

# Interview Top Tips

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# Before the interview

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## Learn about the company

- Read the website, especially the about us section
- Google them and look for news stories

## Know your CV

- This is your specialist subject and you need to know it, including any figures
- Think about what examples you will use for each skill in your CV

## Reread the job description

- List out the skills they are looking for
- Google any terms you don't understand
- Try and anticipate possible questions and prepare answers and examples
- Think about the questions you want to ask them

Know who is interviewing you and write it down with their contact number

# Arrive Well

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## Arrive early

- Know where you are going
- **Don't be late**

## Wear a suit or smart clothes

- If in doubt dress smarter
- Helps you feel more confident

## Start building rapport straight away

- Chat with the receptionist – they may ask for the receptionist's opinions
- Chat to anyone you meet and ask questions

## If they offer accept a drink, even if you don't want it

- It can give a useful pause before replying to a difficult question

## Have a good handshake

- Not a bone crusher or soft one, just a firm quick handshake with a smile

# Selling Yourself

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## Be as open as possible

- The way you sit and speak should project confidence and calmness
- The more open you are, the better rapport you will build and people hire people, not skills

## Try and mirror your interviewer's body language

- If they are in shirt sleeves, take your jacket off when you sit down, sit how they sit etc

## Focus on achievements

- Include facts and figures from your CV
- Use positive stories where you achieved something

## Explain what you can do for the company

- Show how your skills will help in the role

## You need to be positive and sell yourself

- No one will do it for you so don't be embarrassed

## Don't forget - answer the question!

# Use STAR answers

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## **S**ituation

- Set the scene, don't leap into the middle of the story
- Can be a chance to point out you have worked in the area

## **T**ask

- What you were asked or needed to do, it can also help to explain why you were asked

## **A**ctions

- What you did, be careful here to be clear about what you personally did, rather than the team
- Try to include specific details as these make it more interesting and real

## **R**esult

- Probably the most important part, and easy to skip over
- Try wherever possible to include numbers (but you need to learn and remember them accurately)

# Ask Questions

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Interview is a two way process

- You need to find out about them too
- People like to talk so ask open questions
- If you get them talking it gives you a breather and time to collect yourself

Asking good questions shows that you are interested

Ask the right questions of the right people

- Don't ask HR technical questions as you'll fluster them!
- Equally don't ask technical managers about Org structures; ask HR.

If asked "is there anything you would like to ask?" always ask something

- Safe topics are on Org structure - Team sizes - Future plans - Company culture/ Social schemes
- Can show an interest in the interviewer – eg "what do you most like about working here?"
- Should also ask about the next steps in the process

# Dos and Don'ts

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## Do:

- Try and relax and be confident - smile
- Use examples to illustrate points you are making
- If you're running late call ahead to let them know- make sure you have contact details with you

## Don't:

- Get defensive - you'll get asked difficult questions or questions you think are pointless but don't clam up, deal with them
- Give monosyllabic answers
- Be late- if you are, make a point of apologising and have a good reason
- Don't get lost

# Common Mistakes Examples

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Not showing genuine enthusiasm for the company and their products/services

- “This is such an interesting company”

Not showing genuine enthusiasm for the job

- “I really want this job”

Assuming that the interviewer is familiar with your background and your work

- Your CV got you the interview, don’t assume the interviewer has studied it

Not asking [smart] questions

- Some candidates don’t ask even a single question – do they really want the job?

Being desperate

- Trying to get a job is like trying to get a date, and desperation is positively repelling

For more examples see: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/jobs/11237738/The-13-most-common-job-interview-mistakes.html>