

## THE NEXT BIG STEP

Interviews are key points in your career, in the space of a short hour or two, your entire professional life can change direction.

When you apply to a job through Hays, one of our consultants will be assigned to help you tailor your application to the organisation and position you're applying for, and talk to you about your CV and prior experiences. This will help us to identify the characteristics which would be most interesting to your potential employer, and use this insight to help you to secure an interview.

Once you are invited to interview, we will help you prepare. We have created this guide which talks through some of the general actions you can expect from your interview. Every job is different however, so while this guide will give you a great start, talk to your consultant to ensure your interview goes as smoothly as possible and leads to the next step in your career.

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW



### Research your employer

If you've reached interview stage, you must dedicate as much time as possible to learning more about the background of your chosen organisation. Their website is an obvious starting point and can help you explore the following:

- Values, culture and atmosphere
- Social media pages
- Past projects or case studies
- Publications, press releases and marketing

Often most of these materials are readily available, but make sure you search social media for any hidden publications or news stories which may become interesting talking points. The more information you have about an employer, the more you can engage with your interviewer.

Asking questions about previous projects and how they performed will reflect very well on you, so look out for news stories in particular as these will highlight their recent successes.

Researching your prospective employer is as much for your benefit as it is for them. While having a better handle on the values and history of the organisation will give you more to talk about at interview, it will also help you to see if you would fit well within the team. The interview is as much an opportunity for you to get an impression of the organisation and its senior management as it is an assessment of you, so be sure to know as much as you can about their values and culture before you step into the interview room.



### Try to pick the best time

When trying to secure a new job you should always look to gain a competitive edge over the other candidates. One of the ways in which you might do this is by scheduling your interview for the optimum time.

You won't always be able to choose when your interview will be scheduled, but it's not uncommon for employers to offer candidates a few different time slots. When they do, it's useful to have an idea of the various consequences of arranging your interview for different times of the day, or different days of the week.

Monday might not be the best day to arrange an interview as it's often a day when most of us are tying up loose ends from the previous Friday, or replying to emails received over the weekend, whilst also trying to map out our diaries for the week ahead. Give your interviewer a chance to grow into the week.

Try to avoid having your interview on either side of the weekend, or any other holiday period. You want to minimise all risk of the interviewer's mind being distracted by non-work matters.

Wednesdays are generally best, as your interviewer will have completed their 'beginning of the week to-do list', and will be yet to move onto their 'must action before the weekend pile'.

The morning is your perfect opportunity to jump in there and impress the interviewer before anyone else has the chance to. Come the afternoon, the employer may have already seen a quantity of remarkable candidates which they'll be measuring you against. By being one of the first up, you get to set the bar.



It's good practice to organise work interviews in your own time – schedule them after work hours or use annual leave. This is polite to your employer and also removes stress for you as the interviewee.

If you're deceitful about your movements and use your working hours to attend an interview, you'll be nervous and worried about being found out – and it may negatively affect your interview performance.



### Get to know your CV

Your CV got you this far and it's what the interviewer wants to know more about. If you have the ability to remember everything on your CV, fantastic, otherwise, take a highlighter to mark your key achievements, important dates and figures and any other points, relevant to the particular vacancy.

Ensure your LinkedIn profile matches your CV, especially dates, key skills and experience, because your interviewer is likely to cross check and test you during the interview.



### Get inside information

Your recruiter has developed their own rapport with your interviewer so they can give you some behind the scenes information if you ask for it. They'll be able to tell you about the atmosphere of the office, the types of people you'll be meeting and the level of formal dress required. You'll always need to be smart, but a full suit and tie may appear too formal for some organisations. Your recruiter can help you avoid little mistakes like this which may damage your chances.



### Practise and prepare

Your recruiter can often help you prepare for interviews, even to the point of conducting mock interviews and reviewing the questions you're planning to ask. Here are some tips to help you prepare:

- **Practise interviewing.** Enlist a friend (better yet, a group of friends and colleagues) to ask you sample questions.
- **Video record your practice sessions.** Pay attention to body language and verbal presentation. Eliminate verbal fillers, like 'uh,' and 'um.'
- **Handle logistics early.** Have directions to the interview site ready ahead of time.
- **Dress to impress.** Decide what you are going to wear well in advance of the interview, then make sure the items of clothing are dry cleaned or washed and ironed the day before.

Talk to your recruiter, but as a general rule wear your smartest outfit, as long as it is comfortable. If you think any of your clothing looks shabby buy a replacement, it could be a valuable investment.