

## HINTS & TIPS FOR TRAINING CONTRACT INTERVIEWS

The person who gets appointed is not necessarily the one who can do the best job, but the one who performs the best at the interview.

### Preparation for interview

- Do as much research as you can about the Firm you have been invited to, and the people who will be conducting your interview.
- Think specifically about why you are interested in this Firm. Think about what they can offer you, and what you can offer them.
- Prepare a couple of examples for each topic area or competency you feel is likely to come up in the interview. Question areas could include organisational skills, meeting deadlines, customer/client focus, team skills, using your initiative, etc. Try to provide specific examples of when you have done things to provide evidence in your responses. Illustrate achievements and skills with striking examples. Be memorable. The decision to appoint may be made days or even weeks after your final interview.
- Think about some personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Prepare some questions which you would like answered during your interview.
- Ensure you know where you are going, and how long it is going to take to get there. Is there parking available, and if not where is the closest place to park.
- The night before your interview, ensure that you re-read your CV and cover letter/application form, as it is likely that the interviewer will refer to it.

### Create a good first impression

- Arrive in plenty of time for your interview. This will allow you to have time to compose yourself and prevent the additional worry of being late.
- Select appropriate clothing for your interview. Ensure you are smart and well-presented. There is no point in borrowing a suit that is four sizes too big, just to demonstrate that you can wear a suit if it makes you look like a clown.
- When meeting your interviewer(s); appear confident. Smile and shake them warmly by the hand.
- Wait until the interviewer invites you to sit down and indicates where you should sit.

### Body Language

- Maintain good eye contact throughout the interview.
- Don't be afraid to let your hands talk, but try to refrain from directing the orchestra!
- Smile, when there is a natural opportunity.
- Be aware of your body posture and try to find a comfortable position and remain in it. Try not to fidget and move around too much.
- Vary the speed and tone of your voice.

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### Things to avoid

- Lack of preparation for interview – failure to get information about the Firm results in an inability to ask intelligent questions.
- Inability to express thoughts clearly – poor poise, diction or grammar.
- Lack of interest and enthusiasm, passivity and indifference.
- Apparent lack of confidence, and nervousness.
- Evasiveness, making excuses for unfavourable factors in CV.
- Condemnation of past employers.
- Overbearing – overaggressive – conceited “superiority complex” – “know it all” attitudes.
- Failure to look the interviewer in the eye.
- Limp handshake.
- Failure to ask questions about the job.
- Persistent attitude of “What can you do for me?”

### Finally

- If you get the impression that the interview is not going well and that you have already been rejected, don't be discouraged. Many interviewers who are genuinely interested do not wish to raise your hopes until all candidates have been seen. Conversely don't become too optimistic if the interviewers make encouraging remarks. They may simply be trying to put you at ease. Candidates typically are very inaccurate in assessing how they fared at interviews.
- If you have done as much preparation as you can, you have as much chance as any other candidate walking through that door. Stay positive and do your best.



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