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INTERVIEW TIPS

HOW TO SUCCEED IN YOUR NEXT INTERVIEW

CONGRATULATIONS ON GETTING THIS FAR!



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Before you begin to prepare for your interview, first consider how you got to this position in the first place. There will have been several other people who applied for the same role as you, but who *haven't* been invited for an interview. You have been selected not only for your skills, experience and qualifications, but because of how you have presented yourself on your CV (and online too).

It can sometimes be easy to take these things for granted. The reality is that you have already invested time and energy into the whole process. You now owe it to yourself to do as well as you can in the interview. Seek advice, take the time to prepare, and challenge yourself on how you might handle difficult questions.

The consultants at Next Phase are always on hand to provide advice, so please call us on **01403 216216** with any questions, no matter how big or small.

CONTENTS



This document includes tips on all stages of the interview process and as such you may not need to read the whole document immediately.

Please use the links below to skip to the section that is relevant to you right now. As you move through the interview stages we recommend you come back to this document to make sure you read the tips on each relevant stage. We have provided tips for the various types of interview, including presentations which some employers request as part of the process.

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INTERVIEW TIPS

MAKING THE BEST FIRST IMPRESSION



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- At Next Phase, we understand that interviews can sometimes feel a little daunting. To help prepare you we have put this document together to provide you with some advice on how to approach the process and make the best **first impression** that you can. Though they will get to know you more as the interview process progresses, interviewers will base a lot of their judgement on the first time they met you.
- The interview process evolved significantly during 2020/21 and video interviews are now the “norm”, at least for the first stage. Making a strong first impression can be more of a challenge in this format, so there are some practical suggestions later in this document to help with this.
- Our consultants will be on hand throughout and will do everything they can to prepare you ahead of your interview, however we recommend you **read the tips** on the following pages to see what else you can to do ensure your interview goes as well as it possibly can.

INTERVIEW TIPS FOR ALL INTERVIEWS



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- Do your research on the company: size / structure / what they do / who are their competitors / what attracted you to the role
- Write down any questions you have
- If you have been asked to prepare something specific for the interview, make sure you have done this in plenty of time beforehand
- Have a pad of paper and a pen
- Smile! Even in a telephone interview, it will have a noticeable impact on the tone of your voice
- Listen to the interviewers' questions and make notes of anything that seems important
 - If you don't understand or hear the questions, don't be afraid to ask the interview to repeat it
- Remain engaged and enthusiastic throughout
- Thank the interviewers at the end for their time, and call us promptly afterwards to pass on your feedback

INTERVIEW TIPS FOR ALL INTERVIEWS



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EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK, WHEN INVITED TO DO SO:

- Why is this job available? Is this a new position? If not, what did the previous employee go on to do?
- What's the most important thing I should accomplish in the first 90 days?
- What is the company's leadership structure and management style?
- How would you describe a typical day in this position?
- What will the job actually involve, both initially and further down the line?
- How are targets set and how is performance measured?
- What are the biggest challenges that I might face in this position?
- Could you tell me more about the team structure?
- What types of skills is the team missing that you're looking to fill with a new hire?
- What are your expectations for me in this role?
- On what metrics of goals will my performance be evaluated against?
- Are there opportunities for training & progression within the role/company?
- What are the company's long and short-term objectives?
- Are there any structural or organisational changes in the pipeline?
- Can you describe the working culture of the organisation?
- If you were starting this job now, what advice would you give yourself?
- How soon will you make your decision?

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PHONE INTERVIEW



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AHEAD OF THE INTERVIEW MAKE SURE YOU:

- Use a landline if possible, or if you're taking the call on your mobile make sure you are in an area with a good signal and your phone is fully charged
- Have a glass of water to hand
- Have access to a quiet room where you won't be disturbed. Avoid being outside if you can
- Have a copy of the job description in front of you, as well as your own CV. Make use of the fact the interviewer cannot see you, and have these documents available for quick reference. It can be helpful to drop a few choice phrases from the job description into your answers as it will help to build rapport; and having your CV to hand can help prompt you to bring up good examples to illustrate your answers

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PHONE INTERVIEW



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DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- Smile! It will have a noticeable impact on the tone of your voice. Given that the interviewer(s) cannot see you, the only tool you have available is your voice. Make sure you speak clearly, with enthusiasm and a positive tone
- Listen closely to the interviewers' questions and make notes of anything that you feel is important. You can always circle back to an earlier point towards the end of the interview if there is anything to clarify
- Keep focused throughout the call
 - Ensure you have no distractions. Turn off your mobile, mute any background noise, and ensure you are in a room where you won't be interrupted.
- Use positive language that demonstrates your enthusiasm to move to the next stage and meet the interviewers face-to-face

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VIDEO INTERVIEW



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AHEAD OF THE INTERVIEW MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand how you will be connecting to the interview; Zoom, Teams, Skype etc
 - If you haven't used that platform previous, do a prior test run. Next Phase will be happy to facilitate this for you.
- Have a good internet connection; if you know you have unreliable WiFi, it may help to turn off all other devices (TV, Alexa, Sonos speakers etc) to help your interview run smoothly
- Use the biggest screen you can. Ideally a device that won't move.
- Choose a neutral background to ensure the interviewer isn't distracted; most software allows you to have a blurred background or a clean, uncluttered space.
- Have a glass of water to hand

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VIDEO INTERVIEW



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DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- If you are unable to log onto the interview, email the interviewers immediately, or alternatively call Next Phase
- Look presentable – even if it is online, we recommend dressing as you would for an in-person meeting
- Smile
- Sit up straight and think about the impression your body language is giving
- Stay engaged, keeping “eye contact” by looking at the screen and not looking away too much
- Ask questions but make sure you don’t interrupt; allow the interviewer time to finish talking before you respond
 - Even with a good internet connection, there is often a slight time delay on video calls
- Stay calm and answer

INTERVIEW TIPS

FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW



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AHEAD OF THE INTERVIEW MAKE SURE YOU:

- Double check you know where you're going and how to get there
 - Leave yourself plenty of time - there is nothing worse than being late for an interview. If you do end up being delayed, phone ahead to let them know! If you are unable to, contact Next Phase immediately.
 - Do you know the names of the people to ask for on arrival?
- Do additional research on the company and on who is interviewing you:
 - How big is the company and what are their core services?
 - Who are their main competitors and how do they compare?
 - Have there been any recent developments within the company?
 - What exactly do they do on this site, and do they have other sites elsewhere?
- Read the job description thoroughly and write down any questions you have

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FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW



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DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- Look presentable - even if they have said they dress casually always make an effort
- Firm, confident handshake – it really does make a big difference to the first impression you give
- Smile and show enthusiasm
- Stay engaged, keeping regular eye contact
- Use real world examples in your answers to questions
- Never speak badly of a former employer

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FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW



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INTERVIEW TIPS GIVING A PRESENTATION



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There may be times when a prospective employer wants you to prepare and give a **presentation**. This is usually towards the end of the recruitment process but can still be a new or daunting prospect, or might be something you are used to doing. However, presentations for interviews are very different from giving a presentation elsewhere. You need to consider what they will be evaluating, as the aim of a presentation like this is not really about selling a service or educating others, but to result in **you getting a job**.

Areas the interview may be looking at are:

- Your **ability** to prepare a piece of work to a specific brief
- Your confidence in **communicating** to a group
- How well you cope and react under **pressure**
- A **different perspective** of your personality
- Your **technical** expertise and experience
- Your ability to **follow instructions** (eg sticking to a time limit or specific number of slides)

Your consultant at Next Phase should be able to give you more specific insight into what is expected based on our experience with the company.

INTERVIEW TIPS PRESENTATION



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PREPARING FOR THE PRESENTATION:

- Make sure you understand what the topic is, how long the presentation should be, who the audience will be and what technology you will be using
- It can be a good idea to write down an overview of what you are considering presenting and develop this into a “story”, with logical steps that can be broken down onto individual slides
- If your presentation is technical, ensure you have fully researched the facts that you are going to communicate and that you can reference your sources
- Make sure your slides have an overall theme to make them aesthetically pleasing and easy to view. A dark background with light text is often the most striking
- Keep it simple and avoid mixing too many colours / fonts or styles

INTERVIEW TIPS PRESENTATION

CREATING YOUR PRESENTATION:

- Always start with an introduction slide displaying the subject title, your name, the company name you are presenting to and the date you will be giving the presentation
- You could consider using the company logo and the company colours if you think this would be appropriate
- Give each subsequent slide a simple, relevant title and make sure the font and font size is consistent throughout
- Avoid long sentences - use bullet points with short phrases
- The slides should guide the audience through your “story” and be prompts for what you want to say.
- Graphics, pictures and animations

INTERVIEW TIPS PRESENTATION



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CREATING YOUR PRESENTATION:

- Avoid cramming too many points on a single slide. Leaving some blank space is important in making it accessible
- Use the 6 x 7 rule:
 - 6 lines per slide,
 - 7 words per line
- Finish the presentation with a final slide to thank the audience for listening and asking if anyone has any questions
- Check your spelling and proof read for grammatical and punctuation errors, as well as checking consistency of fonts, font sizes, spacing and colours

INTERVIEW TIPS PRESENTATION



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PREPARING FOR YOUR PRESENTATION:

- Practice your presentation as many times as possible, to make sure you can complete it within the allocated time and that you can talk clearly and fluently about your subject matter
- Try to anticipate what some of the questions are that the audience could ask. What would be the trickiest questions they could ask you, and how would you answer them?
- Please forward a copy of your finalised presentation to your consultant at Next Phase ahead of the interview so it can be checked for compatibility and set up ready for your arrival
- Always take along a back up copy on a memory stick, and remember Next Phase will have a copy which can be emailed to the client again in case of emergency

INTERVIEW TIPS PRESENTATION



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DURING THE PRESENTATION:

- At the start of the presentation, address the audience directly, introducing yourself and your subject and thanking them for the opportunity
- If there are time constraints, it might be a good idea to say something along the lines of “as I am limited on time today I will be happy to take your questions following the completion of my presentation”. This puts you in control and means you won’t be interrupted and can finish on time
- Place your watch in an easily visible position or use the stopwatch function on your mobile (alarm off)
- If you are providing handouts, you could add “please feel free to take notes. However, I will be handing out copies of my slides at the end of my presentation.” This gives you control and shows you are prepared and assertive

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DURING THE PRESENTATION:

- Face the audience and be enthusiastic, make eye contact, smile, gesture for emphasis, utilise silent pauses for effect, and relax
- Avoid simply reading the wording on your slide out loud. Your slides should be a prompt, not something to read out word-for-word
- If you feel suitably confident, you can invite audience participation – but only if you've factored this into the timing of your presentation
- Alternatively, you could introduce your presentation and each slide/section with an introduction of what you will be communicating. Then run through your points and summarise, confirming what you have said.

INTERVIEW TIPS PRESENTATION



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AFTER THE PRESENTATION:

- As your presentation comes to its natural and timely conclusion, thank the audience for their time and invite questions
- If there are no questions, thank the audience again, sit down and relinquish control to the interviewers
- Very often the presentation precedes a meeting and will be the catalyst for an ongoing discussion, so make sure you don't start packing up until the interviewers confirm the end of the meeting/interview



We hope these tips have been insightful and help you to prepare for your interview.

For further recruitment-related advice and guidance:

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#)

Explore the resources on our [website](#)

Listen to our “Placing People First” [podcast](#)

Call us on 01403 216216