

Preparing for a Job Interview

Cassel and Company has identified the necessity of having a Candidate Centric approach to recruitment in the Finance and Accounting niche.

You have partnered with a recruitment consultancy that has created various options for you assisting you in your career planning. You have now been called in for a face-to-face job interview at the company of your choice. Now the real work starts. The better prepared you are beforehand; the better your chances are of securing that life changing position.

Keep in mind that in the competitive business world, there are sure to be dozens of other highly qualified candidates going after **your** job. It's important to make yourself stand out as someone significant. Now is the time to practice exactly how you will sell yourself to a prospective employer during that crucial first meeting.

To assist you in obtaining this perfect position, we at Cassel & Company have put together a guideline to assist you in standing out from the other candidates:

1. **Do your homework:** Research the company beforehand so that you can showcase that knowledge during the interview. This will boost your credibility with the interviewer and will help you to formulate intelligent questions to ask him or her.
2. **Know where you're going:** Make sure to find out where the office is and how to get there. Do you know how long the trip will take? Do you have the name and phone number of the person you'll be meeting with? Do you know how easy it is to park? Save yourself time and unnecessary stress by knowing these things before heading to the interview.
3. **Look the part:** Your clothing should be neat, pressed, and professional looking. As it can be difficult to know the culture of the office environment beforehand, err on the side of conservative. Even if everyone's wearing jeans when you arrive, you're still probably better off having shown up in a suit. However, don't be afraid to inject some personality into your look, and don't neglect the details.
4. **The biggest No-No in an interview is a cell phone:** Please, the person interviewing you has taken valuable time out of their day to get to know you. Return the respect they are affording you and turn your cell phone off. It may sound elementary, however we are so focused on the interview that we may forget to do these small but important things.
5. **Prior to your interview, prepare answers to common questions:** The interviewer is likely to ask, surrounding various aspects, such as: What are your strengths and weaknesses? Why do you want to work here? Why should we hire you? And the ever popular: Tell me about yourself. Sell yourself. The interview is your chance to shine. Develop a 25-second "sales pitch" that *truthfully* sings your praises. It should include your strengths, your abilities, and what sets you uniquely apart from other applicants.

6. **Secure your references:** Find at least three key people — former supervisors or managers or colleagues — who are willing to serve as your professional references. Be sure to secure their permission beforehand, and be certain that they will speak highly and truthfully of you if contacted by a potential employer. Most recruitment companies would already have done references, but some of the prospective employers prefer to do their own references.
7. **Bring necessary documentation:** Make a checklist of documents that you will need for the interview, and make sure that you have them in your briefcase before leaving home. These documents may include extra copies of your ID and or Passport and driver's license. You should also take certified copies of your qualifications.
8. **Don't neglect to ask questions:** Based on your earlier research, ask how the responsibilities of the open position relate to the company's goals and plans for the future. Interviewers are often favorably impressed by candidates who show that they are knowledgeable about the organization.
9. **Follow up:** After the interview, contact your recruitment consultant and conduct a proper feedback session, restating your interest and commitment to the position. If you don't hear anything after one week, call to politely enquire when they will be making a final decision.

These 9 guidelines should at least secure you a second interview; thereafter there are other innovative tools to utilize to secure the job. Cassel and Company can assist you in this vital part of the process as well.

Remember to keep in mind: every interview is a valuable learning experience. Even if you don't get this particular position, when you go for the next interview, you'll be much better prepared and more at ease with the whole process. All of which can go a long way to boosting your confidence and improving your chances of being offered the next job.

Good luck!

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