language at all times and do not swear or use slang.

Use a person's name throughout the interview as it is the best way to build rapport.

Application Form: Should you be requested to complete a form, please take the following into consideration

- Contact details: Write "refer to DAV".
- Salary: Avoid writing down current or expected remuneration - write "negotiable from current".
- References: Avoid giving details of your current or previous employers as this may jeopardise your current position. Write "refer to DAV".



Non-verbal: Sit upright and relax, avoid crossing your arms and maintain strong eye contact. Display a positive disposition throughout.

Verbal: Speak clearly and concisely. Think carefully before responding and ensure that your answer shows logic, enthusiasm and initiative.

If you are attending a panel interview, always direct the answer towards the person asking the question whilst maintaining good eye contact with the rest of the panel members.

3. Personality is key

Use work related examples to build upon your experience and impress the interviewer(s) with your personality.

- **Honesty**
Experienced interviewers will pick up on any untruthfulness.
- **Competent/capable**
The employer seeks a consistent excellence and an ability to work independently.
- **Confidence**
Differentiate yourself as a candidate to be taken seriously. Show that you are assertive without arrogance.
- **Enthusiasm**
Show interest by asking for more information about the company and the position.
- **Going the extra mile**
Express willingness to be flexible in work schedule and responsibilities.
- **Accountability**
Show that you take responsibility seriously and are determined to complete tasks timeously.
- **Relationships**
Speak positively about previous, current and potential employers. Express your intention towards a long-term commitment with the employer.
- **Team work**
Emphasise your ability to get along with people and be a good team player.
- **Willingness to learn**
Express your desire for ongoing learning and knowledge sharing.
- **Adaptability**
Portray a positive attitude towards change. Show recognition of, and respect for, people's diversity and individuality.



- Positive attitude
It's all about attitude. Display a positive mindset at all times during the interview, regardless of current economic, political and job market conditions.

THE INTERVIEW

1. Questions from the interviewer

When asked “yes” or “no” questions, back your answer with pertinent examples and reasons - volunteer information, whilst being concise, and steer clear of taking control of the discussion.

If you are asked for a certain skill or experience that you don't have, turn this into a positive e.g. “I don't have experience in SAP software, however I have extensive knowledge of another – similar - ERP system,” or “I don't, however I am very eager to learn about this”.

Anticipate likely questions and rehearse responses beforehand. Always be honest – you don't want to find yourself completely out of your depth 6 months later, also your answer may well be checked with your references.

Feel free to role play your responses to the questions below with your Consultant.

Sample interviewer questions and possible answers

You as a Person

- What are your interests? How do you spend your free time?
Mention hobbies, sports, reading material, family time etc.
- What are your qualifications?
Even though this is mentioned on the CV, the interviewer might be trying to make conversation. Steer clear from using the phrase: “It's in my CV”.
- Why did you decide to study this qualification?
Explain how your qualification has or will aid you in your career aspirations.
- What are your work related strengths?
Prior to any interview, have a list prepared of your greatest strengths and a specific example which illustrates each attribute. Show how your skills will benefit the company. Valued traits include: achiever, intelligence, positivity, good communicator, dedication and confidence.



- What are your weaknesses?
Design the answer to make it something that can be overcome and will not jeopardise you in the offered position. Instead of using the word “weakness”, rather refer to a “developmental area”.
- Tell me about yourself
Begin by describing yourself in a work situation. Prepare a summary of your work experience, career achievements, educational background and accomplishments or transferable skills relevant to the opportunity.

You in the work environment

- Why should I hire you?
This is an opportunity to sell yourself as best you can. Your answer should be short and to the point. The employer is looking for evidence that you can do the job.
- Do you mind working overtime?
Indicate your willingness to work overtime when required. Obtain information from the interviewer on their expectations regarding this.
- Why do you want to leave your current company?
Refrain from using negative reasons. Align your response with your career aspirations.
- Why have you changed jobs so frequently?
The client is seeking assurance that you will be making a long-term commitment to their company. Provide valid reasons for each move in your career.
- Why do you want to work here?
Researching the company is key. Reply using the company's attributes as you see them. Indicate your belief that this can provide you with a favourable working environment and that such an atmosphere would encourage your best work.
- What are your biggest accomplishments?
Respond only with work related answers and your specific contribution. Use structured examples evidencing measurable achievements such as cost and time savings.
- What have you done that shows initiative?
It is important to highlight what makes you stand out. Focus on ideas you initiated that had a favourable impact on your organisation.
- Can you work under pressure?
Give an example of where you conquered a pressurised situation.



Your career aspirations

- Where do you see yourself in 3 to 5 years' time?
Highlight the skills you would like to acquire in this period and ask what opportunities exist within the company.
- What salary are you worth, and why?
It is usually premature to discuss this in the first interview. If asked, avoid giving specifics about your salary requirements. Please role play this question with your Consultant.
- What type of position are you interested in?
Draw attention to your skills and area(s) of expertise and combine those with your passion.

Other questions to prepare for - remember to give work related examples:

- When were you most satisfied in your job?
- What motivates you in a job and in your personal life?
- How do you handle criticism and conflict?
- This organisation is very different to your current employer - how do you think you are going to fit in?
- Why have you changed position/company so many times?
- What kind of people do you find it difficult to work with?
- Give me an example of when you have had to face a conflict of interest at work.
- Do you prefer to work alone or in a group? Why?
- What is the most difficult situation you have faced and how did you approach it?
- Give me an example of when you have felt anger at work. How did you cope and did you still do a good job?
- How do you measure your own performance?
- What changes in the workplace have caused you difficulty and why?
- Give me an example of when you have been out of your depth.
- How do you organise or plan?
- What are three things your manager would say about you?
- How does your job fit in to your department and company?

2. Discussion regarding the company and position

If there are any aspects of the company or position that you are uncertain about, it is important to discuss it with your Consultant. Ensure that you leave the meeting on a positive note thereby not closing any doors for future possibility.

3. Your questions

Remember, this is a two-way discussion. Ensure you have prepared in such a way as to gain a thorough understanding of the expectations. Think carefully when asking questions and make sure they are relevant to the industry, market, company and the role you are interested in.



Samples of questions to ask the interviewer(s):

- Why is this opportunity available?
- Tell me about the team? What are their roles?
- I'd like to know more about your organisation, tell me about the structure of the division/team (organogram)?
- What type of training do you typically go through for this role? For example product, systems training or orientation.
- What are the career growth prospects?
- What are the typical traits of your most successful employees?
- What are the challenges in this position?
- What has been the growth of the company over the last five years?
- How do you measure performance?
- Who does this role interact with?
- Do you have a specific organisational objective you are working towards?

4. The end of the interview

- If the prospective employer offers you the position during the meeting, do not feel under pressure to give an immediate answer.
- Last impressions are almost as important as first impressions. The way you leave the interview may be the way you are remembered. Indicate your interest in the opportunity. Thank the interviewer(s) for their time and give a firm handshake before leaving.
- Phone your Consultant immediately to give feedback as this will enable him/her to have an in-depth discussion with the company whilst maintaining the level of professionalism that you would like to project.