

Part 4 - So what are the Different Types of Interviews

Recruitment Interviews

Recruitment agencies exist to place people in jobs. They make their money from the employer by taking a percentage of your first years' salary (not your actual salary but what the employer agrees to pay you). Does this affect you, not really, but it should be a consideration when you ask for more money than is being offered – the employer needs to factor in the percentage uplift to the recruiter. Therefore, the common assumption that recruitment agencies are there to help you may be something of a misconception, they are there to make money – welcome to the first lesson “Civvie street.”

There are some amazing recruiters out there (anyone helping service leavers gets my vote) and the fact that they make money is a given (we all need to make money in business), so treat them as “Job Finding Contacts” - they are not your friends but understanding what they can do for you is key. The more you know about yourself, your aspirations, finances and what you want to do, the easier it is for them to find you “A” position. Good agencies can be extremely helpful in looking after “Job Seekers” properly, by giving them help and support, and placing them in the right job. Others are purely serving the employment needs of the companies and organisations that pay their fees. They may be less concerned with meeting your own individual wants, needs, and more concerned with placing you in any job that will earn them their fee. Talk to other people who have left already to see who they used. I can certainly recommend a few.

Warning: Be aware of the way some agencies operate and watch out for any attempt to ‘sell you’ a job that isn’t what you want.

Employer Interviews

More on this later as this is the key interview, but it is good to understand what Employer interviews are.

They enable the employer to assess whether or not you are suitable. Usually, the first interview is a screening process (don’t expect a job from the first interview unless you have been approached direct – “Head Hunted”). The second interview is those they liked the look of at the “Screening”. Later interviews are where you would prove yourself to be the best candidate. More on this later.

HR Interviews

You may be asked to attend an HR interview at a large or global company. They focus on you and not necessarily involve technical input from you about your experiences – again, it is there to look at your suitability.

Warning: Don’t assume that this is an easy interview. Your suitability will be scrutinised by these highly professional HR specialists and their opinion of you counts when making any final decision.

The Telephone Interview

Often companies request an initial telephone interview before inviting you in for a face-to-face meeting in order to get a better understanding of the type of candidate you are. The one benefit of this is that you can have your notes out in front of you. You should do just as

much preparation as you would for a face-to-face interview and remember that your first impression is vital. Some people are better meeting in person than on the phone, so make sure that you speak confidently, with good pace and try to answer all the questions that are asked.

The Face-to-Face Interview

This can be a meeting between you and one member of staff or even two members.

The Panel Interview

These interviews involve a number of people sitting as a panel with one as chairperson. This type of interview is popular within the public sector.

The Group Interview

Several candidates are present at this type of interview. You will be asked to interact with each other by usually a group discussion. You might even be given a task to do as a team, so make sure you speak up and give your opinion.

The Sequential Interview

These are several interviews in turn with a different interviewer each time. Usually, each interviewer asks questions to test different sets of competencies. However, if you are asked the same questions, just make sure you answer each one as fully as the previous time.

The Lunch / Dinner Interview

This type of interview gives the employer a chance to assess your communication and interpersonal skills as well as your table manners! So make sure you order wisely (no spaghetti Bolognese) and make sure you don't spill your drink (non-alcoholic of course!). All these types of interviews can take on different question formats, so once you've checked with your potential employer which type of interview you'll be attending, get preparing!

Competency Based Interviews

These are structured to reflect the competencies the employer is seeking for the particular job. These will usually be detailed in the job spec so make sure you read it through and have your answers ready for questions such as "Give me an example of a time you worked as a team to achieve a common goal." For more examples of competency-based questions click [here](#).

Formal / Informal Interviews

Some interviews may be very formal, others may be very informal and seem like just a chat about your interests. However, it is important to remember that you are still being assessed, and topics should be friendly and clean!

Portfolio Based Interviews

In the design / digital or communications industry it is likely that you will be asked to take your portfolio along or show it online. Make sure all your work is up to date without too little or too much. Make sure that your images if in print are big enough for the interviewer

to see properly, and always test your online portfolio on all Internet browsers before turning up.

The Second Interview:

You've past the first interview and you've had the call to arrange the second. Congratulations! But what else is there to prepare for? You did as much as you could for the first interview! Now is the time to look back and review. You may be asked the same questions you were asked before, so review them and brush up your answers.

Review your research about the company; take a look at the 'About Us' section on their website, get to know their client base, search the latest news on the company and find out what the company is talking about.

General Interview Preparation

Here's a list of questions that you should consider your answers for when preparing:

- Why do you want this job?
- Why are you the best person for the job?
- What relevant experience do you have?
- Why are you interested in working for this company?
- What can you contribute to this company?
- What do you know about this company?
- What challenges are you looking for in a position?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- Why should we hire you?
- What are your salary requirements?