

INTERVIEW ADVICE

Opex Selection offers free one-to-one interview coaching to all our candidates and we pride ourselves in ensuring that every candidate we submit for interview is fully briefed and prepared to ensure maximum success. Below is a guide to making the best possible impression at interview, all areas will be covered and complemented with a tailored insight from our experienced Consultants at Opex Selection.

It goes without saying that to make the right impression at interview the basic elements such as being punctual, honest and making good eye contact are essential, but for professionals that advice is a little obvious! We have come up with some straight-talking recommendations designed to really advance your interview style and help combat the most challenging of interview questions.

Preparation

- Digest the job description and take notes on your related experience and proven skills.
- Read the version of your CV that has been submitted and take a mental note of key achievements (especially figures) and career history dates.
- Study the company website / literature and get an overview of company history (with key dates), their products and services, recent revenues and profits, their competitors and if possible their proposition to the market and USPs.
- Research recent company news online using Google and business news websites i.e. Financial Times
- Gain an understanding for the organisation's industry and any opportunities and threats within it.
- Research your interviewer and key personnel online and study their public profile on LinkedIn
- Gain a clear understanding of the recruitment process and any interview techniques. For example many organisations use competency-based interview techniques, see our 'Competency-Based Interviews' guide for further information. This guide will also assist you in articulating your examples in a structured and concise manner.
- Based on your track record, skills and potential, note how you can contribute to the organisation based on their current situation and the context of the job description.
- Prepare for likely questions i.e. "so tell me about yourself" and "what are your strengths and weaknesses".
- Prepare for a positive explanation to any work history gaps or any potentially negative elements in your CV i.e. leaving an organisation after a short period of time.
- Prepare some thoughtful questions that are important to you, but also demonstrate a high level of interest in the organisation and your long-term career view.
- Bring a spare copy of your CV, the job description and a notepad for key points.

Opex Selection Ltd
Harrogate Business Centre
Harrogate
HG2 8ER
United Kingdom

t: +44 (0) 1423 876 360
f: +44 (0) 1423 873 999
e: info@opexselection.com
w: www.opexselection.com

During the Interview

- Whether the interview is formal or informal; be enthusiastic and take a positive outlook throughout the entire process (even if you feel it has not gone well in parts).
- Loyalty is highly valued in any organisation and when it comes to discussing previous employers; draw on positives and never speak negatively of them.
- Don't worry about pausing before you answer, it shows you can think and are not delivering rehearsed answers
- Don't embellish or try to waffle through answers; it's always better to admit you don't know the answer to something. Be honest about any shortcomings and explain how you can overcome them through training or coaching.
- If you left a position on bad terms, provide a concise, positive and factual account. Try to avoid any emotional explanation or blame others. If your position became untenable and you moved on then bear in mind that most employers will think this was the best course of action.
- Even if your explanation to the above is concise, positive and factual; expect some related exploratory questions about how you would fit into their organisation and what you have learnt from the situation. Providing examples of how you have successfully dealt with similar issues in the past, a comprehensive account of how you avoid personality disputes and a clear statement that you have put those events firmly behind you will create a positive impression.
- Explain what interests you about the job, how you can contribute and how it fits with your career goals. Stating that you 'want to' contribute to an organisation will be viewed very positively. Furthermore, stating that you perform and thrive best when you are passionate for a job is a good move, so show you are passionate about it and draw on some of your research on the appointment and the company.
- The interview is also an opportunity for you to ask questions that are important to you, the general rule is to not enquire about salary / conditions at first stage interview and focus on pertinent questions that are important to you, i.e. the challenges the job-holder can expect, priorities over the 12 months how the role is likely to develop.
- The final question we recommend you ask is, "Do you have any doubts about my ability to perform highly in this appointment?" This will give you the golden opportunity to overcome any reservations or to explain more specifically any points that have been wrongly understood or assumed. Should the interviewer state that they have no specific doubts / reservations, then that is your opportunity to reiterate your interest in the appointment and enquire as to the next stage.
- The following day, email the interviewer a very brief note thanking them for their time and reiterating your interest in the job.