



Top Tips Interview Guide

interview DOs and DON'Ts

When any interviewer meets someone, they are always looking to answer three key questions:

- CAN you do the job?
- WILL you do the job?
- And, HOW will you go about doing it?

To gauge this they will probably spend some time going through your CV and assessing your previous experience – this doesn't just help them ensure that you have the correct methodologies and understanding, but also that you talk passionately about what you've done, and with clarity, conviction and energy.

We highly recommend that you spend some time reviewing your CV and considering your past experience and positions. Also, think about the sort of questions the interviewer is likely to ask and ensure that you can answer them. Likely topics include questions about yourself, your hobbies, your family and your life outside of work, because these focus on your personality and give some clues to what really motivates you and what you're passionate about.

Do be careful though! Think how your answers could be perceived...someone who enjoys snowboarding every weekend could break a leg at some point and be off work for a long time, whilst someone who likes rocking the night away or clubbing until the wee hours might not make the best Sunday Duty Manager!)

key tips for being a good interviewee:

Prepare. And, do this as far in advance as possible. If you think that you'll walk into an interview and everything will just flow, you'll probably be mistaken. We can't stress how important it is to research the client – ask your Recruitment Consultant for additional information, check out the interviewer's website (they're bound to ask you about this), check the company via a variety of search engines and see if you can track down some recent news stories about them – dropping some recent company news into a conversation shows you've prepared and helps develop a good conversation.

By preparing in advance, and not cramming it in at the night before, you'll feel less pressured and more relaxed, allowing your personality to shine through.

SWOT up!

A SWOT Analysis, also known as a Mystery Shop or Critique, is an expectation for most clients. It also shows that you've visited a store recently and that you're able to analyse stores in a critical and relevant manner, as well as offering a good foundation for discussion within the interview itself. Don't rely on memory, as stores vary massively and times change very quickly in retail.

Make sure you're comfortable with your CV

Think about what you've done in the past, how you did it, and why you did it. Pre-empt key questions that you may be asked - especially those you don't like answering, and make sure you know how you would address them. Ensure you get your energy, drive and passion across, as this is key.

Write down 10 questions that you would like to ask on the day

Interview questions are important as they provide you with an opportunity to find out about a company's culture and working structure. Most interviewers will ask you if you have any questions during the interview and it's always a good idea to have prepared a list beforehand. You don't need to ask them all, but bring a selection to remind you if you do feel nervous or in case some have been answered during the interview. This also shows that you are well prepared, considerate and organised.

Questions could include:

- Issues the business is facing during this growth stage
- The culture; what it's like to work there and their methods of working
- Their expectations for someone like you in the first three, six and 12 months

Prepare 5 C.A.R's

C.A.R. stands for Challenge, Action and Result. They should focus around the top five skills you'll need to do the job.

An example of a C.A.R. for team working could be to discuss the challenge you faced as a team, the action you took to ensure you met the challenge and the result both you and the team achieved.

Positive approach

In an interview make sure that you try to steer away from negative issues. If you are leaving your current role because you hate the position or the work, try not to discuss the work negatively. Instead, reflect that you are seeking a new challenge and more complex or considered work to expand your skills. No matter how tempting, it's never a good idea to start slating previous colleagues, managers, companies or roles.

For men:

Ensure that you have a clean suit (black or blue is best), a conservative shirt and tie (e.g. white shirt, red tie). Also, a clean-shaven approach (or well-groomed if you have a goatee or beard) and general good hygiene, tidy hair and clean shoes.

For women:

A skirt suit (skirt should be of an appropriate length – not too short, just above the knee) or trouser suit, a conservative shirt or top, tidy hair and clean sensible shoes. You'd be surprised how many people don't bother and it *does* get noticed.

Be on time

And, take a notepad with you, *including your 10-20 questions*, and **two** copies of your CV. Make sure you plan your route and give yourself extra time to get there. If you're early it gives you time to freshen up, relax, check in, and read your notes one last time. If something unexpected does happen and you're running late call your Recruitment Consultant and the interviewer before the interview start time to explain.

Never smoke before an interview

A non-smoking interviewer can take offence to sitting in a confined space with someone smelling of stale smoke. However, if you really need to have one before you go in, do it outside away from site and make sure you air yourself, wash your hands and have a mint or two before the interview.

Be polite to everyone you meet

You never know who they are or what influence they may have over the decision to hire you – even something as simple as being friendly with a receptionist can pay off. You never get a second chance to make a first impression

When you first meet your interviewer, give a firm handshake, maintain eye contact and smile. As you move to the interview room, a bit of flattery about the set up, the offices or anything else that's appropriate can have a positive effect – but be genuine!

Throughout the interview

- Maintain eye contact, smile when possible and keep control of your hands (lay them on your lap if needed). Never fold your arms though, as this can be a defensive pose and gives a bad impression
- If a question is ambiguous, it's fine to politely clarify what the interviewer means, and far better than going off on a tangent
- Speak clearly and at a controlled pace, making sure not to mumble. After you've answered a question, clarify with the interviewer that you have answered the question fully or if there are any other areas he or she would like to cover with regards that point
- Finally, make sure that you put some buzz and personality into your answers.

Remember, you should talk 70% of the time, and they should talk 30%, so avoid monosyllabic *yes, no* answers and always try to expand your response – the C.A.R.s above are useful here.

A top tip is to state what you personally did rather than talk generally about the team. Claim responsibility where appropriate and state *I did this* rather than *we did this* – it's not about pretending you weren't part of a team, but making your role and responsibilities clear ... after all, the interviewer isn't looking to hire the team.

And at the end of the interview, thank your interviewer for taking the time to meet with you. If you like the sound of the role, state that you're really interested and genuinely believe that you could do a good job for them and fit in with their existing team.

Please remember that you can call your Recruitment Consultant or anyone at R³ at any time if you want any more help or advice.