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EXECUTIVE

Numbers Executive Recruitment Interview Advice Guide



INTERVIEW ADVICE

Pre Interview

Do not underestimate the importance of preparation. Preparation is your platform for a successful interview. The interviewer has taken time to review your resume and meet with you, the minimum expectation is that you've done your homework and can demonstrate a base level knowledge of the business. If you want to set yourself apart from the competition and secure that second interview, keep reading!

- Company Research should be performed before every interview. This includes understanding who their competitors are, understanding the products or services they offer, understanding the interviewer's position within the business and their personal work history.
- Try to sample the product or service offered by the company interviewing you, do research into any existing advertising campaigns, make a note of any advertisements you have seen. Businesses invest a lot of money into advertising and demonstrating your connection with the brand is a great way to build rapport.
- Ensure you are aware of any news in the media, particularly any M&A, sale or divestment activity. Research the financial position, turnover, or assets under management of the company by reading any publicly available financial data. A good source of information is www.businessspectator.com.au
- Know your resume and be prepared to justify everything you have written.
- Read the job description thoroughly (if there is one) and ask yourself what the key skills and competencies are, think of examples of occasions when you have demonstrated those skills and be prepared to discuss this.
- Think about how you can add value to the organisation and why you want to work for them. Think about why they may have reservations in hiring you, and also why they should hire you. Make sure you can demonstrate how you can add value.
- The interview process exists just as much for you as it does for the organisation you are considering, and there isn't much time to sell to each other so prior research is key to making an informed decision.

The Interview

- Relax, be confident in yourself and your ability.
- First impressions count, make sure you are punctual, ensure you are in corporate attire - look your best!
- Introduce yourself when greeted with a firm handshake and a warm smile.
- Make an effort to establish rapport quickly.
- Throughout the interview, answer questions with confidence and be prepared to back up what you are saying by providing examples.
- Don't be afraid to take your time in answering a question, or asking for clarification - this is a much better approach than providing an unsuitable answer.
- The interview is your opportunity to sell yourself – be positive, listen carefully and be concise with your answers. You don't want to answer with a "yes" or a "no", expand your answers with enthusiasm although ensure you keep to the point and be honest.
- Try and maintain a comfortable level of eye contact throughout the meeting.
- Don't rush to fill in silence, think before you speak.
- Avoid one-word answers.
- At the end of the interview, you should feel you understand what the company does, what the responsibilities of the position are, and the next stage in the process.
- Make sure you ask appropriate questions (see examples below)
- Close by thanking the interviewer(s) for their time.

Post Interview

- ❑ Consider the interview process, and how you performed
- ❑ Can you see yourself working for the business, for the manager that interviewed you, or at that location?
- ❑ Follow up with your recruitment contact and express your interest or concerns and feedback on the interview process. Decide if you would like to proceed to the next stage.
- ❑ If appropriate, email the interviewer and thank them for their time
- ❑ If you expect a further stage in the process, start the preparation process again!

BEHAVIOURAL STYLE QUESTIONS

Behavioural based interview questioning is based on the premise that your previous behaviour will indicate your future performance. The style of questioning provokes you to give specific examples and will generally assess your answers against specific competencies. For example: problem solving, leadership, innovation, crisis management, influencing.

The best way to approach this questions is to firstly think about the key competencies required for the role you are interviewing for (hint: job competencies are normally highlighted in a position description!)

If “Influencing Skills” are a requirement, prepare 3 good examples of where you have demonstrated superior influencing ability. When you’re asked for an example use the STAR approach to relay your answer, explain the **S**ituation or **T**ask at hand, explain the **A**ction you took and finally the **R**esults you achieved. Note: there is nothing wrong with adding in a **L**earn for next time.

Please refer to the examples below to get your mind ticking:

Tell me about a time when you were faced with conflicting priorities. How did you determine which was your top priority? (Time Management)

Occasionally we make decisions our manager disagrees with. Tell me about a time this happened and why they disagreed with you. (Decision Making)

Everyone is pressured from time to time to complete a project at the expense of quality. Tell me about a time when this happened to you, what did you do? (Ability to work under pressure)

How have your management techniques differed from other people in your company. What did you do that was different? Give me an example. (Leadership)

Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way. (Influencing)

Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
(Decision Making, Problem Solving)

Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
(Integrity)

Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year. (Decision Making, Action Orientation, Leadership)

How have you coped when you have had to face a conflict of interest at work. (Relationship Management, Integrity)

How do you measure your own performance? (Emotional Intelligence, Reflective Ability, Personal Drive)

What would your previous employers say about you and what would they consider your weaknesses? (Self Awareness, Emotional Intelligence, Personal Drive)

GENERAL & TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Q - Tell me about yourself.

A - This is a commonly asked question designed to break the ice. Spend a maximum of three minutes to describe your qualifications, career history and your range of skills. Emphasise the skills that are relevant to the position you're exploring

Q - What have been your achievements to date?

A - Again this is a common question so be prepared. Select a work-related achievement that is recent. Identify skills you used in the achievement and quantify the benefit.

Q - Tell me the most difficult situation you have had to face and how you tackled it?

A - The interviewer is really trying to find out your definition of "difficult" and whether you can show a logical approach to problem solving. Ensure you select the right example that showcases your ability to navigate a problem which was not foreseen.

Q - What do you dislike about your current role?

A - The interviewer is trying to find out whether the job on offer has responsibilities you will dislike. Try to answer this in a positive manner, rather than delving into a bucket list of negative gripes. E.g I feel I work best in an environment where decisions are made relatively quickly, unfortunately that is difficult in my current role due to key decision makers being offshore etc.

Q - What are your strengths?

A - Concentrate on discussing your main strengths. List three or four explanations of how they could benefit the employer. Strengths to consider include technical proficiency; ability to learn quickly; leadership capacity; determination to succeed; positive attitude; team focus and your ability to work autonomously.

Q - What are your greatest weaknesses?

A - The interviewer is trying to gauge your self-awareness. Don't respond that you don't have any. We all have weaknesses. Either use a professional weakness such as a lack of experience (not ability) on your part in one area that is not vital for the job, or use a personal weakness and show the steps that you have taken to combat it. Eg " I'm not very good at delegating but I'm conscious of this and have organised a weekly check in with colleagues to check-in on what could be shared".

Q - What kind of decision do you find most difficult?

A - Try to focus on decisions you have made without sufficient information. This will show your positive side. E.G "I like to make decisions based on sufficient information and having alternatives. When you have to make quick decisions you have to rely on "gut feeling" and experience.

Q - Why do you want to leave your current employer?

A – Be ready for this one and focus on what you are looking to gain by making a career change, rather than what you dislike about your current role. Eg. State how you are looking for more challenge, responsibility, experience and a change of environment and explain why you feel you are no longer receiving these things from your current role.

DON'T FORGET TO ASK QUESTIONS!

Before your interview, prepare questions you want to ask the interviewer. 'Open' questions that begin with 'What?', 'How?', 'Where?', 'Will?' or 'Who?' should encourage your interviewer to talk and provide you with additional information.

These should be tailored to specifically to the role however below are a couple of tips if you find yourself stuck.

How has the position become vacant?

How will you assess my performance?

How does the position fit into the wider structure?

What will the future progression path be?

Who will be the key stakeholders in this role?

Do you encourage further study and learning and development?

What are the key challenges facing the business at the moment? Can you provide some insight into the business strategy in the next 5 years?

When are you looking to make an appointment for this role?

All the best with your interview! Feel free to give us a call if you have any questions, otherwise we look forward to hearing your thoughts/feedback post meeting!

Regards,

Numbers Executive

