

## Interview Guide

Interviews can be stressful regardless of if you have many years of experience or are interviewing for the first time. First and foremost, being prepared will make the whole process easier. This means taking a bit of time to really look at what the job you're applying for entails. You have to look at your own qualifications and what you can bring to the job and also the employer. Here at HireForce, we have compiled this guide to ensure you flourish in every interview.

### 1. Research the Company

Knowing the company that you're applying for is very important. You'll gain a great insight to the company's industry and culture and this will allow you to understand the workplace environment and vibe of the company. You want to know that the values they exhibit are in line with your own. Remember, the interviewer will also be looking for someone who matches their values and beliefs. Also, by researching the company, this will give you context for your interview conversation, and at the same time help you to remain calm.

We are lucky today with such a vast amount of information online. Go through the company's website, reading their mission statements, their core values, the financial health of the company – 'Why did revenue decrease last year by 15%?'. Look at social media pages they may have, and also have a look at employee review sites as well as having a look at their latest products and services.

### 2. Dress Appropriately/Rehearse

In a traditional interview your first impression is made when you shake hands upon greeting the interviewer. Therefore, dressing professionally is a must as your first impression is crucial and you want to make a positive impression. Have a dress rehearsal where you run through and find what you feel relaxed wearing, as well as going through sample answers to check for any recurring filler words and idiosyncrasies such as saying 'um' and 'like' too frequently.

### 3. Start of the Interview

Entering into your interview with a strong start gives you much better chance of success. Arrive 10-15 minutes early, enter confidently with a firm handshake and take a seat when prompted. Stay focused and alert but show your interpersonal skills, we're all human – smile and make eye contact, have relaxed body language to stay calm, answer questions with full answers, all in a professional manner. Always bear in mind to remain composed and not seem too overfamiliar or casual.

Sell yourself. This can be tough for most people as it can be quite uncomfortable but being able to present yourself positively will stand to you. Think of previous roles where you may have excelled – i.e., you may have helped increase sales - have stats ready to show your previous accomplishments and growth.

#### 4. Common Interview Questions

The types of questions asked normally fall under 2 categories: Behavioural Questions and Technical Questions. Make sure you are alert and listening to the questions, so your response is tailored to the answer.

- a) Behavioural Questions – softer questions for small talk which relate to your personality, how well do you work within a team dynamic, why do you want to work for us, conflict within the workplace environment and how you would deal with it, how to display your leadership skills, what motivates you, your strengths and weaknesses, any personal stories that relate to challenges you have faced in your career so far and how you overcame it. Keep in mind the different nuances that come with different interviews, don't force something if it doesn't feel natural.
- b) Technical Questions – specific questions that relate to accounting/finance experience directly, “talk me through financial statements, is capital structure important if you consider issuing debt instead of equity”, example of the best overall strategic plan in terms of budget, what makes a good financial model etc. This could involve scenario-based exercises where you could be asked to give real examples or situations and work you have found yourself in. Don't shy away from difficulties that arose in previous work you encountered but finish on a positive outcome such as a satisfied client.

#### 5. End of the Interview

The final impression that you give is one you want to be a lasting one. This is your opportunity, when invited, to ask any questions you have. Avoid questions about salary and bonus for a first-round interview. Although the formal interview part may be over don't become complacent and maintain a professional image. Always finish up the interview inquiring if they require anything further.

#### 6. Final Tip

If, at some stage of your interview, you are unsure of how to answer or how to phrase your response – pause and take a moment. Your interviewer will appreciate that you are taking the time to respond with a thoughtful answer e.g Let me think about that for a quick moment.