

## INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

### OBJECTIVE

- Explain how your background and experience qualifies you for the position. Utilise your present and past working experience to illustrate your abilities by using a spread of diverse examples to support your answer. To answer situational questions, provide an outcome/solution - oriented reply.

### PRE-INTERVIEW

- Confirm date and time of interview.
- Research and familiarise yourself with the company, position and interviewer.
- Address / directions.
- Prepare interview questions around the position and company.
- Be prepared to outline your career history as well as professional-related strengths and weaknesses.
- Ascertain dress code.
- Charge cell phone on day of interview, **switch off at interview.**
- Recap reasons for leaving your current and previous employers with your Consultant.

### THE INTERVIEW

- Walk into the interview knowing what information you seek to communicate. Align your experiences in the interview to be sure you paint a picture of knowledge and success.
- Remember: firm handshake, good eye contact.
- Display positive non-verbal communication via body language and constant eye contact.
- Use professional language. i.e. avoid slang, bad language and excessive humour.
- Display good listening skills and build rapport.
- Elaborate when required.
- Give a concise response.
- Turn a negative into a positive.
- Take the initiative to share information that may not have been discussed during the meeting, in a way you feel will add value.
- If you are interested in the opportunity, indicate your interest to the prospective employer.
- Find out what the timelines are for the recruitment process ie what is the next step and when will decisions be made?

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

This is a great opportunity to conduct research to prepare and plan how you will best present yourself to the company.

**Location:** Plan your travel time to arrive 10 - 15 minutes prior to your appointment time. Know the address and exact location. Get a map or use GPS coordinates for clear directions. Make sure you are informed of where to park and which floor to go to. If you are able, drive to the venue a day prior to the meeting so that you know the exact route (this goes a long way towards eliminating stress on the day of the interview)!

**Interviewer:** Know the name(s) and business title(s) of the person or panel you will be meeting with.

**The Role:** Familiarise yourself with the job description or details of the role including responsibilities, reporting lines and key performance areas. Ensure that you prepare pertinent business questions.

Please discuss your preparation and any further information you require with your Smilers Selection Consultant.

## WHY SHOULD THE COMPANY INVEST IN YOU?

First impressions DO last! Most employers believe that people who look as if they care about themselves are more likely to care about their job. Your goal should be to present yourself in the best possible light - professional in the way that you dress, in your mannerisms, facial expressions and especially, in your communication.

Wait until you are offered a chair before you sit down. Refrain from smoking and chewing gum until you have left the premises. You may accept a non-alcoholic beverage if offered as it does relax the atmosphere. Ensure you use professional language all the time and do not swear or use slang.

Use a person's name throughout the interview as it is the best way to build rapport.

**Application Form:** Should you be requested to complete a form, please take the following into consideration:

- Contact details: Write "refer to Smilers Selection".
- Salary: Avoid writing down current or expected remuneration - write "negotiable from current".
- References: Avoid giving referee details of your current employers as this may jeopardise your current position. Write "refer to Smilers Selection".

**Non-verbal:** Sit upright and REMEMBER TO BREATHE! Try to relax, avoid crossing your arms and maintain strong eye contact. Don't fidget or fiddle and display a positive disposition throughout.

**Verbal:** Speak clearly and concisely. Think carefully before responding and ensure that your answer shows logic, enthusiasm and initiative.

If you are attending a panel interview, always direct your answer towards the person asking the question whilst maintaining good eye contact with the rest of the panel members. It might help to imagine that the interviewers are actually your dinner guests and you are making a concerted effort to include them all in the discussion.

## **Honesty**

Experienced interviewers will pick up on any untruthfulness.

## **Competent / Capable**

The employer seeks consistent excellence and an ability to work independently.

## **Confidence**

Differentiate yourself as a candidate to be taken seriously. Show that you are assertive without being arrogant.

## **Enthusiasm**

Show interest by asking for more information about the company and the position.

## **Going the Extra Mile**

Express willingness to be flexible in work schedule and responsibilities.

## **Accountability**

Show that you take responsibility seriously and are determined to complete tasks timeously.

## **Relationships**

Speak positively about previous, current and potential employers – NEVER RUN A PREVIOUS EMPLOYER DOWN! Express your intention towards a long-term commitment with the employer.

## **Team Work**

Emphasise your ability to get along with people and be a good team player.

## **Willingness to Learn**

Express your desire for ongoing learning and knowledge sharing.

## **Positive Attitude**

It's all about attitude. Display a positive mindset all the time during the interview, regardless of current economic, political and job market conditions. Use words like CHALLENGE instead of PROBLEM.

## THE INTERVIEW

### QUESTIONS FROM THE INTERVIEWER

When asked “yes” or “no” questions, back your answer with pertinent examples and reasons - volunteer information, whilst being concise, and steer clear of taking control of the discussion.

If you are asked for a certain skill or experience that you don't have, turn this into a positive e.g. “I don't have experience in SAP software, however I have extensive knowledge of another – similar - ERP system,” or “I don't, however I am very eager to learn”. If possible, provide an example of how you mastered a particular system or process in the past.

Anticipate likely questions and rehearse responses beforehand. **Always be honest** – you don't want to find yourself completely out of your depth 6 months down the line, also your answer may well be checked with your references. Feel free to roleplay your responses to the questions below with your Consultant.

### SAMPLE INTERVIEWER QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE ANSWERS

#### You as a Person

**What are your interests? How do you spend your free time?**

*Mention hobbies, sports, reading material, family time etc.*

**What are your qualifications?**

*Even though this is mentioned on the CV, the interviewer might be trying to make conversation. Steer clear from stating the obvious, ie “It's in my CV”.*

**Why did you decide to study for this qualification?**

*Explain how your qualification has or will aid you in your career aspirations.*

**What are your work related strengths?**

*Prior to any interview, have a list prepared of your greatest strengths and a specific example which illustrates each attribute. Show how your skills will benefit the company. Valued traits include: achiever, intelligence, positivity, good communicator, dedication and confidence.*

**What are your weaknesses?**

*Design the answer to make it something that can be overcome and will not jeopardise you in the offered position. Instead of using the word “weakness”, rather refer to a “developmental area”.*

**Tell me about yourself** – this is an open - ended question.

*Begin by describing yourself in a work situation. Prepare a summary of your work experience, career achievements, educational background and accomplishments or transferable skills relevant to the opportunity.*

#### Open / Closed ended questions

**Be aware that some questions only need a yes/ no answer and others need some explanation.**

**ie. What is your salary – they need a figure, say R15000 per month (not oh, I did not get an increase as yet... etc.**

#### Your Career Aspirations

**Where do you see yourself in 3 to 5 years' time?**

*Highlight the skills you would like to acquire in this period and ask what opportunities exist within the company.*

- When were you most satisfied in your job? What motivates you in a job and in your personal life?
- How do you handle criticism and conflict?
- This organisation is very different to your current employer - how do you think you are going to fit in?
- How will you go about getting to know everyone here?
- Why have you changed position / company so many times?
- What kind of people do you find it difficult to work with?
- Give me an example of when you have had to face a conflict of interest at work.
- Do you prefer to work alone or in a group? Why?
- What is the most difficult situation you have faced and how did you approach it?
- Give me an example of when you have felt anger at work. How did you cope and did you still do a good job?
- How do you measure your own performance?
- What changes in the workplace have caused you difficulty and why? Give me an example of when you have been out of your depth.
- How do you organise or plan your day? What are three things your manager would say about you?
- How does your job fit into your department and company?

## **DISCUSSION REGARDING THE COMPANY AND THE ROLE**

If there are any aspects of the company or role that you are uncertain about, it is important to discuss it with your Consultant. Ensure that you leave the meeting on a positive note thereby not closing any doors for future possibility.

## **YOUR QUESTIONS**

Remember, this is a two-way discussion. Ensure you have prepared in such a way as to gain a thorough understanding of the expectations. Think carefully when asking questions and make sure they are relevant to the industry, market, company and the role you are interested in.

### **Samples of questions you may wish to ask the interviewer(s):**

- Why is this opportunity available?
- Tell me about the team? What are their roles?
- I'd like to know more about your organisation, tell me about the structure of the division / team (organogram)?
- How would you describe the work environment? (Fast paced, supportive, work hard / play hard)?
- What type of training do you typically go through for this role? For example product, systems training or orientation.
- What are the career growth prospects?
- What are the typical traits of your most successful employees?
- What are the challenges in this position?
- What has been the growth of the company over the last five years?
- How do you measure performance?
- Who does this role interact with?
- Do you have a specific organisational objective you are working towards?

## THE END OF THE INTERVIEW

- If the prospective employer offers you the position during the meeting, do not feel under pressure to accept there and then. It is perfectly fine to ask for some time to discuss this with your consultant. Make sure you both agree on a time when you will get back to them by.
- Last impressions are almost as important as first impressions. The way you leave the interview may be the way you are remembered. Indicate your interest in the opportunity. Thank the interviewer(s) for their time and give a firm handshake before leaving.
- Phone your Consultant immediately to give feedback as this will enable her to have an in-depth discussion with the company whilst maintaining the level of professionalism that you would like to project.