

## Interview Preparation:

You have your job interview scheduled - congratulations! Now it is time to prepare and we've got you covered. Here are some top tips to prepare for an interview:

### Carefully examine the job description:

When preparing for an interview, use the job description as a guide to what questions they may ask you. Study the skills and experience needed to be a suitable fit for the role and align these with your experience.

### Research the company:

Spending time researching the company is vital to achieving interview success. Study the website, taking time to fully understand the story behind the business and what its core values and products/services are. It is also a good idea to do your research on the interview panel via LinkedIn.

### Consider your answers to common interview questions:

While you won't be able to prepare for every question that you'll be asked during an interview, there are a few generic questions that you can plan answers to. It is also a good idea to think of a clear and concise personal statement that describes who you are, what you do and what you want from an opportunity.

### Possible questions:

*What do you know about us?*

Consider what they do, their products, size, office locations, their journey, awards, the market and competitors.

*Why do you want to work here?*

Think about what appeals to you about them: career progression, culture, their products/services, the market that they are in etc.

*What interests you about this role?*

Using the job description as a guide, consider the key responsibilities and relate them to your experience, as well as the opportunity for career progression.

*Why are you looking to leave your current company?*

Be honest but not negative. For example, lack of career progression, flexibility, team ethos etc.

## Key strength and weaknesses:

When it comes to these questions, it is important to be honest but try to carefully consider your responses beforehand.

*Key Strengths:* If possible, relate your answer to something that they are looking for in the job description. For example, team leading skills, communication etc.

*Weaknesses:* The best approach when answering this question is to choose an actual weakness but one that you're working on to improve. For example, "I sometimes have trouble asking for help, but I have learnt that it is much more beneficial for both myself and the business to reach out and ask for help when I need it."

## Competency-based questions:

Competency-based questions aim to test your skills and experience, so you'll need to answer in the context of actual, *specific* events. Which skills are tested will depend on the position that you're applying for. These questions usually open with 'Tell us about a time when you...', 'Give an example of...' or 'Describe how you...'.

## Answering competency-based questions:

Using the STAR (situation, task, action and result) method to structure your answers is a practical way to communicate your answers clearly and concisely.

**Situation** – the situation that you were in. For example, "In my previous job as Lead Engineer, a work colleague left unexpectedly, leaving behind an important project that had to be delivered within a very tight deadline."

**Task** – what you had to do to overcome the situation. For example, "My manager asked the team for a volunteer to take on the project."

**Action** - what you did and how and why you did it. For example, "I decided to step up and take responsibility for the project. I saw this an opportunity to show my dedication to the company and improve team moral."

**Result** - the outcome of your actions. For example, "After studying the project brief carefully, I put in the extra hours' work needed to complete the project on time and to specification. My manager was delighted with my work ethic and thanked me for commitment to keeping our customers happy. As a result of this, we received more work from the customer and had our highest achieving month."

This is just an example. Avoid embellishing the truth at all costs – any invented or exaggerated examples could be detected and will reflect badly on your character.

## "Do you have any questions for us?"

Most interviews conclude with the opportunity for you to ask any questions of the interview panel. Consider preparing five questions relating to the company, showing your interest and knowledge. For example, "How would you describe the company's ethos?", "What are the main goals for the business in the coming year?" or "What are the three best things about working at the company?"