

# Company Interview

## success with a company interview

CVAC is a specialist independent CV and career advice site, we work only with accounting staff who are looking for specialists to assist them with their CV, job search or career advice.

In the following pages you will find advice and guidance on how to succeed with a company interview and find the job you deserve.

## **Prepare**

Preparation is the key to a successful interview. You will be asked what you know about the organization – facts, figures, history etc. Check the company's most recent financial statement to see how it performed.

### **The organisation**

Start with the company's website; this will give you a feel for their corporate style and culture. Don't forget to look at their annual report and press releases.

Look at the company's page on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and others. Make notes of anything relevant. Search the company name to see if anything has been written about it.

Look at any professional bodies the company may belong to, and check relevant trade sites to see if it has been mentioned.

### **The interviewers**

Check to see if the interviewers are profiled on the company's website. Look at their profiles on LinkedIn and link with them. Take notes of anything relevant.



## **Prepare yourself**

Try to do a mock interview with friends or family members.

Make a note in your calendar, and in writing, of the time, date and location of the interview and full names of the interviewers.

Plan your journey. If you are driving, check whether you need to reserve an on-site parking space or if there are car parks near the office. Consider doing a dummy run. If you are taking public transport, work out timing and connections, and do a dummy run if necessary. If you will be travelling during the rush hour, take into account the extra time required.

Prepare your clothes the night before and make sure that your shoes are clean! Dress smartly – ideally in a plain, dark suit. Make sure that you have a clean and ironed shirt or blouse and, if you are wearing a tie, check that it's clean!

Try not to drink the night before an interview.

Review your CV and make notes, especially with regard to academic or professional studies (if the grades are not listed on your CV, you may be asked to detail them), work history, achievements and systems experience.

If there are gaps on your CV, you will be asked to explain them. Be honest. If you were unemployed for a period of time, explain that you were unemployed and looking for work. If you were training during this time, tell them about it if relevant. If you were travelling, talk briefly about your trip. If the reason is more complicated or sensitive, please talk to us so that we can advise you appropriately and in confidence.

Print the job description and make a note of your skills and experience that are relevant to the position.

## **What to take**

Prepare any documents the night before. The interview confirmation should detail what you need to bring, but typically you will need:

Hard copy of your CV  
Passport or other photo ID (original)  
Exam certificates (originals)

In addition, take the following:

Interview invitation, Job description, Notes, Letter or email of application, Money, Phone, Printed map of the location

## **Arrival time**

Arrive ten minutes before the interview. When you meet the interviewers greet them with a smile and a firm handshake.

## Interview

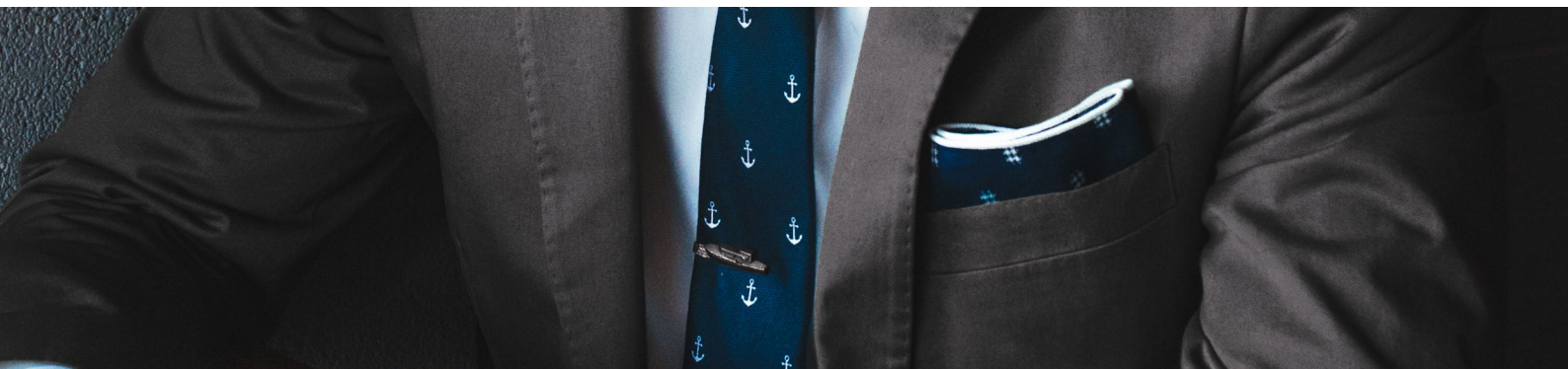
Be polite and courteous during the interview. Try to relax and sit naturally, while staying aware of your body language (don't slouch!). Speak clearly and smile.

The interviewers will probably review your CV. Highlight your skills, attributes, experience and achievements, giving practical examples that are relevant to the job description. Ask questions clearly and concisely, and don't be afraid to ask relevant questions at appropriate moments.

Don't criticise previous employers or work colleagues. Don't talk about personal problems.

Keep the conversation flowing and try to avoid one-word answers. Don't rush; take your time to give relevant and considered answers.

Most interviewers will ask you if you have any questions, so be prepared to ask at least one.



## Phone interview

Some organisations conduct phone interviews before any face-to-face interview. You should prepare in the same way as you would for a regular interview.

Ensure that you have a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. If you are using a mobile phone, make sure that it is fully charged and that you have good reception.

Have your CV, application and job description at hand, together with a pen and paper for notes.

Have a glass of water nearby. Don't smoke, eat or chew during the interview.

## Video interview

Prepare as you would for a regular interview and dress appropriately. Ensure that you have a quiet place with a plain background, where you will not be disturbed.

Have your CV, application and job description at hand, together with a pen and paper for notes.

If you are using a mobile phone or tablet, ensure that it is fully charged, with a strong wi-fi signal, and that it is secure; don't hold it in your hands. If you are using a laptop, plug it into the mains or ensure that you have a fully-charged battery.

Have a glass of water nearby. Don't smoke, eat or chew during the interview.



## Second interview

Well done! You have made it through the first stage and now you have been shortlisted for the second stage, where there will be less competition.

Ask for detailed feedback from the first interview and review your performance.

Prepare more detailed questions.

You will probably meet with your potential line manager and work colleagues. If you know who you will be meeting, review their details on LinkedIn or the company's website. Ask around to see if anyone knows them.

## Cancelling or re-arranging an interview

If you can't attend the interview or need to re-arrange it, try to give at least 24 hours' notice.

If the interview was arranged through an agency, call the consultant to explain why you can't attend. If you need to re-arrange, suggest alternative dates and times. Follow up with an email.

If you applied directly to the organisation, call your contact there. If you are cancelling, explain the reason, apologise and thank them for their time. If you need to re-arrange, apologise, explain the reason and offer alternative dates and times that work for you both; be flexible. Follow up with an email.

If you have to leave a message, suggest a time for a call-back, and follow up with an email.



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