



CANDIDATE TIPS AND FAQs

Getting the interview right

Dressing for success

Common interview questions

Golden rules

Frequently asked questions



GETTING THE INTERVIEW RIGHT

It's a fact that the best candidates don't always get the job. In most cases the candidate who gets the job is the one who has prepared the most and therefore performs the best in the interview. Research indicates that employers make decisions within the first 5-9 minutes of the interview, making presentation crucial as first impressions count.

DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

Men

- Dark suit
- Light shirt
- Striped or plain tie
- Well polished dark shoes, no 'comedy' socks
- Briefcase or folder
- Minimal jewellery
- Short neat hair cut
- Easy on the aftershave

Women

- Plain business suit or professional dress
- Minimal jewellery
- Hair tied back if long, clean well groomed
- Make up should be worn but not too heavy
- Briefcase or smart folder
- No heavy perfumes

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Employers are looking for a positive answer to these 3 questions:

1. Can you do the job?

The employer will be looking for skills, experience and knowledge that match with what will be required in the position.

2. Do you want the job?

The employer will be looking for someone who is keen, enthusiastic, well presented, punctual, switched on, positive, confident.

3. Will you fit in with their team?

A little more difficult for you to determine, as the employer knows what they are looking for, but try to get a feel from the interviewer and the style of the company.

They will ask a series of questions to help determine if you meet all of these crucial criteria.

Having considered answers to the most commonly asked questions will not only improve your confidence at interview, but ensure you come across as an articulate professional.

Questions employers will ask to understand more about you:

1. What kind of job are you looking for?
2. What do you know about our company?
3. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
4. Why do you wish to leave your current employer?
5. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
6. What attracted you to this role?
7. Why do you want to work for our company?
8. What are your interests outside of work?
9. What are your expectations for us as your employer?
10. How do you believe your skills and experiences relate to this role?

Think carefully about your answers before your interview, and tailor your responses to suit the role and the Employer's business.

GOLDEN RULES

Be prepared

Know where you are going, who you are seeing, the person's title and what the company does.

Be on time

In fact, always arrive a few minutes early.

First impressions

Appearance and grooming must be immaculate. First impressions include a firm handshake, a friendly, confident "good morning/afternoon Mr Smith" and a smile.

Answer questions clearly and succinctly, but include relevant detail

Do not answer "yes or no" if you can help it. Listen carefully to all questions asked and respond to key points. Don't ramble. Phrase your responses in positive terms and keep the job in question in mind.

Any weaknesses?

Only ever give one weakness. Try to select something that was once a weakness that you have turned into a strength, this gives you another chance to sell yourself again.

Alternatively, pick something that is not critical for the position (e.g. Your weakness may be Maths, Accounting if you are going for a Receptionist position that involves no accounts!)

Why are you leaving your current employer?

Never, ever be negative about your current employer. Focus on what the new role has to offer for example increased career development, promotion, a chance to broaden your experience etc.

Never Lie

Explain difficult aspects of your background truthfully.

Maintain Eye Contact

And be aware of your body language.

Don't give away confidential information

Don't discuss your current employers confidential information. If you let your interviewer think confidential information is unsafe with you, it will seriously affect your chances of succeeding.

GOLDEN RULES (continuation)

Try not to ask questions about salary at the first interview

However, if asked, be as general as possible and quote market ranges. As discussed with your Optimum Consultant, justify your own market worth relative to market conditions and your own qualities and experience. The purpose of this is to ensure that the interviewer will commit first with a figure that will be a guideline for you.

Use your common sense

It might sound obvious, but you'd be surprised what we hear candidates have done in the past! Don't smoke or chew gum, don't interrupt your interviewer, don't keep looking at your watch and don't swear or use slang language.

Show your interest

Make it clear at the end of the interview if you are interested in the role. Thank the interviewer for their time, shake hands and smile. If your interview was arranged directly with the employer, send a letter or email thanking them for their time.

Time to consider

If you are offered the job at the interview, always ask for time to consider the offer and speak to your Optimum Consultant as soon as possible.

Feedback

Get in touch with your Optimum Consultant as soon as possible – they'll need to know how you got on.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do you handle overseas assignments?

Yes, we have placed a variety of roles with our international clients in locations including Singapore, Hong Kong, China and PNG.

How long does my application stay current?

When you apply for a job with us we will endeavour to respond within 48 hours. If you are invited for interview your details will be loaded onto our database for ongoing contact or until you request your information to be withdrawn. If you are unsuccessful we welcome you to apply for other advertised roles that interest you.

What happens if I turn down a role?

Recruitment is a two-way process where both the prospective employer and applicant need to be satisfied of a suitable match. We understand and respect your right to decide whether you wish to accept a role offered to you by our client, after all, it is your career!

Can you give me salary advice?

Yes. We're constantly monitoring salary trends both nationally and locally, so we'll be able to ensure that your salary expectations are realistic and in-line with the market overall. We will also work with you and the client to negotiate a package that everyone is comfortable with.

What do I need to consider as a temp as I've not done it before?

Temping is a fantastic opportunity to explore the employment market and to broaden your skills and experience by working for a variety of companies. As a temp, you are employed by Optimum Consulting and you will be in regular contact with your consultant to ensure the assignment runs smoothly. As a temp you are a "casual" employee and in most cases you will be paid an hourly rate.

Temp jobs can range from a one day assignment through to twelve months or longer as required. It is important to note that although we endeavour to agree timeframes with you and our clients, sometimes temporary roles end sooner than expected. If this occurs our consulting team will work hard to help you find another role. If you have any issues during your assignment, always call your Optimum Consultant first to discuss and we will try to solve the problem as effectively and respectfully as possible.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (continuation)

I am on a 457 visa, can Optimum sponsor me as a third party?

Following changes to the laws around 457 Visas in 2008, we are no longer able to offer third party sponsorship to candidates. However, some employers will still consider sponsoring you direct – ask your Consultant for more information.

How often can I expect to hear from my Consultant at Optimum?

Your consultant will work in partnership with you and together you will agree the appropriate level of contact during the initial interview. We encourage regular contact to keep you abreast of the current market. Our job is to facilitate your job search and provide sound career advice and open doors to our vast network of clients.

Do I need to phone in regularly to be considered for current vacancies?

Once you are interviewed and registered with us, your Consultant will contact you to discuss any new roles that match your skills and experience, however we also recommend you keep in regular contact with your consultant. Keep us updated with your job search!

Will Optimum be able to help me with my CV and interview preparation?

Absolutely. We can provide you with tips and guidelines, and will talk through your interview preparation before you go to your appointment. We'll also provide feedback on your current CV and help you to get it into shape.

Do I have to pay a fee for using Optimum services?

Not at all. Employers using our services pay our fees, there are no charges to candidates.

