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INTERVIEW ADVICE

All interviews and interviewer styles are different. Below are sample questions which will typically be asked at an interview.

Our advice is prior to an interview to go through two conscious processes.

1. Print out your CV and the Job Specification. Compare your achievements with those technical skills, qualities and competencies that the spec stipulates. Write notes on your CV which expand each given point and highlight the competencies that the potential employer is looking for. Try to give solid examples of what YOU have done, not what your team achieved.
2. Look at your CV and try to consider how it will be viewed by your potential employer and what their primary concerns might be. Try to tackle these potential concerns head on, in this way no nagging doubts will be left at the end of the interview for either party.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Before attending an interview you should think of the questions you might be asked. By using some of the suggested answers below, we aim to show you how to confidently deal with any negative objections from the interviewer using the situation to emphasise your strengths. Preparing answers will significantly help to reduce the stress during the interview and enable you to do well.

These questions are designed to test qualities, such as leadership, teamwork, ambition, resilience, flexibility and integrity. The interviewer also uses them to get to know you. If you don't have an opinion or answer, don't give one and always answer honestly.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES?

It is important to show that you have clearly identified your strengths and weaknesses; these should be contextualised and given examples. Do your utmost not to be vague, despite it being a very personal question. Strengths should always be backed up with examples. Weaknesses should be turned into strengths. A weakness may be the lack of a certain skill in a particular field and you should express your desire to learn new skills.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK FOR THIS COMPANY?

Emphasise positive reasons why you want to work for the company, e.g. the people, reputation and opportunity. Avoid mentioning aspects such as more money or shorter hours.

HOW WOULD YOUR COLLEAGUES DESCRIBE YOU?

Be honest and concise - do not lie. Try to use this awkward question to tie in with the job spec.

CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF WHEN YOU HAD TO DELEGATE AUTHORITY AND/OR RESPONSIBILITY?

This will depend on the nature of the role - be precise with your answer.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS TIME?

Your answer will depend on the nature of the role and your career ambitions. Be careful not to sound too ambitious, the interviewer may be your future boss. The safest option is to express your desire to grow with the company, developing new skills and gaining promotion.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE CRITICISM OF YOUR WORK?

Try to portray an attitude that all criticism is beneficial, and provides a chance for improvement. Give an example of a poor idea that was criticised, rather than sub-standard work, which you had produced.

CAN YOU NAME A DIFFICULT CHALLENGE YOU HAVE FACED?

What are your thought processes under pressure? Think of something that you have overcome, such as a changed deadline, show that you reacted and can adapt.