

Interview Preparation

THERE ARE 4 KINDS OF QUESTIONS YOU ARE LIKELY TO BE ASKED:

1) What have you done in your career to date?

- Know your CV like the back of your hand.
- Be prepared to explain what business/sector your previous companies are in.
- Be ready to talk about what you did.
 - What did you do?
 - Who did you work with – inter-department, across departments, colleagues senior to you and colleagues with whom you have seniority.
 - How did you do things?
 - Why did you do things in that way? What did
- you enjoy in the role?
- What did you dislike and how did you cope with this?
- Why do you want to leave your current employer? (make sure the answer to this is for positive reasons – never criticise your current employer)
- Be able to talk about any **achievements** you may have had – no matter how small – the best two words to use in an interview are ‘for example’.
- Be able to give reasons for leaving for all of your roles.
- READ YOUR OWN CV – it is like having the exam paper before the exam!

2) What do you want to do next?

- Why do you want to work for this company?
- Why do you want this job? – Look at the job specification, talk about the experience you want to gain and how this role will help you gain this experience.
- Look at the job specification – write down an example of the experience you have for each point. If there is something you do not have experience of, make a note and ask what support you may get and say that you are willing to learn.
- Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years’ time? Avoid talking about salary/job titles – talk about the experience you want to gain, skills you want to develop e.g., become qualified, manage a team, gain more autonomy.

3) What kind of a person are you?

- How would you describe yourself?
- How would your friends/family/bosses/colleagues describe you?
- What are your strengths – use ‘for example’ as many times as you can.
- What are your weaknesses – use ‘for example’ as many times as you can – with weaknesses it reflects well if you can identify the weakness and explain what you are doing to overcome it – try to focus on minor weaknesses only.
- Be able to think of examples of:
 - How you handled conflict in the workplace
 - A time when you felt under pressure at work
 - An achievement that you are most proud of
 - The biggest obstacle you have had to overcome at work/in private life

4) What do you know about the company?

- Visit the website. Be prepared everyone should do this, so for you to really stand out from the crowd you need to go the extra mile and think outside of the box;

- Visit a store or site (if they have one open to the public) and speak to one of the staff (explain you are going on interview and would like to know about current initiative etc.)
- Do you know anyone that works for the business or has worked for the business in the past, friends, or family – talk to them about the company.
- You could do a SWOT Analysis of the organisation – what are the businesses Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats?
- Who are the main competitors and where does the company stand in relation to the competition?

ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMPANY:

- Direction the business is moving in?
- How business is now?
- How is the company hoping to gain a competitive advantage?
- Biggest threats facing the company?
- Ask what the interviewer likes about working there and why they joined?

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW:

- Thank them for their time
- If you enjoyed the meeting – tell them
- If you like the sound of the company – tell them
- Tell them you are aware that they will contact simon@franrec.co.uk and that you look forward to hearing from them via Simon.

IF IT'S A SECOND INTERVIEW:

- Write down everything from the first interview – a lot of the questions will be repeated (possibly for the benefit of someone you did not meet first time).
- Have an agenda for what you want to cover, i.e. be prepared for the question “Thanks for coming back – what do you want to talk about?”
- Be the same person – you know they like you. Be confident, be enthusiastic. Maintain pace in the interview.

3 KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. Be Enthusiastic
2. Be able to give examples & talk about achievements
3. Ask questions and show interest

A Guide to Competency Based Interviews

In case your interview is a competency based interview, we are enclosing the following guide to help you. The aim of this guide is to help you prepare for a Competency Based Interview and introduce the competencies for the job relevant to you.

What are Competencies?

Competencies are best thought of as those characteristics which enable a person to deliver fully competent performance in a specific job or role. They are not simply skills and knowledge, but are rather a combination of values and behaviour that contribute to a person's performance.

Competency Profiles

Competency profiles define which set of competencies will lead to superior performance in each job and describe several indicators for each competency. The indicators are behaviour patterns which competent job holders demonstrate consistently.

Competency Based Interviews

Competency-based interviews are structured interviews, which help to assess candidates against the competencies defined within the profile for a job. This method of interviewing is both a highly accurate and practical means of assessing and selecting candidates.

The objective of a competency-based interview is to elicit evidence from you, the candidate, for each of the required competencies. During the interview you will be asked to draw on previous experiences and describe actual situations when you have demonstrated the behaviour most relevant to the job. You will be asked to give a brief overview of your actions and role for each of your experiences. Try to focus, specifically on **your own** involvement.

For example, when assessing a particular competence the interviewer may ask:

- Initiative
"Tell me about a time when you took personal responsibility for a project and made sure it was carried out efficiently"
- Achievement Motivation
"Tell me about a time when you acted to improve the performance of the business"
- Relationship Building
"Tell me about a time when you used your contacts to get a job done"

The interviewer may try to dig deeper and ask further questions to clarify the details of your involvement and actions.

For example: **"What happened first?"**
"What did you do and say?"
"What were you thinking and feeling?"
"What was the outcome?"

To provide the relevant and factual details of your previous experiences, actions, and roles, it is advantageous to consider the most significant experiences you have had within the last 18 months.

Preparing for a Competency Based Interview

Although time is allowed for candidates to think of appropriate experiences during the interview, prior consideration of the competencies would be advantageous. Try to think of one occasion when you have demonstrated similar behaviour to those presented in the competence model. You will not be expected to have demonstrated all the behaviour patterns, although some evidence for each competency is preferable. Try to recall any relevant details, whilst focusing on your actual behaviour.

Examples of some of the Competencies companies may use:

Customer Focus

Is the desire to meet the needs of internal and external customers. It means focusing efforts on discovering and satisfying their needs.

Achievement Motivation

Is a concern for working well to meet or surpass a standard of excellence. The standard may be one's own past performance; an objective measure; the performance of others.

Teamwork

Is working co-operatively with others, as part of an immediate team and across functions, to meet business objectives.

Analytical Thinking

Is the use of logic to assess and improve the accuracy of validity of ideas, information, or processes.

Information Seeking

Is driven by an underlying curiosity and desire to know more about things, people, or issues. It implies going beyond the questions that are routine or required in the job. It may include "digging" and scanning for further information.

Initiative

Is about being a self-starter; proactively doing things to solve problems and seize opportunities, taking maximum responsibility (within the limits of authority).

Flexibility

Is adapting to and working effectively within a variety of situations, with individuals or groups. It includes adopting new behaviour and approaches as required by changes in role and the wider organisation.

Impact and Influence and Effective Work style

Is about persuading, convincing and impressing others to get them to support your agenda in the interests of the business. It is based on the desire to have a specific impact or effect on others where the person has his or her own agenda, a specific type of impression to make, or a course of action that he or she wants the others to adopt.