



Preparing for a job interview

Preparation for the interview

Preparation is the first essential step towards a successful interview. Company interviewers are continually amazed at the number of applicants who drift into their offices without any apparent preparation and with only the vaguest idea of what they are going to say. Thus, it is important to:

- 1) Know the exact time and place of the interview and the interviewer's full name.
- 2) Find out specific facts about the company – where its plants, offices or stores are located, what its products and services are, what its growth has been and what its growth potential is for the future.
- 3) Refresh your memory on the facts and figures of your present/former employer. You will be expected to know at least the basics of the company that you have previously worked for.
- 4) Prepare the questions you will ask during the interview. Remember that an interview is a two-way street. The employer will try to determine through questioning if you have the skills and qualifications necessary to do the job. You must determine through questioning whether the company will give you the opportunity for the growth and development you seek. You may ask questions like:
 - a. A detailed description of the position?
 - b. Anticipated induction and training programme?
 - c. The reason the position is available?
 - d. Company growth plans?
- 5) Dress in a business suit (no sports clothes). Pay attention to all elements of your clothes and grooming. Look neat, clean and presentable.

The interview

Remember to be calm and confident. Focus on your strengths and past achievements. Interviewers are looking to see if you are suited to the job at hand and if you will fit into a team. Be prepared to answer questions like:

- 1) Tell me more about yourself.
- 2) Tell me more about your previous work duties.



- 3) What are your strengths?
- 4) What are your weaknesses?
- 5) Why are you interested in this company?
- 6) Why did you leave your previous job?
- 7) Where do you want to be in 5 years time?
- 8) What do you know about our company?
- 9) Why do you think you will be successful in this job?
- 10) How do you feel about working overtime?

Factors to watch for

As well as listening to what you say, interviewers will be looking at your body language. Listed below are negative factors frequently evaluated during the course of the interview and those which most often lead to rejection:

- 1) Poor personal appearance
- 2) Overbearing – over aggressiveness – “know it all” attitude
- 3) Inability to express thoughts clearly – poor poise or grammar
- 4) Lack of planning for career – no purpose or goals
- 5) Lack of interest or enthusiasm – passive and indifferent
- 6) Lack of confidence – nervousness
- 7) Over emphasis on money – interested only in the salary
- 8) Evasive – makes excuses or unfavourable factors in record
- 9) Lack of tact – maturity – courtesy
- 10) Speaking badly of past employers
- 11) Failure to look interviewer in the eye
- 12) Limp, fishy handshake
- 13) Lack of appreciation of the value of experience
- 14) Failure to ask questions about the job
- 15) Attitude of ‘what can you do for me’
- 16) Lack of preparation about the interview – failure to research about the company

Coopers & Lybrand

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information above, the DA Youth cannot be held liable for any issues arising from the use of the advice above.