

HANDLING AN INTERVIEW – STAGE 2

Congratulations



You have successfully negotiated the first interview only to find out that you have to go through it all again. How do you achieve success at the second interview stage and ensure that the desired job becomes yours?

First and second interviews

The first interview lays the foundations: it involves checking out your academic background, skills base and experience to see that they tie in with your CV and match the job specification. The second interview goes a stage further and can take on different formats - you could be meeting several staff members (panel interview) or a series of one-to-one interviews.

Alternatively, it could take the form of an all-day assessment centre - some have even been known to last even longer.

Whatever the format, the questions asked will probe two areas:

-  Are you competent to do the job? This question focuses on your skills and experience.
-  Are you going to fit in with the company? This is to establish if you will be suited to the company culture.








Your personality and the personal impact you make is what will really land you the job. Be yourself and let your personality shine through. Enthusiasm, positivity and honesty will go a long way.

Preparation – Failure to prepare is preparing to fail!

The second interview is a more thorough and detailed process, this time however you have an advantage, you have been there once already and obviously impressed enough to get a call back, this time round liaise with us to fact find in terms of the finer details of how you did in your first interview, the client may have given us an insight however big or small as to why they liked you, or why they are keen to meet with you again.

This type of inside information can be invaluable to you in preparing for the next round, and you can use this may provide you with a distinct advantage over your competitors.









Walking into an interview knowing you have done your homework will give you confidence. Your preparation should concentrate on all the practical and intellectual aspects of the interview:

-  Find out the names and titles of the interviewers beforehand.
-  Check the time and location and plan your route accordingly.
-  Allow extra time for your journey in case of delays. Remember to take the phone numbers of those meeting you.
-  First impressions count for so much so ensure that you look clean and always wear a suit unless the environment is particularly informal.
-  Take a copy of your CV, a pen and paper - it is by no means certain the interviewer will have a copy from your first visit.
-  Make sure you pick up business cards of those interviewing you so that you can write thank you letters.
-  Contact the employer for clarification on expenses as most employers pay all reasonable expenses incurred on visits. Keep records for transportation, lodging and food.

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General interview tips

Think back to your first interview.

-  What main areas did the interviewers concentrate on? Be prepared for a more intense focus.
-  Look at the information given to you - brochures, presentations etc. and be prepared to answer questions.
-  Which questions did you find difficult? Be prepared to answer the same questions again.
-  Let the interviewer know more about you - this is your chance to express your ideas.
-  Think of fresh examples and information i.e. about your achievements.
-  Do not get distracted - focus and listen carefully to the interviewer.
-  Know your skills and strengths and express them with confidence
-  Have confidence, remain calm, be concise, positive and enthusiastic.

Questions to ask

Asking questions shows initiative and that you are interested in the position.





-  What am I expected to accomplish in my first six months?
-  How would you define your company culture?
-  What support will I receive for my professional development?

Be sure to have some questions prepared that relate directly to information you were given at the first interview. It not only shows enthusiasm but also that you are capable of listening. Be sure also to clarify any of your doubts about the organisation, training etc. This is a two-way process - so it is just as much their mission to find out if they really like you as it is yours to see if you would fit in with them.

Presentations












In many cases in today's market, an organisation may request that you prepare a brief or even sometimes detailed presentation on a pre-determined subject.

This subject is usually highly specific to the industry in which you are applying for the post, but it can sometimes be something totally different. The main reason for a client requesting that you compile, and present are as follows:

-  They want to see how you prepare, research and present on a topic.
-  They want to see how well you cope under scrutiny or under pressure.
-  The wish to test your listening and communications skills.
-  It may be a core aspect to the role, i.e. presentations may form a large part of the new post.

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Presentation Tips

-  Read the brief and topic and understand it.
-  Prepare and research topic on the web.
-  Include their corporate logo and colours (shows excellent attention to detail).
-  Use graphs and diagrams where appropriate.
-  Use buzz cards in addition to your PowerPoint presentation (avoids you having to read off the screen which can be distracting).
-  Compile a hand out for everyone to take away.
-  Time your presentation to the slot allocated. ☑ Ask for any questions and answer accordingly.
-  Check that the company uses the same system as the one you designed your presentation on.
-  Email a copy of the presentation to the main contact at least 2 days prior.
-  Bring a backup copy on a memory stick just in case.
-  Remain calm and stand up straight whilst delivering the presentation.

Follow-up actions after the second interview

Remember to give immediate feedback to us after the interview. This needs to include any areas you felt you may have fallen down on - perhaps you have a nagging doubt about a specific answer you gave or forgot to press home a certain point about a special skill or experience you have.

We can cover this for you in our call to the employer. If you have been interviewed directly, send a thank you note, or email expressing enthusiasm and keenness to join, sent immediately to the person who interviewed you - this can be a deciding factor as to whether you receive a job offer.

There is a possibility you will be offered the job on the spot, at the end of the interview - if you are, and are unsure, be confident enough to ask for time to think about it. It is normal practice, however, to find out several days later. Second interviews can be daunting - but if you put in the preparation, your hard work may well pay off.