

## Interview Preparation

Now is the time to really put some time and effort into researching the company, role responsibilities and requirements.

### The role and why you are the best candidate for it

- Look again at the job requirements and for each key requirement, think of 2-3 examples where you have demonstrated that skill, knowledge or experience.
- Practice describing each example succinctly (in approx. 2 minutes), using the SOAR acronym:
  - **Situation:** Briefly set the scene. Where were you working? When? Who with (team structure)? Where did the project idea stem from?
  - **Objectives:** What were the objectives of the project?
  - **Action:** What was your role in this project? What did others do? How did you prioritise? What challenges did you face and how did you solve them?
  - **Result:** What was the end project delivery? What was successful about it? What could have been improved? Did you receive positive feedback? Is the work you did still being used today? Was it used to develop another, more advanced, project?
- It is a good idea to think generally about what other questions they are likely to ask you and also prepare for them.
- Some of the more obvious questions might be: why do you want to work for us? What attracted you to this particular role? Why should we hire you over other applicants? What will you bring to the team/division/department?
- They may ask questions like: what are your strengths and weaknesses? What are your key skills? What are your long-term career objectives?
- Think about how you will explain your career transitions and why you moved on from each position, including from your current position. Go beyond 'I fancied a new challenge'.
- Think about explaining your current career objectives including the type of company you would like to work for (the market area, large or small, in-house or consultancy, part-time or full-time, contract or permanent, start-up or well-established, corporate style or more creative, etc).
- A lot of the time people do not anticipate being asked about themselves, but it is a good idea to have a quick think about how you might approach a question like 'tell me about yourself' or 'what do you like to do in your spare time?'

### The company

- For the above questions it is advised to research into the company, their clients, projects, recent market debates and the longer term objectives of the organisation.
- Use the internet, trade press, newspapers, your consultant, friends and former colleagues to find out about the company.
- What is the company's annual turnover, who are the directors, what is its market place (niche), what sort of reputation does the company have?

## Your questions to them

- Interviewers will usually give you an opportunity to ask questions of them, their business and the role. Think of up to five that you would like to ask.
- This is your opportunity to show 2 things: a) that you are interested and b) that you have researched their company.
- For this reason it is a good idea to ask 'bigger picture' questions about the direction of the company (geographically, new sectors, new products or services), questions about particular projects they are currently working on, company operations and questions regarding the role and its position in the company (for example: will the successful candidate be working closely with the New York office on the engineering projects for international clients?).
- This is not the time to ask questions about how long your lunch break will be, how often you will have appraisals, the salary, or other more detailed questions about the role. These can be asked later, through your Amida consultant, if you get through to the final stages.

## The Logistics

- Understand your interview format. How long will it last? How many people will be on the interview panel or is it a one-to-one meeting? Is it a formal competency-based interview or an informal chat?
- Research your interviewer(s). What is their position? How long have they been at the company? What are their business objectives and responsibilities? What type of things are each of them likely to be interested in asking you?
- Plan what you are going to wear. This will vary depending on the type of company but as a general rule it is better to be smart rather than not be smart enough. Ensure you dress professionally and conservatively, aim to match as close as possible the dress standard of your interviewer(s). Neutral and block colours are best. Ladies: it is advised that you do not wear too much make-up, nail polish, or jewellery. Think carefully about the impression that tattoos or visible piercings will give. Personal appearance is important so aspire to make a good first impression!
- Plan for the unexpected. Is it likely to rain (do you need an alternative jacket or change of shoes)?
- Plan what to take with you. Have they requested that you bring your passport, NI card, CV project portfolio?
- Plan your route. Ensure you know where you are going and the best route to get there. Research alternative routes in case of delay on your preferred route. Take a note of the address and a map. Leave enough time to arrive at least 15 minutes early.