

# INTERVIEW GUIDE



**BEFORE THE INTERVIEW****1) Job description**

Ensure you have a complete and detailed understanding of the job description:

- Involved tasks and responsibilities
- The team
- The company's structure

**2) Do your homework**

Understand the company's current and past situation:

- Most companies provide annual reports on their website
- Conduct additional research on the company on the Internet
- Ask your contacts about the company and the person who will interview you. It is wise to be prepared!
- Google your interviewer(s)

**3) Know the details**

- Exact place
- Time of the interview – be 10 min early
- Full name and title of interviewer

**4) Dress code**

- Dress appropriately
- Pay attention to your appearance

**5) Revision of your CV**

- Spend 30 min reviewing your resume
- Be prepared to talk about experience relevant to the job description
- Know specific examples to demonstrate your skills and competencies
- Refresh your memory on past and present employer(s), work history, and dates

**6) Before you enter “the room”**

- Switch off your mobile phone! Not silent, not mute, not in vibration mode... off!

7) **Be a S.T.A.R.**

**Competency-based interviewing** or **behavioural interviewing** requires you to draw on past experience and describe specific examples of incidents that demonstrate your competence in a particular area. The most efficient way to answer those questions is to use the STAR technique:

**S – Situation** – briefly describe the background to the situation

**T – Task** – specifically describe your responsibility

**A – Action** – describe what you did

**R – Result** – describe the outcome of your actions

**Example:** “We like promoting people who are result-oriented. How would you categorize yourself?”

**Answer:** “One time at M Company I was asked to develop a new market for our services and be profitable within 12 months. I was to select a support team of 2. I set out to research the markets, started to meet with the decision makers of that specific industry to understand how we could offer our services best and most efficiently. With the gathered information, I adapted our offer. We were profitable after 9 months and can now be proud of having earned some key clients for the company.”

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**MARKETING MANAGER**

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*Although I've been in marketing for over 10 years now, I had forgotten that my CV was my marketing tool. I re-did my CV with the comments from the free intro-meeting, but decided anyway to have a Career Angel do their "CV-magic". Wow. I did not know my CV actually looked like that!*

**ENGINEER**

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*Stuck between a hard language and diminishing local prospects, I decided to switch careers and take advantage of my native English and technical skills. Career Angels gave me creative perspective and an outrageous idea that perfectly targeted what MTV Networks Europe was looking for. I have now been in digital media for almost 4 years and manage a popular internet portal for one of the most recognizable brands in the world.*

## AT THE INTERVIEW

### 1) Your Style and Behavior

During your interview your potential employer will evaluate your overall performance – not only the quality or accuracy of your answers. The following hints will help you to ensure a positive impression:

- Firm handshake
- Wait until you are offered a chair and sit upright
- Express your thoughts clearly
- Show that you have clear goals and have planned your career
- Tact, maturity, courtesy
- Maintain eye-contact
- Positive, “can-do” attitude

### 2) Interviewer Questions

There are some standard questions asked by almost all HR Managers or Specialists:

- What can you tell me about yourself?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your career aspirations?
- Why do you want to work for our company?
- Of all previous jobs, which did you enjoy the most? And why?
- How do you manage conflict?
- Describe what you have done in your career that demonstrates your initiative?
- Are you a team player or do you prefer to work on your own?
- What style of management gets the best from you?
- What have been your major achievements to date?
- What are you proud of?

### 3) Questions related to your specific role:

- You will be able to find them online on sites like Monster.co.uk or Pracuj.pl
- If you have a Career Angel, they will certainly provide you with some if it is part of your program

### PROJECT DIRECTOR

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*It's good to have somebody do all that writing & translating & researching for you, but honestly, what I got out of it is 1) the coaching element that led to clarity in my career and 2) the invaluable contacts to decision makers in my industry that will pay off sooner or later anyway. Bonus: the up-to-date salary survey is a lovely advantage in interviews & negotiations!*

## 4) Your Questions

To show that you are interested, you can ask some questions:

- What would a normal day in this role look like?
- Why is this position available?
- How would you describe your organizational culture?
- What induction and training programs does the organization offer?
- What kind of people do well in your organization?
- What are the three things that would make someone an outstanding success in this role?
- How is the company positioned against its competitors?
- What is the vision for the future? What are the plans, if any, for growth or expansion?
- How well do you think I match the requirements of the role?
- What is the next step in the process?
- **And anything you are interested in. Don't ask about salary or holidays.**

## 5) Closing the Interview

If you are interested in the position, make sure you tell the interviewer that. Thank the interviewer for their time.

## 6) Frequently Asked Questions:

- **What if they ask me about my financial expectations?**
  - Strategy number 1 says: Do not avoid answering this question. Be prepared. Think beforehand what salary realistically would satisfy you. If you do not want to give a concrete number, you can always give a range. It is worth knowing the market level of remuneration on that position – you can find information about that on Salary Surveys on the Internet or you can ask your Career Angel to prepare such a report for you.
  - That applies to Upper Management positions:
    - If asked by a headhunter: be prepared to answer the question. You may be tentative and ask them for some guidelines.
    - If asked by a prospect employer as a result of speculative introduction, avoid quoting your „price” at all costs at the *first* meeting. Why? Because you do not want to sell yourself cheap or extremely expensive. The first meeting is a getting-to-know-each-other. And that is it. You should reserve yourself the right to learn more details about the position, meet more people at your future potential employer, understand what they have to offer, and *then* once you see their offer or at least some more detailed job description, take position. In negotiations the most important rule is: *never ever* be the first one to quote a price. The first one loses **always**. Yes, you should always know your market value for negotiation purposes. If you want to earn above market level salaries, be ready to back your request with strong arguments. Your Career Angel can help you with that.
- **What can, should or shouldn't I say about my current / previous employers?**
  - The golden rule says: Talk about your former employer positively or not at all. The same applies to your current employer. If something really negative happened, that influenced your decision to change your job, try to talk about it in the most neutral way possible. Do not get emotional. Do not judge. Talk about facts. Do not give names.
- **Are there any questions that are considered taboo?**
  - Yes, though in Poland these are not so clear yet. The potential employer cannot ask you about your political opinions or religious belief. When it comes to women, it is forbidden to ask about family planning or potential pregnancy. The potential employer *can* ask where you live to find out about commuting.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

### 1) Peace of mind

You have done all you can if you have answered these three questions:

- Why are you interested in the job and the company?
- What can you offer?
- Can you do the job?

### 2) Thank you

Send your interviewer a “Thank you note” - that way they will remember you as opposed to other candidates.

### 3) Important

- **Never close the door to an opportunity** – it is always better to be in the position where you can choose from a number of jobs rather than only one.
- Answer questions with **full explanations** whenever possible and not a simple “yes” or “no”
- Always tell the **truth**
- The interviewer may steer the conversation into politics or economics. Since this can be tricky, it is best to **answer the questions honestly** trying not to say more than is necessary.
- **Do not let your discouragement show.** If you get the impression that the interview is not going well and that you have already been rejected do not show discouragement or alarm. Sometimes interviewers who are genuinely interested in your possibilities may seem to discourage you in order to test your reaction.
- **Avoid inquiring about:**
  - salary
  - bonuses
  - holidays

... unless the interviewer raises the issue first. **However, you should know your market value and be prepared to specify your required salary range the latest at the second round interview.** If you are not sure, you may find updated salary surveys on the Internet, can ask headhunters directly to provide you with information or ask your Career Angel for an updated Salary Survey.

**LOTS OF SUCCESS!**