

How to Ace an Interview

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How to Ace an Interview



"We're looking for someone with the wisdom of a 50-year-old, the experience of a 40-year-old, the drive of a 30-year-old and the pay scale of a 20-year-old."

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Learning outcomes

You will be able to:

- Prepare effectively
- Present yourself well
- Utilise STAR methodology
- Gain confidence
- Understand the benefits of follow-up

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What is it?

- A follow-up from your application docs
- A measure of success
- A two-way process
- To be taken seriously
- Designed to get you a job offer

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What is it **not**?

- An informal chat
- Time to wear your weekend gear
- Designed to 'trip you up'

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Practical Considerations

- **Where** is it/are they? **When** is it/are they?
- What type(s) of interview?
- Do you need to take anything with you?
- DO take: bottle of water, notepad, pen
- Dress code?

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Preparation, preparation, preparation ...

- Read the Job Description / Person Specification **in detail**
- **Highlight** key words & phrases: duties; skills; knowledge; approach/attitude
- Try to figure out what the questions might be
- Make notes on what your answer could be
- Provide evidence to back up your assertions

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An example ...

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- The National Gallery Company, the trading arm of the National Gallery, has an exciting opportunity for a Marketing Assistant.
- We are a commercial company established to provide revenue for the National Gallery from a range of operations including publishing, retail, digital sales and catering. Our work enhances the visitor experience and helps to safeguard some of the country's most valuable works of art. Our diverse range of activities means consistent branding and effective marketing is vital.
- This is a support and administrative role, working closely with the Head of Marketing in the implementation of the marketing strategy. You will be involved in developing customer knowledge and loyalty and ensuring the customer is at the heart of all activity. You will contribute to PR activities, marketing communications as well as the development of marketing collateral.
- The successful candidate will have a Marketing qualification and preferably will have worked in a Marketing role previously. Excellent computer skills including Microsoft Office are essential

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- The successful candidate will have a **Marketing qualification** and **preferably** will have **worked in a Marketing role previously**. Excellent computer skills including **Microsoft Office** are **essential**

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Preparing your Evidence

‘Xyz’ is what THEY require – it’s on the JD and / or Person Spec

“How can I **demonstrate** that I have that skill / that experience / that knowledge / that attitude?”

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S T A R

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EXAMPLE:

You're applying for a role which requires
“Creative thinking or the ability to
innovate”

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“Creative thinking or the ability to innovate”

- It was last summer, 2018. I was at the Museum of London. I helped them with their website. We made it a lot better than it was particularly using a virtual assistant. Everyone really liked it. They're still using it now.

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Creative thinking or the ability to innovate

- **(S)** I worked at the Museum of London in Summer 2018 and **(T)** was asked to *assist* in developing their new website. **(A)** I *devised* a simple questionnaire targeted at walk-in users of the Museum. Once I had *collated* and *analysed the* data, I *conducted* an audit of similar sites. I *produced* a written report, including graphical and tabular data, which I *presented* to the web development team. I *recommended* the use of a 'virtual assistant' to answer visitor questions and had *prepared* some visual design ideas. I *persuaded* them to allocate funds for an initial trial of six months. **(R)** The 'assistant' was a great success and is now a permanent feature of the website.

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- The National Gallery Company, the trading arm of the National Gallery, has an exciting opportunity for a Marketing Assistant.

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Preparing your Evidence (Marketing Assistant, National Gallery Company)

Marketing Assistant **7 Key Accountabilities** [stated in job spec]

- Marketing & Communications
- Customer & market knowledge and research
- Brand marketing
- Database and CRM
- Liaison & Communications
- PR
- Other

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Preparing your Evidence | Break it down | 1st bullet point

Marketing & Communications | Key Activities/Decision Areas

- Support development, implementation & monitoring of Marketing & Comms for NGC, including internal & external comms
- Actively explore marketing opportunities – activities, promotions, events
- Work closely with Design team, provide marketing content across platforms – onsite, in print, & digital including social media channels
- Handle marketing enquiries from internal & external sources

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Preparing your Evidence | Sample Question

“Tell me about a time when you demonstrated a good understanding of **marketing**”

S = Situation – where, when, what

T = Task – overarching task / scope

A = Actions – 4, 5, 6, - logical flow – what YOU did

R = Result – outcome – facts, figures, concrete

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Preparing your Evidence | Outline of your answer

“Tell me about a time when you demonstrated a good understanding of **marketing**”

S = In [month, year] I was the [role/job title] at [where]

T = I was asked to [overarching task]

A = I [logical flow of actions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5] what **YOU** did

R = I succeeded in [result / outcome / facts / figures / percentage] i.e. something **measurable**

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Preparing your Evidence | Sample Content

- What is marketing? = AS OPPOSED TO COMMUNICATIONS...
- What was its purpose? = INFORM / PERSUADE / ENTERTAIN ...
- Who was it aimed at? = TARGET AUDIENCE / AGE / LEVEL ...
- What consumer research did you undertake? = EVIDENCE ...
- How did you select the marketing collateral? = DECISION-MAKING ...
- Which mode/s did you use? = PHYSICAL, DIGITAL, PRINT ...
- Where placed? = BANNERS, CORRIDORS, WEBSITE, INSTAGRAM...

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Preparing your Evidence | Sample Content (ii)

- How did you monitor it? = FOOTFALL, WEBHITS, ENQUIRIES...
- How did you evaluate it? = EFFECTIVENESS, UPTAKE ...
- How did you report it? = WRITTEN, EXCEL S/S, PIE CHART...
- If you had to do the same task again, what would you do differently? = ABILITY TO EVALUATE, ACCEPT FEEDBACK, TAKE ON SUGGESTIONS

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Preparing your Evidence | Marketing & Comms | Sample Questions

- *Actively* explore marketing opportunities including activities, promotions and events (BP2)
- “Tell me about a time when you improved something using your own initiative” S T A R

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Preparing your Evidence | Marketing & Comms | Sample Questions

- Working closely with the design team ... (BP3a)
- “What qualities do you have that make you an effective team member? Can you give me an example?” S T A R

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Preparing your Evidence | Marketing & Comms | Sample Questions

- To provide marketing content **across platforms** as required – onsite, in print, digital including social media channels.
(BP3b)
- *“Can you give us an example of when you have successfully used **different marketing methods** to get across your message?”* **S T A R**

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Preparing your Evidence | Marketing & Comms | Sample Questions

- Handle marketing enquiries from internal and external sources (BP4)
- *“Can you think of a time when you have had to choose carefully how best to **communicate** with someone?”* S T A R

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Preparing your Evidence | Beginning. Middle. End.

Question 1

- “Why do you want this job?”
- 7 bullet points (7 Key Accountabilities) – **at least 7 questions**

Final Question

- “Do you have any questions for us?”

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The Interview | Preparing Yourself

- Dress code
- Water
- Map / instructions how to get there - building - floor - room number
- Resources – memory stick – handouts – timer or watch – pad & pen
- Put your phone on SILENT!
- Be nice to the Receptionist...
- Smile and shake hands with interviewer/s
- Are you sitting comfortably?

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The Interview | The Interviewers

- Interviewers get NERVOUS too!!
- It's a two-way stretch - YOU are interviewing them.
- STRANGE THING – if you're nervous, you make the interviewers nervous. They are willing you to do well.
- They may NOD, SMILE - to encourage you. FROWN ...
- ... BE MAKING NOTES – 'score sheet'.
- ... ASK A FOLLOW-UP QUESTION - usually because your answer is insufficient.
- ...WANT TO KNOW: Can you do the job? Will you do the job? Will you fit in?

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The Interview | The Follow-Up

- Send an email to the interviewer / the panel thanking them for their time.
- You enjoyed meeting them and finding out more about role / organisation.
- Look forward to hearing from them.

- If you don't hear by expected time, DO chase the HR department.
- If you ARE offered the job, respond quickly.
- If you ARE NOT offered the job, ask for feedback. Written preferably. Not always forthcoming...

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Thank you and good luck!



Sue Young

1:1 help with interview prep

(for an ACTUAL job)

1:1 practice interview with feedback

(for an ACTUAL job)

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