

Be prepared!



THE ADVICE ON HOW TO SHINE AT INTERVIEWS REMAINS THE SAME, BUT **MATTHEW MATTHEOU** HAS SEEN ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT MANY PEOPLE JUST HAVEN'T BEEN LISTENING.

Something that continues to surprise me after nearly nine years in recruitment is how many extremely strong candidates seem to fade or underperform at interviews. Simply by being invited to interview you have already cleared a couple of major hurdles: you have been put forward by the consultancy and then survived the second cut which the recruiting company invariably carries out. So realistically you are in with a strong chance of securing the role.

A lot of what I am about to say has been said before many times. But as I continue to get the same feedback from interviewers, it is obviously advice that is well worth repeating.

PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW I cannot stress this enough. Interview preparation does not consist of having a quick scan of the job specification the night before, briefly glancing through your CV so you can remember what it looks like and surfing the net for 10 minutes to get a vague idea of what your target organisation does.

Proper preparation means looking through the job specification to get a thorough feel for what it says. If you are unsure of something (and, let's face it, many can be vague), ask the recruitment consultant to verify it with the client and then think of any other supplementary questions you have which follow on from this.

It's also a good idea to find out as much about your interviewer and the department size and structure before the interview – your recruiter should be able to find out this information for you – which should give you an idea of where you would fit into the team.

It's also worth asking why the role has materialised – is it as a result of someone moving on internally or leaving for another company; if it's the latter, ask why they left.

Find out as much as you can about the organisation from the internet. This should give you a feel for the corporate culture as well as give you financial information and the latest news on corporate activity. Remember that the better prepared you are, the more confident you will feel and consequently the more favourable an impression you will make.

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CONSIDER THE EMPLOYER'S PERSPECTIVE

Think about the interview from the potential employer's perspective. If you have yourself recruited, this should be relatively straightforward; if you haven't, think about the nature of the role and the kind of attributes required, what would you consider your key strengths to be (make a mental note of them and remember to ensure that you get them across at some stage in the interview).

During the interview itself, when you are asked a question, answer the question you were asked! Try to be concise and back up your answers with examples from your own experience where possible.



HAVE QUESTIONS PREPARED When asked by the interviewer if you have any questions, ensure that you do. If you have done your preparation and are serious about your career, there will be many points that you will want to clarify with your interviewer. You will also find that supplementary questions (from both sides) will follow on from these, making the interview more of a two-way process.

BE ENTHUSIASTIC People will always warm more to someone who comes across as enthusiastic and upbeat. Think about your tone of voice and how you come across. Ask your friends and or colleagues for their candid opinions. Most recruiters will be happy to go through a mock interview if you feel slightly unsure, or if you haven't interviewed for a while, so take advantage of this.

If you really want to change roles and give yourself the best possible chance of securing the position, just remember that, as with exams, you have to do your preparation.

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