





Your Interview: Hints & Tips



This guidance sheet will give you valuable information regarding the format of the interview and tips on how to prepare, including for competency based questioning.

Not every one of these questions will be relevant, but they will give you a good idea of the questions you can expect to be asked and what you can do to prepare.

Preparation for the Interview:


- ★ Research the firm via their website
-  Request any company brochures/literature to gain further insight into how they market themselves
- ★ Google them! See if they have appeared in any recent news articles or press releases
-  Find out as much as possible about the company, including all areas of law serviced/typical clients/markets/structure
- ★ Ask your recruitment consultant to give you as much knowledge as they can about the vacancy and their ideal candidate
-  Prepare questions to ask at the interview – what would you want to know before taking the job? (note: not salary related questions!)
- ★ Plan your route to the interview, checking on planned roadworks, typical journey times and train timetables. Do you need to pre-book parking?
-  Use an on-foot journey planner to ensure you know your way from the car park or train station to the office

On the Day of the Interview:

- ★ Dress smartly. It's always advisable to wear formal business attire, unless you have been told otherwise. It goes without saying that all shirts must be ironed and shoes polished!
-  Print and take with you an up-to-date version of your CV. It's also advisable to take a notepad and pen
- ★ Set off in plenty of time. Always better to be there early and give yourself time to go over your notes beforehand
-  Plan to arrive at your interview 10 minutes earlier than scheduled (but no earlier!) as this will give you chance to read the literature at reception
- ★ Be friendly and courteous to the reception staff – their opinion on candidates is often sought by hiring managers



Interview Questioning Style

- ★ HR generally focus on whether you fit with the company culture and that you have the general skills to do the job
-  Department Partners focus more on your specific skills and your personality to ensure you can technically do the job and you will fit in with the team
- ★ Be prepared for a possible panel interview and answer questions looking from one interviewer to another

Typical Questions you may be asked at the Interview:

Plan a model answer for each of the below questions prior to your interview. They are all very generic and may or may not appear in your interview, but they are typically asked in interviews and it is always wise to prepare!

- How much do you know about the vacancy/firm?
- What do you see as the main functions of the role?
- How do you visualise a typical day?
- Why are you interested in the position?
- What do you see as the satisfactions of the job?
- What do you think the frustrations may be?
- Describe a time you received negative feedback about yourself?
- What skills or experience do you have that make you right for this position?
- Who and what are you responsible for in your current role?
- What has been your biggest achievement in your career to date?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Give an example of how you coped well under pressure?
- When have you had an opportunity to show initiative?
- What motivates you?
- What de-motivates you?
- How do you analyse your own performance?
- How do you think you could improve your own performance?
- What are your long-term goals?
- What are the reasons you are looking to leave your current role?
- If you could change one aspect of your current role what would it be and why?
- What are you looking for in your next role?
- Choose 5 words to describe yourself?
- What 5 words would your current boss use to describe you?
- Are you considering other vacancies?

Competency Based Interview Questions:

Competency based interviews are becoming increasingly popular to predict a candidate's future performance. Essentially a series of behavioural questions, the interviewer will ask you to describe a situation which demonstrated a situation which demonstrates your abilities that will be integral to the role you are interviewing for.



You can spot a competency based question as they usually begin with, "Tell me about a time", or "Describe" or "When did you", or "How did" ... they are basically setting you up to describe a situation.

Think about which competencies are important for this position? Now think about examples from your past experience.

Answers to competency based questions should be very structured, so we recommend the STAR technique, describing:

- ★ The Situation
- ★ The Task required as a result
- ★ The Action you took
- ★ The Result of that action

Individual competencies: These refer to your personal attributes such as your flexibility, decisiveness, tenacity, knowledge, independence, risk taking and personal integrity. Example: Tell me about a time when one of your ideas was challenged.



Managerial competencies: These refer to your ability to take charge of other people such as leadership, empowerment, strategic thinking, corporate sensitivity, project management and managerial control. Example: Tell me about a time you led a group to achieve an objective?



Analytical competencies: These refer to your decision-making abilities such as innovation, analytical skills, problem solving, practical learning and attention to detail. Example: Tell me about a time you identified a new approach to a problem?



Interpersonal competencies: These refer to social competence. Many workplaces function on the basis of project teams and the more collaborative they are, the more likely they are to thrive. Example: Describe a situation where you got people to work together?



Motivational competencies: These refer to things that drive you, such as resilience, energy, motivation, result orientation, initiative and quality focus. Example: When did you work the hardest and feel the greatest sense of achievement?



Finally... be yourself when answering competency based questions; use real life examples and relate them to your experience, how you reacted and how it made you feel. These are not trick questions, they are designed to make the best match between an individual and an organisation. A little bit of preparation and you'll quickly realise that competency based interviews represent an unprecedented opportunity to describe some of your finer moments to a captive audience.



Questions you may want to ask the interviewer:







It is important to ask questions to show you are interested in the position and that you have given the opportunity sufficient thought beforehand.

- Future of the company/position? Growth plans?
- Who do they consider their main competitors?
- What is the company culture/ethos/values?
- Ask about training opportunities, promotion prospects etc.
- Ask for more specific information about the duties/clients etc.
- Ask about staff retention
- Ask about why the vacancy has arisen
- Ask more about the people/team you will be working with
- Ask more about the interview procedure, whether there is a second or third stage

Make sure you confirm the salary and benefits with your recruitment consultant prior to the interview rather than asking when you are there. By leaving your consultant to negotiate on your behalf you will often end up with a more comprehensive offer. If the interviewer asks you about salary in the interview, just defer them to Eventus Recruitment, and we will discuss that on your behalf.

Final hints and tips!

Remember that any client will buy what you can do for them, supported by your past accomplishments. How can you make their life easier? Talk in the future tense, “this is how I will support you” or “this is how I could add value in that area”. Be enthusiastic above all – stress your flexibility. If you are comfortable in doing so, try and get their commitment to seeing you for a 2nd stage – close the deal!

- ★ Remember to use a firm handshake; it conveys a positive and confident persona
-  Remember that honesty really is the best policy
- ★ Smile where appropriate and show enthusiasm for the company and position
-  Find opportunities to sell yourself, relating your skills to the position
- ★ Remain motivated and give positive responses
-  Show that you have researched the company
- ★ Don't criticise your previous employers or colleagues
-  Seek clarification if you are unsure of the meaning of the question
- ★ If you are unsure of how to answer a question, be honest
-  Keep your answers clear and to the point
- ★ Ask when you'll be given a decision and when you can expect to hear from them
-  Tell them you are interested in the job if you are
- ★ Thank the interviewer for seeing you

Good luck! If you require further assistance with interview preparation, please get in [touch](#).

We are here to help you find your perfect role at no cost to you as a candidate.

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