

Euro-Projects Recruitment Ltd

Interview Success



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*Our mission is:
To provide the most professional, friendly and quality recruitment service
to clients and candidates alike*



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KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS

- Don't interview for positions you don't want. Do communicate to the interviewer that you want the position (and why) and that there is an excellent chance that you would accept their offer (if that is true).
- Be prepared. Most interviews are won or lost based on preparation.
- Have several good questions to ask the interviewer. Don't be passive.
- Frame whatever you say positively, even if asked negatively ("What did you like least about your previous work as a").
- Get across your agenda: three or four selling points for that position. Give examples to demonstrate each of those selling points.
- Connect your personal and professional experiences to the position description and the particular questions asked during your interview. The interviewer wants to get to know you. The more you create a connection between yourself and the job, the better the impression, and thus, your chances of securing the job you want.
- Know where you are on your career path and how the employer fits in. Having a clear idea of what you want to do and how you plan on getting there conveys confidence and drive. Scattered interests and vague plans, on the other hand, send the wrong signals.
- Be honest with yourself and the interviewer. You don't want to talk yourself into the wrong position.
- Practice and prepare for your interview.
- Be prepared for questions you hope they won't ask (e.g. career gaps, previous unrelated experience). Be brief and factual in your responses, not defensive.
- Even if you're being interviewed for a contract position, know that the company is thinking about you long term.

POST INTERVIEW SUGGESTIONS

- Send a thank you letter or email reiterating why you are a good fit for the position. (Ask your Euro-Projects Consultant if the client likes this sort of response). Ask follow up questions or highlight something you failed to mention during the interview.
- If someone has championed you for the job, let them know whether you are going to accept or decline the job before you tell the recruiter.
- If you decline a job, make sure the reason you give is framed in a way to consider Euro-Projects ongoing relationship with the employer and reflects your professionalism.



PREPARATION

Prepare for the job interview as you would for an examination and you may be able to enjoy them as you would an interesting conversation with colleagues. Conversely, if you go into an interview without adequate preparation, the experience could feel like an exam for which you overslept! Spend time reflecting on your own goals, your strengths and skills, so that you can discuss them succinctly. Learn about the employer's organisation and current needs so that you understand how and where you would fit, prepare questions for any areas that remain unclear.

Assist your preparation by:

- Visiting the company's website.
- Search the Internet for related or competitor products/services/companies.
- Research the company in newspaper or magazine web sites, e.g. The Times, Telegraph, Trade Journals.

Researching Yourself

You know best how to reflect your own goals and strengths. Ask yourself what your objectives are on the following table:

Where do I see myself?

	Now	2 to 5 Years	5 Years +
Career			
Personal/Family			

Another simple and very helpful exercise is to prepare for an interview, is to create a matrix, listing your skills on one axis and the employers requirements on the other to see where they match.



Etiquette

- A punctual, well-dressed and well-groomed candidate is off to a good start (ensure shoes, finger nails and car are clean).
- Always plan to arrive a little early (use facilities for comfort and a final check in the mirror before the interview if you have time). Allow time for unanticipated travel delays.
- Dress codes vary according to organisation, but always be conservative in your choice. A clean, pressed business suit for men and a business suit or dress for women is most appropriate. By making an effort in your appearance you are demonstrating that you are interested in the job.
- Hair should be neatly cut, beards trimmed.
- Jewellery, perfume, cologne and aftershave should be kept to a minimum.
- Don't chew gum or smoke unless it is invited and it appears appropriate.
- If offered a drink and the interviewers are having one it is ok for you to do so as well.
- Initial impressions count, make eye contact, use positive body language (avoid folded arms, or slouched posture), a firm (not crushing) hand shake without damp palms is often an indication of how calm you are. (A trick of the trade to avoid clammy-palms: when waiting to meet the interviewer rest your hand on your knee or wrist...it works!). Also, be prepared with a little small talk to bridge the silence whilst being guided to the interview room.



QUESTIONS

What kind of questions should you expect? This can be the hardest question to answer. In the course of your job search you may meet calm and skilled interviewers and others who seem as nervous as you may be. In some organisations interviewers will use a standard schedule of questions, and will be rating candidates on a standardised scale. At other organisations, a committee with no pre-assigned questions may interview you. Interviews differ by sector. The good news is that, whatever the skills of those who interview you, your own careful preparation will be rewarded. Your enthusiasm and thoughtful answers will make the tired or bored interviewer sit up, and help the nervous interviewer relax and listen.

It has been suggested that there are four types of interview styles: Gut-feel, Conversational, Trait and Behavioural. Most human resources departments use behavioural interviewing in the belief that the best way to predict someone's actions in the future is to know how they did something in the past. However, if you are interviewed by other people in the organisation, they may rely on one or more of the other interviewing styles.

The best preparation for any of the styles is preparation for a behavioural interview where you give **examples of how you solved problems in the past**. Many of the sample questions on the next page are behavioural.

Also during your preparation note down several key points which link your skills and experience with the job. Prepare to raise these positive points if the interviewer doesn't raise questions in this area.

Typical Questions

On the following page is a list of questions that are commonly asked. Read them through, and consider how many of them are open-ended. Open-ended questions give a well-prepared candidate the opportunity to tell the interviewer just what makes them an outstanding candidate. As you prepare answers, remember that you will stand out from the other candidates if you can describe specific situations, your actions and the results that highlight your selling points. Any candidate can claim to be well organised and detail orientated.

Interviewers will often ask whether you have had a negative experience, or what you consider your weaknesses. A good answer will always be brief, keep the description of the downside to a minimum, avoid gratuitous criticism of others, and end on an upbeat note.

Be Specific

Many people give vague and general answers to behavioural questions. Give specifics of the issue, how you dealt with it, and be ready to give more than one example.



Be Concise

However good you are at thinking on your feet, in the pressure of a job interview it can be easy to ramble if you are caught by surprise, wasting precious interview minutes, so practice your answers aloud and time yourself.

These days very few interviewers are looking for a year by year account of your life and career.

Afterwards

After an interview, always sit down and make some notes on how it went. If there were questions that surprised you, or that you wish you had answered differently, write them down now, and when you are relaxed, go back to your notes and prepare the answer you would like to give next time.

Follow up

Contact your Euro-Projects Consultant soon after the meeting to discuss your thoughts. Ask your consultant whether the interviewer like to receive send thank you notes (which may be typed or handwritten, if your writing is legible). A note by email is acceptable, but should be as formal as a note on paper. Address the reader as Dear, not Hi, Keep the letter brief, thank the interviewer for their time, and indicate your continued interest.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself. (NB The most professional reply is to very briefly describe your personal/family circumstances and conclude with 'and I am currently working for as a' (or if unemployed ' and I am a with years experience). Do not take this question as an invitation to give an year by year account of your life and career.)
- What are your strengths and weaknesses? (Make sure you can list several of the former).
- What is your greatest passion?
- What three or four adjectives would a supervisor use to describe you? Why? Give examples to display those qualities.
- What three or four adjectives would a colleague use to describe you? Why? Give examples to display those qualities.
- How would you describe yourself?
- What is the procedure you go through to make a decision?
- How do you organise your time?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- What are the most important things for you in a job?
- What achievement that is not on your CV are you most proud of?

Behavioural Questions

- Give me an example of a time you demonstrated leadership.
- Give me an example of a time when you worked on a team. (As a team player, not a leader).
- Tell me about a time when there was conflict of personalities, and how you handled it. (NB Be concise and factual. Do not lobby the interviewer as if they are judge and jury. Concentrate on how you solved the problem, not the rights/wrongs of the disagreement.
- Describe a situation in which you were presented with a task or instructions with which you disagreed. (You do not have to choose your biggest ever fight, perhaps a less contentious example may be better).
- How creative are you? Give an example of a creative idea/solution you developed.



- Explain your decision to pursue a career in this sector after “X” years of unrelated work.
- Why are you interested in this industry?
- Why did you choose to interview with this company/industry?
- What did you do to prepare for this interview?
- Describe the ideal position for you in our firm.
- Who else are you interviewing with?
- What other sorts of jobs are you applying for?
- What qualities do you think make someone successful in this industry/organisation?
- How do you think you could contribute to the objectives of our organisation/company?
- What experience do you have in managing others/projects?
- What qualities make a good/poor manager?
- How do you feel about travel, overtime demands of the industry?
- Why do you think you are qualified for this position?
- What did you like most, and least, about your previous positions?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
- What questions do you have for me (the interviewer)?



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR INTERVIEWER

Employers will also expect you to have questions for them. Below are some suggestions to help you think about what you might ask. Remember that questions about salary, benefits, starting date, etc are always best left until after you receive an offer.

- What do you see as the strengths of the organisation? What do you see as the greatest challenges?
- Tell me about the work environment.
- How is the department organised in which I would work?
- Does management encourage promotion from within the organisation?
- What would be the goals for the first six months I was here?
- Why do you enjoy working here?
- If you could introduce, change or modify three things about your organisation over the next year without additional resources, what would they be? (You will find that people reveal a lot about the organisation in this exercise).

Take notes or remember the answers, so you can list them in your thank you note and say what you would do to address them.

It also looks impressive if you have your questions typed or written down, rather than trying to remember them (this demonstrates preparation).

Also remember not be overly questioning, it is not an opportunity for you to “grill” your interviewer back, you may feel like you have scored some points but you are unlikely to be offered a job.



OTHER INFLUENCES TO BE AWARE OF:

Part of your interview may involve a tour of the company conducted by someone different. It is highly likely that this person will be a close associate to the person to be appointed and their perception of you will influence the final decision. To create a positive impression with this person aim to achieve the following:

DO:

- Make and maintain eye contact
- Appear interested in the company, its plant, activities, systems, products, procedures etc as you are shown around. Pay attention to any information boards relating to Key Performance Indicators such as output, quality, targets etc that exist in many companies. Relate to these with relevant experiences of your own.
- Answer you tour guides questions as you would in your interview.
- Show enthusiasm and passion for what you see.

DON'T:

- Be overly critical of what you see.
- Use the opportunity to criticise the people who interviewed you in a more informal environment.

FOR FURTHER ADVICE:

If you feel you need further advice or help relating to your interview, please call your recruitment consultant on 0845 6444 818 who will be happy to talk through any concerns or answer any questions you may have.

Good Luck with your Interview from all at Euro-Projects Recruitment.