

2nd Interview Techniques

You have secured a second interview – well done, it means the company are genuinely interested in you for their vacancy. Before you attend your second interview, please remember that although you have done well, you have not yet been offered the job! The process of selling yourself into the role is not over. So, please take a few moments to consider the following points in your preparation for your 2nd interview, we hope they will help get you that job offer on the table.

1. First impressions and Grooming

Just as in the 1st interview, first impressions are vitally important. In fact, you may be meeting the interviewer(s) for the first time, in which case you should view the whole process as a first interview and refer back to the preparation you did for that meeting.

- Know where you are going, and at what time
- Arrive a few minutes early
- Greet the interviewer by his/her last name
- Offer a firm handshake with a warm smile
- Do the confident thing, and you will feel confident
- Switch off your mobile phone
- Dispose of any chewing gum or sweets before entering the building
- You must present yourself correctly – if you are not properly dressed and groomed, you will be fighting an uphill battle from the start

2. The Aim of the Interview

As before, the main objective to be achieved in an interview is to leave the interviewer with the overriding impression that your skills, experience and personality are a match for what they are looking for.

Do not fall into the trap of thinking that because this is a second interview that the interviewer knows all about you. If you adopt this approach you are likely to “undersell” yourself.

Remember that at 2nd interview stage the interviewers are actually looking to decide who to offer the job to, and it is your job to present your key selling points for the role as clearly and confidently as possible.

As before, do not assume that the interviewer knows about you, or indeed has read your CV. The person who performed the 1st interview may not have fully briefed the 2nd interviewer, and indeed if it is the same person doing both interviews they may not have remembered everything about you.

It is your job to help the interviewer as much as possible by selling yourself. Volunteer relevant information without being asked during the course of the interview. Repeat verbally the relevant content of your CV - what you don't tell them, they will never know, so spell everything out.

The value of enthusiasm cannot be over-emphasised. Enthusiasm is infectious, so if you want to be remembered as a candidate that the interviewer actually wants to employ, inject some enthusiasm into your performance. You will be amazed at how the interviewer will warm to you and thus how much better you will come across.

3. Preparation – The Key to Success

In our opinion the best approach is to treat a 2nd interview exactly as you would a 1st interview. In other words, revise the preparation of the “unique selling points” you prepared for the 1st interview.

- List all the skills/attributes that the job requires
- Against that list write why you satisfy each element of the job specification
- This is best done by referring to your CV and writing down what you will say in response to each point
- This list will then constitute a summary of your key work-related attributes and experience in relation to this job. All you then have to do is learn it, and then tell the interviewer!
- Try to put your experience and skills across in a way which is relevant to the role in question

- Focus on the attributes required by the job specification, and be prepared to back up your ability to meet each of these criteria
- In fact, it is true to say that, armed with this list of your key attributes you are well equipped to answer any question which is related to the job specification

We cannot emphasise too strongly that you still have to put on a great performance at a second interview.

Even if the interviewer tells you that it is “just a chat” or done over lunch, you are still being assessed, so keep your approach professional and keep selling yourself. The more opportunities you take to put across your selling points the better - you will simply be proving that you are the best choice for the job in question.

4. Closing the Interview

As before, this is a vital stage to the process. In fact, at second interview your performance here could actually secure you the job offer. As before for your 1st interview, usually you will be asked if you wish to ask any questions, and usually your questions have already been answered during the interview. However, you must ask some questions, (or at least create the impression that you were going to), since it demonstrates that you have thought seriously about the role and have done some preparation. This is one of the most important parts of the interview, and a poor performance here will result in failure – our experience has taught us this.

You must take a folder in to the interview containing your question list. This will:-

- Demonstrate your preparation
- Demonstrate that you are taking the job seriously
- Ensure that you don't forget anything

You must produce and look in this folder, even if all your questions have already been answered. Look in it and say “all my questions have been answered, thank you”. The interviewer will be impressed, and you will stand head and shoulders above other candidates. If you are feeling confident, a final question to ask may be “What reservations do you have about me/my experience?” You will then be able to lay to rest any doubts which the interviewer may have.

The final thing to do is to tell the interviewer that you are interested in the job, (write this on your questions list so that you don't forget)

*“Thank you for taking the time to see me.
I am very interested in the job,
it is the position I have been looking for.
When are you looking to make a decision?”*

Don't be discouraged if no definite offer is made or if no specific salary is discussed. If you get the impression that the interview is not going well and that you have already been rejected, do not let your discouragement show. Once in a while an interviewer who is genuinely interested may seem to discourage you to test your reaction.

Finally, remember:

- Enthusiasm is infectious
- Sell yourself in a confident, professional manner
- Never assume – what you don't tell the interviewer, they will never know
- Do the confident thing to feel confident
- Express your interest in the job

Good Luck from us all.