JMK Recruitment Limited

# The Interview

## Before The Interview:

Before your interview find out everything you can about the company together with directions to the interview and a contact name.

See if the agency can give you any tips as to what the company, or the interviewer may respond well to.

Re-read your CV, thinking through your own career and the questions they might ask you. Ensure that you can give them more information than is on your CV.

It is important to highlight the elements of your roles that sell you as an individual. Prepare some examples of situations you have been in that help to demonstrate your competences.

You should try to anticipate the general questions which they will ask and also prepare some questions to ask them.

Of course the employer will want to be sure you are the right person for the job. You may find that the interview focuses much more on technical / ability issues than you are used to - so be prepared.

Technical tests too are becoming very common, so do not be surprised if one is sprung on you! Ask your agency whether this is likely to happen.

Make sure you get value from the interview too. Clarify exactly what the role is and what will be expected of you. See if you can get a feeling for the culture of the company. The most successful positions are where technical abilities meet the specification and your goals match that of the employer.

## In the Interview:

It is said that 80% of all interviews are decided in the first 5 minutes. Therefore it is important to be smart, punctual, attentive, positive and polite to make a good first impression. To do well at the interview you will need to convince the interviewer you are technically qualified to do the job. You will also need to show that you are sufficiently motivated to get the job done well and that you will fit in with the company's organisational structure and the team in which you will work.

## Body Language:

When you are being interviewed it is very important that you give out the right signals. A firm handshake, good eye contact and a winning smile all help to create the desired image. You should always look attentive, so do not slouch in your chair. Never lie to anyone in an interview, your body language and tone of voice or the words you use will probably give you away - classic body language giveaways include scratching your nose and not looking directly at the other person when you are speaking to them.

## Group Interview Tests:

Employers use Group tests to see how you react in a group. They will want to see if you help or hinder the group to reach the objectives set. An observer will be watching to see how you take criticism, whether you take on leadership roles and involve less communicative group members.

## Panel Interviews:

To do well you will need to identify the important figures on the panel and which role each is fulfilling. The chairperson is easy to identify, as they will generally make the introductions. You will also need to identify the person whom you will be working for directly - make sure you give them plenty of eye contact.

When you are talking to the panel, remember that you are talking to all of them and not just the person who posed a particular question - your answer has to be the correct one for each panel member! If there is one particular panel member who everyone else seems to agree with, you should make sure you impress him or her.

## Interview Questions You May Be Asked:

- **Why do you want this job?**

  Think carefully about this question. Stress the positive aspects, which have attracted you to applying for this position. Do not mention the negative aspects of your current job or the job in question.

- **What can you contribute?**

  This is your chance to shine. Tell them about your achievements in your previous position(s), which are relevant to the new position you are applying for.

- **Why are you changing careers?**

  This question will only be asked if you are making a radical change in your career. Always stress the positive aspects of the change rather than the negative aspects of your previous career - you do not want to come across as someone who is moving just because you hate your old career. Say why you think you will be good in the new career - this should come from your experience and achievements. Stress the transferable skills you have, such as leadership ability, etc.

- **Why did you join your previous company? Did they live up to your expectations? Why are you leaving now**?

  Always be positive about your reasons for joining and leaving a company. Be very careful that you do not say anything negative about your present employer. If you do, the new company will wonder what you will say about them when you leave. You might want to stress that you are looking for a new challenge and that you feel that the company who is interviewing you fits the bill!

- **What's been your biggest failure?**

Try to pick something you were later able to correct or learn from or something that can be easily turned in a position. It is important to show that you are able to learn from mistakes. Sometimes the employer will want to know where you are weakest so they can assess your training needs. It's important to prepare well for this question and above all be honest.

- **How do you handle 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 any areas which my manager/supervisor highlights. Do you have regular staff appraisals and a staff development plan?"

- **Why should we employ you?**

The answer to this question will be based on your previous experience and achievements, which relate to the company. At the end you could add that you think there is a good fit between you and the job, and do ask the interviewer for their opinion.

**Factors That Can Cost You The Job:**

1. Being unprepared for the interview.
2. Poor/limp handshake.
3. Lack of eye contact
4. Saying unfavourable things about previous employers.
5. Not being able to communicate clearly and effectively.
6. Being aggressive or acting in a superior way.
7. Making excuses for failings.

**After The Interview:**

Call your agency as soon as possible to let them know how the interview went and what your reaction was. Try to be as decisive as possible:

Are you interested?

Are there any questions left unanswered?

If you are offered the role what will you say?

It may well be that the employer has already called the agency with his/her decision.

**If You Are Unsuccessful:**

If you're not getting the job offers you desire then you need to look carefully at your interview performance. You should try and get as much feedback as possible from your agency. If you have been unsuccessful in obtaining a job ask the agency where they think you fell down and how they think you could do better. Once you have feedback you can modify your interview technique and hopefully do better at the next interview.

**If You Are Successful:**

If you are offered the role you may well have very little time indeed to make up your mind. The agency, naturally, will be keen for you to say yes, but make sure that you are certain before giving a positive response. One of the worst things you can do is to say yes and then go back on your word when something else comes up. If you decline the role, give the agency your reasons. Feedback is vital to ensure you retain the goodwill of agency and employer.

But all being well the job is exactly what you are looking for and you are more than keen to start.