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recruitment assessment retention

## **Successful Interviewing – Interview Preparation** **Ardus Consulting Group**

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## Introduction

Today's highly competitive job market demands a more sophisticated approach to the interview process. The time that you spend with an interviewer may determine your career future. A successful interview is a vital step toward fulfilment of your ambitions.

This leaflet, combined with the guidance provided by your Ardus Consulting Group Consultant, will provide you with in-depth information on how to conduct yourself during an interview.

## Interview Preparation

Like any good business meeting, sales call or other important encounter, preparation and strategy will achieve the best interview result. Apart from basic information regarding the interviewer's name, correct pronunciation, position, company and address, it is essential that as much knowledge be gained as possible on the company's products or services, market perception, growth and culture. With this information, you will be well equipped to prepare and answer questions from a position of strength. This information will also assist your own enthusiasm for the company as a potential employer.

It is also important that you prepare a list of questions to ask during the interview. Remember, the interview is a two-way street. The employer will try to determine through questioning if you have the qualifications and experience necessary for the position. You too, must determine through questioning that the company will provide the opportunity and environment you seek. Pertinent and intelligent questions will also be well received by a discerning interviewer. Typical questions may include:

- Is there a detailed position description available?
- What is the reason for the vacancy?
- Is there an induction and training program in place?
- What are the key performance measures for this position?
- How and when will performance appraisals be conducted?
- What opportunities are available for the high achiever?
- What are the company's growth plans?

Preparation for the interview entails a full understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses, ambitions and employment requirements. You should feel confident in discussing these areas, projecting a positive attitude and your value to an employer. A well prepared resume will be necessary covering personal details, education and qualifications, career history overview including employment dates, brief employer description, reporting structure, responsibilities, achievements and reason for leaving or wishing to leave.

## Your Image

Your image during the interview is critical. Image is very much non-verbal communication. If you do not utter a single word, the way you look will tell people a lot about you. People make many sub-conscious decisions based on your presentation: your economic, social and educational level and heritage, your trust-worthiness, level of sophistication, success and moral character. Add to this the fact that 90% of people will form an opinion of you within the first 10-40 seconds of a meeting and, in an interview, you will be virtually fully judged within the

first four minutes. It has been found that the impression you create is based 55% on the way you look (dress), 38% on the way you physically present (body language) and 7% on what you say. You can see how creating a positive first impression is vital!

Your physical presence or dress should reflect the culture you are entering. This can be determined by your initial company research and advice from your Consultant. If in doubt, a conservative, corporate dress style should be adopted such as a business suit. Be sure all facets of your grooming and hygiene are immaculate.

Posture, movements and mannerisms should be natural. Your manner of speaking should be considered so that you are clearly understood. Convey the right amount of enthusiasm, sincerity, respect and warmth. Pay attention to your listening skills and maintain good eye contact. Communicate fortnightly and credibly; organise your thoughts.

## The Interview

It is important to be prepared for a variety of interview styles. Not all interviewers are skilled practitioners and you may experience considerable contrasts. Having a basic interview strategy will allow you to confidently adapt to any style of interviewer and ensure that you are able to discuss your past performance, the position description, the type of person being sought, position analysis including objectives, your relevant experience, education and personal attributes. Your strategy should include:

- mirroring the style and pace of your interviewer
- answering questions fortnightly and credibly without over-elaboration listening carefully
- maintaining eye contact
- conveying enthusiasm and warmth
- using natural gestures and avoiding nervous fidgeting
- ensuring you speak clearly.

The interview process is a two-way communication. There should be no "hierarchical" overtone. You should feel relaxed and confident - after all both you and your interviewer are meeting to find out about each other and determine whether each of you has a match. The following list will provide you with sound interview etiquette:

- Plan to arrive on time or a few minutes early. Late arrival for an interview is never excusable.
- If presented with an application, fill it out neatly and completely. If you have a personal resume, be sure the person to whom you release it is the one who will actually do the hiring.
- Greet the interviewer by his/her surname using the correct pronunciation and salutation. Check with the receptionist on arrival.
- Shake hands with equal strength, not limply or crushingly.
- Wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright, look alert and interested at all times. Be a good listener as well as a good talker. Smile.
- Don't smoke, even if you are offered a cigarette.
- Don't chew gum.
- Maintain eye contact during the interview.
- Follow the interviewer's leads but try to get the interviewer to describe the position and duties to you early in the interview so that you can relate your background and skills to the position.
- Try not to answer questions with a simple "yes" or "no". Explain whenever possible. Tell those things about yourself which relate to the position. Make sure that your strengths are highlighted during the interview in a factual, sincere manner. Keep in mind that you alone can sell yourself to an interviewer.

- Don't ever lie. Answer questions truthfully, frankly and keep as close "to the point" as possible.
- Don't over answer questions. If the interviewer steers the conversation into politics or economics, it is best to answer questions honestly without saying more than is necessary.
- On the issue of salary and benefits, it is best not to enquire about these areas in the initial interview, but rather at the time when you are positive the employer is interested in you. You should be well aware of your own market value and be prepared to state your salary range.

Always conduct yourself in an enthusiastic, positive manner. Show interest in the position and never close the door on opportunity. It is far better to be in a position where you can choose from a number of positions rather than only one.

### Closing the interview

- If the position is of interest, let that be known to the interviewer. Ask the interviewer if what has been gleaned from the interview fits what the interviewer is looking for. This will give you an opportunity to overcome any "objections" they may have at this point and allow you to convince the interviewer that you are the right person for the position.
- If the position is offered to you and you want it, accept on the spot. If you wish time to think it over, be courteous and tactful in asking for that time. Set a definite timeframe in which you will respond.
- Don't be discouraged if no definite offer is made or specific salary discussed. The interviewer may need to communicate with others prior to a decision.
- Should you feel the interview is not going well, don't let your discouragement show. It is possible that your reactions are being tested.
- Always thank the interviewer for their time and consideration. If you have provided the reasons you are interested in joining the company and given details of what you are able to bring to the company, then you have done the best you can.
- As you arrived with a smile, remember to depart with a smile.

### Typical interview questions

- What do you know about our company?
- Why would you like to work for our company?
- Why are you looking for another position?
- What have been your major achievements?
- Describe your ideal working environment.
- What type of management style do you work best with?
- What would your current manager say about you?
- In your most recent position, what have been your most significant accomplishments?
- What motivates you in a work environment?
- What frustrates you in the work environment?
- What are your expectations of an organisation in relation to your career objectives? What would you bring to this position?
- How would you describe your own personality?
- What are some of your outside activities and interests?
- What are your strengths?
- What areas have you identified that you would like to improve on and what have you done about them?
- What are your career ambitions?
- What level of salary are you seeking?

## Factors evaluated negatively in an interview

- Poor personal appearance.
- Overbearing; aggressiveness; conceitedness; "know-all" attitude.
- Inability to express thoughts clearly.
- Poor diction, grammar, posture.
- Lack of planning for career or life - no goals or purpose.
- Lack of interest or enthusiasm; passiveness and indifference.
- Lack of confidence - nervousness.
- Over-emphasis on money.
- Evasiveness.
- Lack of tact, maturity, courtesy.
- Condemnation of past employers.
- Poor eye contact with the interviewer.
- Poor handshake.
- Failure to ask questions about the position.
- Lack of preparation for the interview.

## After the interview

Your feedback to the Consultant at ArduS Consulting Group who referred you for the position is very important. Prior to talking with the client, your Consultant will want to know what transpired during the interview from your perspective. Be open about positive as well as any negative aspects of the interview. Advise of your interest in the position and your thoughts about the client's reaction. Your Consultant can greatly assist you secure the position if well prepared prior to speaking with the client.

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