

## Marketing Yourself

### Phase 3: Preparing for an Interview

People have written volumes about job interviews, so an article of this length can deal only with the bare essentials.

The purpose of an interview is to assess your capacity to perform in a particular job and to find out if you will fit into the organisation.

There are three secrets to a successful interview - preparation, preparation and preparation! Preparation involves reviewing your CV and covering letter, doing research on the company and the job, and anticipating questions that the recruiter might ask you.

Before attending an interview, **find out all you can about the company and the job.** You will then be able to prepare reasons why you and the job are a good match.

The interview is the most important event in your job search campaign. It is not the final step; you will still need to negotiate an offer. **But you win or lose a job in the interview.**

It would be sad to lose it for lack of preparation after all the marketing effort that you put into your CV and covering letter. So think of the interview as the sales pitch within your overall marketing campaign and prepare for it accordingly.

### Main Preparation for the Interview

As part of your preparation for an interview, there are three main things you should do:

- Know your work history and your achievements very well. In times of stress, the first thing that fails is your memory.
- Know why you are the right person for the job. If you are very clear in your mind about that, it will help convince the interviewer.
- Know as much about the company as possible. This will help you anticipate what questions the interviewer might ask you.

### Further Preparation for the Interview

- Know the exact place and time of the interview, the interviewer's full name and correct pronunciation of it, and his/her title
- Research the company via the Internet, the Business Who's Who, and other sources
- Know enough about the job to make sense at the interview
- Think about the company's products or services
- Network with your contacts for further information
- Consider issues the company might face and how they might relate to the job
- Visualise what it would be like to work in the company
- Revise the facts and figures of your present and previous employments
- Consider your personal image. (How should you appear to the interviewer?)
- Visualise and rehearse the interview
- Be ready to "run the interview" if necessary
- Devise a list of questions to ask the interviewer (what do you **need** to ask?)

## **At the interview**

Go to the interview prepared to listen, not just to talk. It is important to focus on what the other person is saying, not on what you are going to say next. You have to listen actively. That involves eye contact, facial expressions and careful attention to pick up underlying messages.

## **Get on the same wavelength – or not**

"Pacing" and "Mirroring" are ways of helping the interview go well. Be prepared to let the interviewer set the pace and respond in kind. If the interviewer is bright and crisp and friendly, you should try to be the same. But if the interviewer's manner is serious, formal and unremittingly businesslike, what then? Try to behave as much like that as your own personality will allow – if you want to!

## **Answering Questions**

When providing information, make sure that it is understandable, clear and concise. Where possible, use **examples** to clarify what you mean.

Interviewers will often ask you questions about challenges you might face in the job, or have faced in previous jobs. You need to prepare in advance for these by reflecting on situations in your past work experience. You can then use examples to show how you handled situations and what the outcomes were. A useful structure for your answers is this one:

- **Situation** - a brief description of the context in which things took place
- **Tactics** - the possible responses or options you considered
- **Action** - the action that you decided on and took
- **Results** - what you achieved

This approach will make you a STAR!

With practice, you will find that this structure enables you to demonstrate your achievements very effectively.

Finally, go to the interview prepared to accept the job if it is offered to you and you really want it. Only ask for time to think about it if you really need it. Here's wishing you get the job you want.