



Job Search Support

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1. JOB SEARCH SUPPORT

This guide has been put together for various types of people at various stages in their career. Please feel free to use and refer to the sections you feel are relevant to you.

2. ANALYSE YOURSELF

In order to present a positive image of yourself you need to have a clear picture of the points you wish to convey. Sound product-knowledge is the key to good marketing. In this case you are the product.

A good starting point is to look at areas such as Skills, Strengths, Weaknesses, Achievements, Career Plans and Interests. Self-awareness is crucial both for making a sound career choice and in making effective applications.

3. ANALYSE THE JOB

Find out what the job involves. Ideally, you should obtain the job description and any information about the employer. You might be able to find information about a company by looking on the Internet. Or do you know anyone who works there?

Having gathered together the information that you need check how that relates to you. Highlight the requirements of the job on the advertisement or job description so that they stand out - you can then begin by focusing on these points. You need to ask yourself questions such as: What personal qualities does the job require? - do you possess these qualities? - can you demonstrate them? - how can you show that you have these skills and abilities?

Two stages of analysis are crucial preparation for the application process.

The sort of questions you might be asked

The following are questions taken from actual employer application forms:

- Please choose three activities in which you have been most enthusiastically involved and describe the nature of your involvement. Please say what you contributed and what you achieved
- Please give an example of when you have had personal responsibility for completing something or demonstrated your initiative

- What do you think are your key strengths that make you suitable for the position? Please explain your choice and give examples.
- Apart from your academic career, what has been the biggest challenge in your life and how did you overcome it?
- How would your colleagues describe you in five words?
- Please give an example of how you have solved a problem
- Describe a situation where you were successful in putting your ideas across
- Give an example of a situation where you have demonstrated what you consider to be your main strengths in interacting with other people
- What do you consider to be your main skills, attributes and interests?
- Describe a particularly difficult issue or complaint you have had to handle. How did you resolve it?
- Please describe your most outstanding non-academic achievement(s) involving other people
- Give an example of a time when you have had to 'sell' an idea, plan or suggestion to a group of people. Explain how you did this
- Describe two recent achievements of particular importance to you which have demonstrated your drive and initiative
- Please tell us how you arrived at your career choice and eliminated any alternatives

4. PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

A positive thought worth remembering! - It is the recruiting area that has a problem – they have a vacancy to fill and all you are there to do is help them to fill it.

Interviews may be on a one-to-one or two-to-one basis, or undertaken by a panel (three people or more). Most are on a one-to-one or a two-to-one interview, unless you are asked to attend an Assessment Centre where you may have more interviewers.

The important thing is to **prepare!**

IT MAY HELP TO ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

What do I need to find out about the organisation and the areas?

structure?
mission statement?
quality focus?
staffing levels?
training?

How much do I know about the job's main duties?

responsibilities - to whom?
responsibilities for what?
career progression possibilities?

How thoroughly have I "prepared"?

why I am applying?
what I have to contribute?
how I will present myself?

What should I do with this information once I have gathered it?

The point of gathering this information is to enable you to get a better picture of:

- ✓ What the main business of the area you would be working in;
- ✓ How it fits in with the rest of the organisation;
- ✓ Who you will report to;
- ✓ What its prospects for the future are;
- ✓ Where you will fit in.

What if I only gather a small amount of information?

This is not a problem as long as you ensure that you prepare appropriate questions to obtain the missing information during the interview.

What questions might I want to ask?

Whilst many of your primary questions will be about the company, the job itself and so on, you may wish to ask for further information about how the job will affect you and your career, and examples of those types of question are included below. If you go armed with good questions it will show you have prepared, and take the job seriously.

What is the structure of the area?

To whom will I report?

With whom will I be working?

How do you see this area developing over the next 5 years?

Are there any major changes expected in the near future?

What career progression opportunities are there?

What training will I receive?

When will the successful applicant start?
When will I know if I have been successful?
How many other people have been interviewed?
Will I be expected to work overtime/unusual hours?

What will the Interviewers Expectations be?

Try to consider what expectations an interviewer may be looking for in a successful candidate. You may get clues from the job advertisement or a job description. Some main characteristics may be:

- Reliability and trustworthiness
- Punctuality
- Willingness to Learn
- Ability to work as a team member
- Enthusiasm
- Clean & tidy appearance
- Ability to work with minimal supervision
- Initiative
- Well organised
- Ability to speak fluently, confidently
- Friendliness

What should I wear?

Human nature being what it is, an important part of your overall "presentation" will be your appearance. Think what you are going to wear for the interview and how you will create a well-groomed, professional impression. If you feel good, it will show.

Do I know where I am going and How to get there?

Ensure you know what time the interview is to start and *exactly* where it is to be held. Do not be afraid to ask for a map if you are at all unsure. Have a "dry run" if necessary. Remember to allow yourself sufficient time to arrive about 15 minutes early.

What should I take with me?

- ✓ Writing pad/paper
- ✓ Pen
- ✓ Copy of your CV, application form, job description etc.
- ✓ Your pre-prepared questions to ask the interviewer

Good preparation will boost your confidence.

Remember, people have confidence in people who appear confident.

5. THE DAY ITSELF

Interviewers may be young or old, male or female, good or bad! Not everyone conducting interviews have been professionally trained and/or highly experienced.

This interview is important to them *too* - they need to ensure they get the best person for the job.

Use it as an opportunity to have a full and frank exchange of information and to "sell yourself" in person. An interview is no more than a two-way conversation which has a purpose and a structure.

When you first arrive in the interview room, there will doubtless be some introductions and a couple of "settling down" questions - your journey, etc. Use this time to become comfortable in the room and to let your nerves (and your breathing) settle. And then off you go.....

Remember - *you* have prepared thoroughly for this day, *you* have practised, are informed, and *you* have been short-listed. As the old saying goes - "You never get a second chance to make a first impression". So don't sell yourself short!

Someone has to be given the job - *you* might as well do what *you* can to improve the chances of it being ***you***.

6. AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW

Don't just heave a sigh of relief, but think to yourself:

Do I *really* want this job?

By the end of the interview, having had a good two-way discussion with the interviewer and asked all your questions, you should know the answer to this question.

If you want the job, don't keep it a secret! Make it clear to the interviewer that you do.

When will I know the result?

It is perfectly natural that you should want to know when the result of the interview will be given, so you should ask. You are not being "pushy" - this sort of question simply confirms your interest in the job.

Appendix 1 - INTERVIEW DO'S AND DONT'S

Obvious but worth refreshing yourself:

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prompt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be late
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you know the interviewers name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit down until a chair has been offered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk into the room confidently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aggressive or argumentative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend a positive handshake – not too hard, limp or clammy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give jokey answers to cover up nerves
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit up straight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be afraid to tell the interviewer at the outset if you would like to take notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep eye contact with the interviewer, but don't stare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criticise or insult colleagues or your previous management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak audibly and clearly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slouch in the chair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think through your answers before you speak, brief moments of silence are okay! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaze out of the window
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the interviewer's name/surname if a natural opportunity arises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to read what is on the interviewers' desk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mumble or speak too quickly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep hands relaxed and natural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fidget or fiddle with rings, pens etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look enthusiastic and interested – nodding your head, sitting forward etc. can show this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pad out sentences with phrases such as, "you know"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen very carefully to the interviewer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give simple Yes / No answers – amplify your response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be afraid to ask questions as you go
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interrupt or anticipate the end of questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be neat and tidy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to be someone or something you are not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have clean, polished shoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have missing buttons, dropped hems etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep jewellery to a minimum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have jangling chains/tinkling bracelets or something to fiddle with

Appendix 2 - Potential Interview Question

These sheets have been prepared as a guide of the sorts of questions you might be asked. It may help to prepare yourself to jot down the sort of answer you might respond with.

Ref	The Question	Why this question might be asked	Your answer
1	Please give brief explanation of your current role and how your experiences would help you in this role.	Put you at ease by asking you to talk and to check your Verbal Communication	
2	What do you like most and least about your current role?	Understand your likes and dislikes	
3	Why do you want to leave your current employment?	Might give insight into any problems you have	
4	What are your strengths and weaknesses - Give an example?	Give you an opportunity to sell yourself and confess any areas of development	
5	How would you describe yourself?	Give you an opportunity to sell yourself and confess any areas of development	
6	What experience have you had that could help you in this job?	Give you an opportunity to sell yourself and check your understanding of the job	
7	What achievement are you most proud of - What difficulties did you have with achieving it?	Give you an opportunity to sell yourself and see if you learn from mistakes	
8	What management style do you use/how do you manage others?	Understand how well can you manage others	
9	How do you like to be managed?	Understand your likes and dislikes	

Ref	The Question	Why this question might be asked	Your answer
10	What makes you the best person for the job?	Checks your understanding of the job and whether you really want it	
11	Why are you applying for this job?	Checks your understanding of the job and whether you really want it	
12	What do you think are the essential skills required to perform this job well?	Checks your understanding of the job and whether you really want it	
13	How long do you anticipate it will take before you add value/make a difference?	Give you an opportunity to sell yourself and gain your commitment to settle in	
14	With reference to what you like least - how do you maintain your enthusiasm and motivation?	Understand your Enthusiasm / Self Motivated	
15	Give an example of when you exceeded someone's expectations.	Looking for High Standards	
16	What would be your ideal job?	Looking for High Standards	
17	If you could improve one Administration function in your current role, what would it be and how would you go about it?	Checking your Admin Skills and commitment to be part of the team	
18	What's the most exciting thing you have learnt about your computer recently?	Looking for Computer Keyboard Skills	

Ref	The Question	Why this question might be asked	Your answer
19	Please give examples of the type of documents you prepare using the different applications.	Looking for Computer Keyboard Skills	
20	Please give an example of where you have managed your time effectively in order to meet a specific target?	Looking for Time Management / Working to Targets	
21	What would you expect from a company in terms of supporting you personal development aspirations	Looking for Personal Development	
22	How do you see your career progressing over the next 5 years?	Looking for Personal Development and commitment / drive	
23	The position will require you to analyse data and solve problems. What experience do you have of this?	Looking for Analytical Ability / Problem Solving	
24	You will be working in a very busy department where you will have work to complete which have similar deadlines. How would you go about prioritising your day?	Check how you Work Under Pressure	
25	If it became clear you could not complete all your tasks what would you do?	Check how you Work Under Pressure	

Ref	The Question	Why this question might be asked	Your answer
26	Can you give me an example of when you have influenced someone or their work?	Looking for Influencing Skills	
27	What do you see as the most important factors in delivering customer service?	Looking for Customer Service	
28	What experience do you have of working in a team? What do you think makes a successful team?	Looking for a Team Player	

Appendix 3 - Sensible Questions to Ask Yourself

IS THIS JOB THE ONE FOR ME?

Q: Why do I wish to apply for this job?

A:

Q: How will this job/help to develop my career?

A:

Q: What will it add to my own personal and professional development?

A:

Q: What will I gain from this job/in terms of job satisfaction?

A:

Q: Am I being realistic about the timing of my application?

A:

Q: In development terms, have I achieved everything that I possibly can from my present role?

A:

HAVE I GOT WHAT THEY WANT?

Q: How closely do the requirements of the job match the personal attributes and skills I have to offer?

A:

Q: How favourably does my "audit" compare to the selection criteria for the job?

A:

Q: If very fully, am I happy to accept the level of responsibility outlined in the detailed description?

A:

Q: Do I want to specialise to this degree?

A:

Q: If only quite well, is this the right job for me and am I the right person for this job/attachment?

A:

Q: If not a great deal, what further development do I require if I am to be able to apply for such jobs in the future, or should I reconsider my next step?

A:

HAVE I DONE MY PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW?

Q: What do I need to find out about the areas' organisation and structure?

A:

Q: What do I need to find out about the areas' mission statement or quality focus?

A:

Q: What do I need to find out about the areas' staffing levels / training?

A:

Q: How much do I know about the job / attachments' main duties?

A:

Q: How much do I know about the job / attachments' responsibilities?

A:

Q: How much do I know about the job / attachments' career progression possibilities?

A:

Q: Why I am applying?

A:

Q: What I have to contribute?

A:

WHAT MIGHT BE THE REASON FOR MY LACK OF SUCCESS?

Scenario–You have submitted lots of applications but have not yet been invited to an interview.

Q: Are you applying for the correct sort of jobs?

A:

Q: Does your CV need amending / better direction / a new style of presentation?

A:

Q: Are my aspirations realistic in terms of my current position and level of responsibility?

A:

IF YOU HAVE HAD LOTS OF INTERVIEWS BUT HAVE NOT BEEN OFFERED ANY OF THE JOBS

Q: Do I need to review my interview technique /personal presentation?

A:

Q: Does my CV overstate my potential / expertise / skills?

A:

Q: Where might I be going wrong in selling myself in face-to-face situations?

A:

Q: Do I need to review my research / preparation /dress?

A:

Q: Do I need to ask my line manager to approach the area advertising the job in order to obtain some feedback on the reasons for my lack of success?

A:

YOU HAVE NOT IDENTIFIED MANY JOBS FOR WHICH YOU WANT TO APPLY

Q: Am I being too narrow in my search?

A:

Q: How could I widen my horizons?

A:

Q: Do I need to rethink direction if there are very few opportunities in my chosen area?

A:

Appendix 4 - Business Language

Always use strong, positive words in preference to those that are less dynamic, for example:

	rather than
Committed to the total quality concept	Perfectionist
Controlled	maintained
Co-Ordinated	oversaw
Empathetic	understands others
Good team member	gets on with people
Innovative	has good ideas
Instigated	recommended
Managed	supervised
Negotiated	liaised
Persuasive /negotiator/motivator	can get people to work
Task/target orientated/driven	gets the work done

STRONG ACTION VERBS

Achieved	Conducted	Examined	Operated	Revitalised
Administered	Consolidated	Executed	Organised	Saved
Advised	Controlled	Forecast	Originated	Scheduled
Analysed	Co-ordinated	Formed	Piloted	Secured
Anticipated	Created	Formulated	Pioneered	Selected
Appointed	Decided	Founded	Planned	Serviced
Appraised	Defined	Generated	Processed	Set up
Approved	Delivered	Guided	Produced	Simplified
Arranged	Demonstrated	Implemented	Programmed	Sold
Assessed	Designed	Improved	Promoted	Standardised
Attained	Developed	Improvised	Proposed	Streamlined
Avoided	Devised	Launched	Redesigned	Strengthened
Built	Diagnosed	Managed	Reduced	Stretched
Calculated	Directed	Marketed	Reorganised	Succeeded
Centralised	Effectuated	Monitored	Represented	Tested
Combined	Eliminated	Motivated	Resolved	Tightened
Communicated	Enforced	Negotiated	Restored	Trained
Completed	Established	Networked	Reviewed	Unified
Conceived	Evaluated	Obtained	Revised	Vitalised