

Part 7 - Researching Yourself - Is this the job you really want?

As you have just read, application packs can help you decide whether or not a job is right for you. An essential part of your interview preparation should always be to evaluate your own needs, wants and desires. If you assess carefully how badly you want this particular job, you will approach the interview with the right mind-set.

If you don't really feel the job is ideal for you, but that it's one you could settle for, you can approach the interview more as a means for giving you interview experience. But if the job is the one you really want – that elusive 'dream job' – then the interview becomes extremely important, and you will need to put all your effort into excelling at it.

Know Your Facts

You may be asked in detail at interview about your salary and benefits expectations. Make sure you know what they are as you may look rather foolish if you don't. Check out hourly, weekly or monthly rate (however you are paid) and when you last had a pay rise. Know what benefits you get. If you don't know what you're paid at the moment, you will weaken your negotiating power.

Know What You Want

Look at the job, and before you go into the interview decide the minimum salary or pay you would accept, should you be offered it. The job advert may list a salary or salary range, but a company may sometimes pay more for the right person, so always do your homework and decide on your minimum requirements.

When deciding your minimum requirements, you need to factor in additional costs. For example, if you will have a longer journey, you're travelling expenses may be higher than you currently pay. Factor in extra costs like this to your requirements, so you can define your ideal salary.

Your minimum acceptable salary – your 'bottom line'

It is absolutely essential that you know your absolute bottom line, so if you are offered a salary below this, you will know you need to decline the job offer.

Research Salary Requirements

Employers are very often open to a well-argued justification for a salary offer. If you have done your homework and are able to show it by justifying your salary requirements, they are much more likely to be met.

Getting from Your Front Door to the Interview

One area you need to prepare in advance is how you will actually get to the interview. You will need to check out, well in advance, both how you will get there – bus, taxi, car, train – and how long this is likely to take. Plan your journey carefully, and allow extra time for unforeseen circumstances. Emergencies may be understandable but getting there late can still mean you don't get a proper interview.