

The Interview

Increasingly, employers are using competency-based interviewing techniques to gather evidence in support of a candidate's case to ascertain that he or she has the ability, skills and motivation to match the 'competencies' outlined in the job and person specifications.

The theory behind competency-based interviewing is that past work behaviour is a good predictor of future job performance. When interviewers ask you competency-based questions, they want you to talk about how you have actually tackled real problems in the past. From this, they are trying to confirm how effectively you would tackle future problems if they were to offer you a job.

In responding to a competency-based question, the most important principle is to give a real example that actually happened to you. Do not talk in broad terms about how you generally tackle those sorts of situations.

Talk about a specific example in the first person. "I did this, and I did that.. and this is the effect it had".

Once you have talked about your example, the interviewer will probably ask you further questions to get a deeper understanding of what you did. So, the second key principle is: Be ready to talk about your example in a lot of detail.

Interview research

One of the most common mistakes to make during the application process is to carry out insufficient research on prospective employers, as often the first question will be "What do you know about us?" Before meeting your potential employer, you'll need to be aware of the following:

What does the company do?

Who are their major competitors?

What skills they are looking for, such as education or previous experience?

What you can offer them?

Information research

Study the job specification; match it to your CV so you can provide evidence that you meet the criteria.

The best place to research a company is their website. Q Personnel will provide you with specific job information before you attend interviews. If you need/want any specific further info please just ask!

Handling the Interview

No matter how well-qualified you are for a job, your personality and personal presentation will count enormously at interview.

Logistics

Know whom it is you are meeting, where the building is and how to get there so as to avoid stress and complication on the day.

Bring your contact details, spare CV, pen and notepad.

Have information ready to impress the interviewer with your research.

Take your photo identification; passport, driving licence in case they need it.

Your first impression

Remember that you're making an impression as soon as you walk through the door.

Be courteous to everyone, from the Receptionist to the MD - you never know who might influence the final selection of candidates, or even the eventual successful candidate.

Questions you may be asked: (Have a think about what your answers would be to save you 'going blank' in the interview)

Why are you looking to leave your current position? (Don't be negative towards your current employer)

What are your main strengths?

What is your biggest weakness?

Where have you shown excellent team working skills?

What is your biggest work achievement?

Where have you demonstrated a 'can do' attitude?

What are your main skills?

Why do you want this job?

What progression are you looking for?

Ask the interviewer

What key things are they looking for the right applicant to possess?

What would my core responsibilities be?

What training or induction is given?

What scope is there for taking on extra work or being involved in any other aspects of the company?

Where are the opportunities to progress within the company?

What is the next stage to the interview?

What reservations do they have about you?

Pitching the right salary

Often the salary will be set, but if your salary expectations are asked, rather than under-pricing or over pricing yourself, why not ask the interviewer what they would look to offer someone with your skill sets and experiences?

Conclusion

If you want the job, tell the client that you do. After all, if there are 2 similar applicants applying for the job and only one says they want the position, who will be offered the role?!

At the end, thank your interviewer for his or her time and shake hands. Tell them you'll hope to hear from them soon.

Post-interview

Call me so I can take your feedback, and go back to the client proactively.