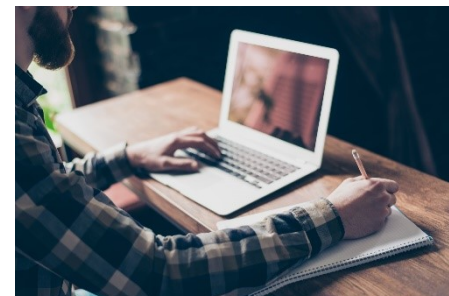


# Interview Techniques: Top Tips

This information sheet will give you top tips to ensure that you feel confident and prepared when going for your next interview. Use the information in this document to impress the interview panel!

## Top Tip 1: Preparation

Preparing for an interview will help you feel more confident and prepared when you meet the panel. It'll also ensure you turn up in good time, are dressed appropriately and you have everything you need to deliver a successful interview. There are a number of steps you might want to consider when preparing for your interview:



- ❖ **Find out about the employer;** the employer could ask you in an interview what you know about the company.
- ❖ **Visit the website and read about the organisation.** You might want to have a look at the strategies and initiatives they currently have in place.
- ❖ **The employer might have sent some brochures for you to read** or they could have been included in the application pack; make sure you have a look at these.
- ❖ **If you can't find anything, contact the employer and ask them for some information.** You might know someone who works there already so you could ask them.
- ❖ **Ensure you read the job description and check you understand it.** If you don't have one, contact the employer.
- ❖ **Ensure you read the person specification and job advert thoroughly.** You'll need to meet any "essential" requirements.

## Top Tip 2: Examples for Interview

At interview, you'll need to sell yourself to the employer and convince them you're the right person for the job. To do this, you'll need to provide evidence to demonstrate your competencies, capabilities, skills, knowledge and qualities – you'll also need to demonstrate your enthusiasm for the role.

Look at the job description and person specification to determine the key skills the employer is looking for and plan some examples under key headings. If you jot this down you can take it into the interview with you. Key headings you might want to consider preparing for are:

**Communication**

*Resolving conflict*

**Problem solving**

*Leadership*

**Team work**

**Leading a project or piece of work**

*Using initiative*

## Top Tip 3: The STAR Model

When answering interview questions, our nerves sometimes get the better of us and we end up rambling with no focus. When answering your interview questions, think about using the STAR model to give your answers structure and keep them short and concise.



**S**ituation – the context

**T**ask – what you had to do

**A**ction- what and how you did it

**R**esult – the outcome and what difference it made.

Always draw examples from your previous employment, voluntary works, free time activities etc. so that you can provide a rich source of scenarios but also subtly let the employer know more about your skills, interests and abilities. Try and give an example in all of your answers.

### Top Tip 4: The Unexpected Questions

Interviews are designed to challenge you in different ways and the employer will be interested to know more about you than your skills and capabilities. You might find the employer wants to know more about your motivations, your ambitions, your values. The following interview questions could come up so be prepared:

- Why do you want this job?
- Where do you see yourself in X years time?
- What are your ambitions/what motivates you?
- What type of working environment would you thrive in?



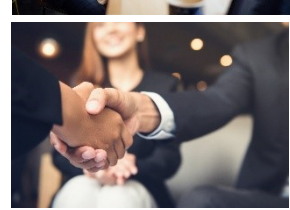
### Top Tip 5: Questions for the Panel

To reinforce your interest and enthusiasm for the job, it's always a good idea to ask the panel questions. These questions should genuinely reflect things you'd want to know, for example about the team, who may line manage you if you were successful, the roles within the team, about software, structure, asking about training or development. Be sure to read the candidate pack/job description/person specification as the answer might be in here and it could indicate that you hadn't read it or weren't prepared.

### Top Tip 6: Going Into Your Interview

Here are some top tips for your actual interview which might help you...

1. Arrive at least 15 minutes early before the start of the interview. You should have worked out before hand how you're going to get there, how long will it take to travel, if its virtual; can you access the internet or the video conference platform.
2. Dress tidily – smart, no trainers, clothes straight and ironed, hair brushed – avoid wearing anything uncomfortable.
3. Make sure that you've got everything the employer has asked you to bring i.e. evidence of qualifications, ID etc. You also might want to take a copy of the job description and person specification just in case.
4. Try to relax – use breathing techniques or an app i.e. Calm to calm your nerves before heading into your interview
5. Make sure you smile and give good eye contact with the interview panel.
6. Take a drink of water in with you – you'll be doing a long of talking so you might need this.
7. Listen closely to the questions and answer exactly what is being asked – if you want it repeating, ask.
8. Take in a pad and pen – you might want to jot down the question to help you focus your answer. You might also want to take in some notes of your examples and write down STAR on your piece of paper to remind you to use this technique.
9. Take as long as you need to answer a question. It's ok to pause for thought before answering. Breathe and focus.
10. Ensure you speak to all panel members, not just the one who asked you the question.
11. If you're asked to give a presentation, ensure you stand up for this (unless otherwise instructed by the employer). After you've finished presenting, then you'll likely be asked to sit down for the question part of the interview.
12. Finally, sit up straight – this will help you project your voice and speak clearly and avoid any nervous fidgeting.



Throughout your interview, ensure you remain professional throughout but try to show your personality too. The employer wants to know more about **you** so don't be afraid to show this and find a good balance when building up a rapport with the interview panel.

GOOD LUCK! 