



AR RESOURCING

GUIDE 2

MANAGING YOUR INTERVIEW

Interview preparation advice and guidance giving you the best opportunity to secure the job offer

GUIDE 2 : MANAGING YOUR INTERVIEW

In this guide we will focus on interview preparation advice and guidance giving you the best opportunity to secure the job offer. We will highlight best practice in our interview checklist and discuss the typical interview and competency-based interview formats, together with sharing lots of common interview questions that you can prepare answers for.

Candidate Support Guides

This is the first of three guides that we have produced to support candidates throughout their entire journey of finding a new job, you can view the other guides in the series here:

[Guide 1: Starting Your Job Search](#)

[Guide 2: Managing Your Interview](#)

[Guide 3: Managing Your Resignation](#)

Pre-interview preparation

These guides are only the beginning of the support we provide to our candidate network.

Every candidate will receive a detailed pre-interview preparation call 48 hours prior to every interview we arrange. In this call we will discuss the interview format, have a refresh on the role duties and advise what interview preparation activities will best help your chances of success.

Get in contact

Whether you are looking for a confidential career consultation or you simply have a recruitment related question that we can help with, call our office to speak with an industry expert recruitment consultant.



INTERVIEWING BASICS CHECKLIST

Whether this is your third interview of the week, or your first in five years, the fundamentals remain the same: however, it is easy to sometimes forget the basics. Here is our interviewing basics checklist:

1. Interview confirmation email

Check the details your recruiter has provided to ensure nothing has been miscommunicated.

2. Check directions

Plan the route, made a practice run, and arrive early to allow for a final review of your preparation notes.

3. Dress professionally

Check the dress code with your recruiter, even if you know it is business casual, take it up a notch. Always wear a smart suit, well ironed shirt and have polished shoes... if in doubt wear a tie, you never get a second chance to make a good first impression!

4. Act professionally

Greet all attendees with a firm handshake and smile, ensure you have a positive posture and keep eye contact. Build rapport and show enthusiasm for the vacancy and company.

5. Use positive language

Take ownership of conversations, remember to say “I” not “we” and use positive language, “When will I get the opportunity to meet suppliers?” sounds better than “Do I have to travel?”.

6. Pen and paper

Make sure you have a smart pen and pad and feel free take notes throughout the interview as this will demonstrate that you are engaged and interested in the opportunity.

7. Remember your identification

A written offer cannot be issued until the company have proven your right to work so take your passport or driving licence with you, offer this to the attendees upon arrival as it can sometimes be overlooked.

8. Bring multiple CVs

Make sure you have a few spare copies of your CV in the event that any of the attendees require one. You should also take a copy for yourself to use as a guide when discussing your experiences and it is worth making some additional notes to share with the attendees that are specific to the role you are interviewing for.

9. Avoid discussing salary

Try to avoid discussing salary in the first interview. It is more important that you demonstrate your transferrable skills and focus on showing your interest in the company and the job. If you are asked for your salary expectations, then answer as follows:

“I am currently earning £X, obviously I am looking for an increase on this package however it is more important that I find the right job and company culture”.

10. Say thank you

At the end of the interview thank them for their time and make sure you let them know ‘why’ this role and company is of interest... and don’t forget to smile!

11. Follow-up email

Sending a follow-up email to your recruiter for them to forward on to the attendees is a great way to reinforce your commitment to the opportunity, you could also include some contact details for any references they can approach.



INTERVIEWING PREPARATION CHECKLIST

We know that the best prepared candidate is the one who receives the job offer so to help maximise your chances of success make sure you complete the following preparation. Here is our interviewing preparation checklist...

1. Research all attendees

Make sure you have researched their profiles on LinkedIn, review their connections and work history to try and identify some discussion points, referencing mutual industry contacts, previously shared companies or similar role duties will help build rapport.

2. Research the company

Research the company website, search Google and industry trade magazine websites, create some questions to ask at interview that will demonstrate you are well researched.

3. Study the job description

Thoroughly review the job description, create a list of the top 5 role duties and then prepare examples from your recent experience of how you meet the requirements detailing both duties and achievements. Sometimes job specifications can be generic and lack role specifics so make sure you also discuss the key role requirements with your recruiter.

4. Know your CV

Memorise a list of key duties and achievements for each role over the last 10 years, remember to tailor your experience to the specific role requirements wherever possible, the more transferable skills and experiences the better.

5. Prepare questions

Prepare 15-20 questions relating to the job, company, industry and future opportunities, see our 'Managing Your Interview' guide for examples.

6. Supporting information

Consider taking with you a couple of supporting documents that help demonstrate your fit to the job: however, it is important not to take too much so one or two pieces of information is fine... speak with your recruiter to discuss what could help your application.

7. Prepare for common interview questions

Make sure you have researched their profiles on LinkedIn, review their connections and work history to try and identify some discussion points, referencing mutual industry contacts, previously shared companies or similar role duties will help build rapport.

- i. Tell me about yourself.
- ii. What motivates you?
- iii. What do you know about our company?
- iv. Why do you want this job?
- v. Why do you feel you are a good match for this job?
- vi. Why are you looking to leave your current company?
- vii. What are your greatest strengths / weaknesses?
- viii. What are your career goals?
- ix. What are your greatest achievements?
- x. What are your salary expectations?

8. Remember to sell yourself

This is one of the biggest challenges in an interview and most people find it a little uncomfortable, but it is an essential skill that you need to master to ensure you get the job offer.

When asked a question that gives you the opportunity to sell yourself you should clearly articulate a list of recent duties and achievements demonstrating how you meet the job requirements. You should also make sure you have the facts and figures to corroborate your claims.

Whatever accomplishments you have, don't be modest about sharing them during your interview, the attendees want to know that you will be the right fit and want to understand what you can deliver.

TYPICAL INTERVIEW FORMAT

There are many different types of interview format: however, we find that the standard one to two person interviews are preferred more often over the slightly more intense group or panel interviews.

First interviews

The standard first interview is generally attended by the functional head and line manager and lasts from 45 minutes to 1.15 hours. It normally begins with a 5-10-minute introduction to the company, details of why they are recruiting the role and an overview of the key role duties.

The following 30-45 minutes will involve the attendees asking you to either talk through your CV and discuss your relevant experiences and achievements or you will be asked a predefined set of competency-based questions

The final 5-10 minutes of the interview normally affords the candidate the opportunity to ask their own questions.



Second or final interviews

The second or final interview will go a stage further to assess your fit to the job. We find that they involve meeting several other staff members who are generally from the wider functional team along with key internal stakeholders that you will be working with closely.

Whatever the format, you are ultimately being assessed against two particular areas:

- Do you have the correct skills and experience?
- Do you fit in with the company culture?

It is important when going into a second interview that you are not overconfident as there is still work to be done and you need to prepare just as much as for first interviews. Here are a few tips to help you when preparing for second or final stage interviews.

Think back to your previous interview:

- What areas did the interviewers concentrate on? Be prepared for more intense focus.
- Which questions did you find difficult? Be prepared to answer similar questions again.
- Let the interviewer know more about you – this is your chance to express your ideas.
- Think of fresh examples, information and new achievements that you can share.
- Do not get distracted – focus and listen carefully to the interviewer.
- Remain calm, know your skills and strengths and express them with confidence.
- Be concise, positive and enthusiastic... and don't assume that the job is yours!

DISCUSSING YOUR CV

Taking a hiring manager through your CV at interview is a very important skill that you must practice. Even if the interview has been proposed as competency based, a hiring manager will still normally ask you to briefly go through your CV first.

When talking through your CV make sure that you:

- Have recently read your CV multiple times, get familiar with your previous companies, job titles, duties and employment dates so you can clearly communicate your previous experiences
- Know how long you have to articulate your experience and proportion your time accordingly, if you have 20 minutes to talk through your CV do not spend 10 minutes talking about your first job 15 years ago
- Talk through your CV in a direct bullet pointed manor, ensuring that you give facts, figures and achievements wherever possible
- Have a structured way to communicate your experience for each of your previous roles. Most attendees want to understand:
 - Main aim of your role
 - Spend, category, project overview
 - Internal, external stakeholder engagement
 - Seniority, most challenging aspects
 - What you have achieved
- Ultimately the attendees are looking for you to mention specific key skills or experiences that are relevant to the job, allowing for a further level of questioning. Make sure that you have read the job specification and identified the required key skills and experiences... Now think of tangible examples for each and get them into the conversation
- We encourage all candidates to take a space copy of their CV to use as a guide when discussing their experiences... its worth making some additional notes to share with the attendees that are specific to the role you are interviewing for



COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEWS

Competency-based interviews allow candidates to demonstrate their behaviours and skills by answering questions about how they have reacted to and dealt with previous workplace situations.

By looking at past experience a potential employer can predict future behaviour

Candidates are asked to give an example of a situation or task that led to a certain course of action. Probing questions will then be used to determine the course of action taken, what changes were created by those actions and the effects of those actions on others. When answering, remember that the interviewer wants to know about your individual achievements rather than those of a group so avoid overusing examples of 'we'.

How should I answer competency-based questions?

When answering competency style questions, it is best to adopt the STAR model, which will allow you to structure your answer in a logical and concise manner.

- **Situation** – Describe the situation / problem you were faced with (try to keep your examples recent)
- **Task** – What did you have to do?
- **Action** – What action did you take and why? Were there any challenges / obstacles and how did you overcome them?
- **Results** – Highlight the outcomes

What competency questions am I likely to be asked?

Competency based interviews generally consist of both behavioural and technical focused questions.

The best way to identify potential technical questions is to review the job description. The first five role duties are likely to be the most significant parts of the job, so it is a good idea to think of specific examples of when you have evidenced these experiences.

It is also worth discussing this with your recruiter who will be able to advise you of key role duties and you may also find it helpful to run through your answers with them.

Identifying potential behavioural questions by reviewing the job description is a little more challenging as these can be very varied: however, those more detailed job descriptions could detail some.



PREPARING FOR COMMON COMPETENCY QUESTIONS

Test yourself with the following technical and behavioural competency questions that may come up at interview and be sure you follow the STAR methodology when discussing your answers.

Technical Competencies

- **Procurement Strategy** – Give me an example of a high-profile procurement strategy that you have written and delivered?
- **Commercial Negotiation** – Give me an example of a high profile or complex commercial negotiation that you have delivered?
- **Performance Management** – Give me an example of when you have improved a relationship / performance of a critical supplier?



Behavioural Competencies

- **Team Development** - Give me an example of when you have positively developed a team or team member?
- **Improvement / Innovation** - Give me an example of a process improvement or innovation that you have delivered?
- **Stakeholder Engagement** - Give me an example of experiencing difficulty building a relationship with someone?
- **Influencing Skills** - Give me an example of having to influence a challenging stakeholder with an opposing view?
- **Problem Solving** - Give me an example of when you took on a high priority task / problem at short notice?
- **Collaboration & Teamwork** - Give me an example of when you had to collaborate with other stakeholders to achieve a goal?
- **Integrity & Honesty** - Give me an example of when you had to use high levels of integrity to achieve a goal?
- **Drive Results** - Give me an example of when you had to drive results on a challenging project?
- **Effective Communication** - Give me an example of when you had to use effective communication with a challenging stakeholder?
- **Planning & Organising** - Give me an example of when you had to plan for a high-profile and complex project?

PREPARING FOR COMMON QUESTIONS

Test yourself with the following questions that may come up at interview about you, your work history and the new job, be prepared to elaborate on any answers.

About you

1. Tell me about yourself
2. What motivates you?
3. Do you prefer to work independently or as part of a team?
4. What type of work environment do you prefer?
5. How do you handle stress and pressure?
6. If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?
7. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
8. How do you evaluate success?
9. What do you find are the most difficult decisions to make in your job?
10. How would you describe the pace at which you work compared to your colleagues?

Work history

1. Why are you looking to leave?
2. What were your expectations of your current job and to what extent have they been met?
3. What are you responsible for?
4. Describe a typical work week and the hours you work?
5. What major challenges do you face currently and how do you handle them?
6. What are the most and least rewarding parts of your job?
7. What is your greatest achievement to date in your role and what is your greatest failure?
8. What was it like working for your manager and what were their strengths and shortcomings?
9. What were your starting and current salary levels?
10. What are your salary expectations?

The new job

1. What do you know about our company?
2. Why do you want this job?
3. Why do you feel you are a good match for this job?
4. Why are you looking to leave your current company?
5. What challenges are you looking for in your next job?
6. What can you contribute to this company?
7. How many days a week are you willing to travel?
8. How many days a week are you looking to work from home?
9. What are your short / medium / long terms career goals?
10. How do you plan to achieve these goals?



PREPARING QUESTIONS TO ASK

Asking relevant questions in an interview is critical to your success because it will give you the necessary information to make a more informed decision about the opportunity. It will also show the attendees that you have thoroughly prepared and that you are serious about their vacancy.

Prepare 15-20 questions and take them into the interview. Then at the end of the meeting when you are asked if you have any questions you should select the most relevant 3-4 questions that have not been covered. Here are some example questions:

Questions about the company and department

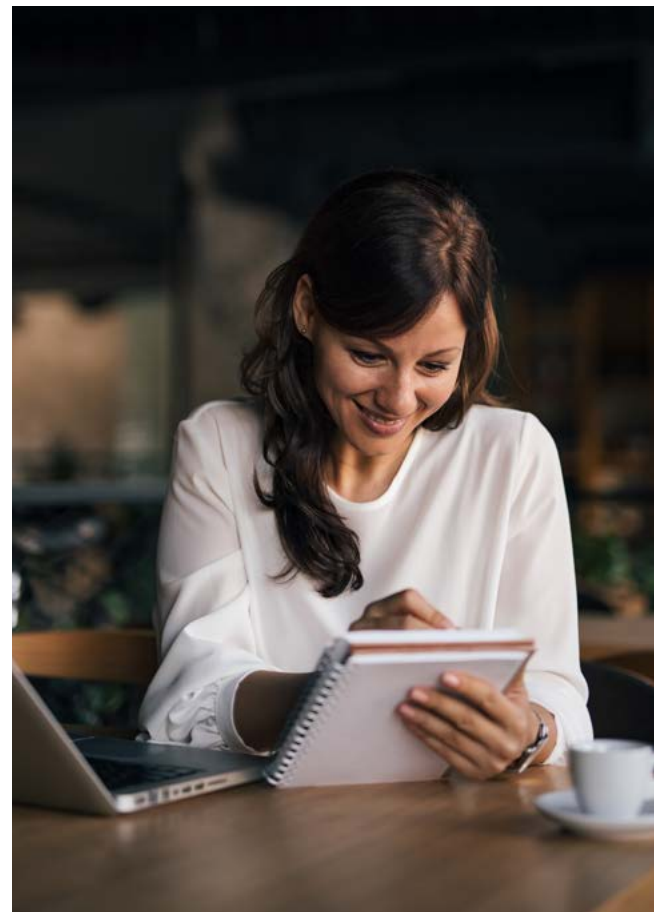
1. How would you define your company culture?
2. How long have you been with the company and what made you join and stay?
3. What are the company's / department's plans for the future?
4. What are the experience levels and personalities of the people I would be working with?
5. How advanced is the greatest department compared to other industry competitors?

Questions about the job

1. Why are you recruiting the role?
2. What would my core responsibilities be?
3. How would you describe a typical day?
4. What KPI's / Targets will I have to achieve?
5. What sort of handover will there be with the person who is currently doing this job?
6. How long has the person I will be working for been here?
7. How long would you expect a person to stay in this role?
8. How do you see this role developing?
9. What are the greatest challenges I am likely to come up against in my first 6 months?
10. Which internal or external stakeholders does this position interface with?

Questions about career development and training

1. What prospects are there for career progression?
2. What training is offered within the department and is it provided in-house or externally?
3. What type of 'Personal Development Programme' (PDP) do you have?
4. How often do you assess the skills / abilities / progress of staff?
5. What support is offered for further study, MCIPS, MRICS, Masters?





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Whether you are looking for a confidential career consultation or you simply have a recruitment related question that we can help with, call our office to speak with an industry expert recruitment consultant.

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