

INTERVIEW TIPS – THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GETTING THE CONTRACT AND NOT.

The following Interview tips were provided by Adecco's ICON Recruitment one of the largest recruitment companies in Australia.

They put together the following interview guide for attending interviews providing some useful tips. If you have a successful track record of attending interviews and getting the job, you can safely skip this section. If not, or if this is your first time out, here are a few tips from experienced professionals on both sides of the interview desk.

Prepare for the Interview:

- Do some background research on the client. You should be reasonably well acquainted with the company and the type of work they do. You will also need to know something of their operating system, hardware, software, languages and so on. You can do your own homework or get your ICON account manager to help you.
- Confirm all important details such as names, times and location.
- Dress accordingly - while it is true that the rules of dress in the workplace have changed in recent years, in most cases you will still be expected to wear a suit and tie in an interview. If you want to make a statement, check with your ICON account manager first - they will know the ethos of the place.
- Arrive on time. Give yourself plenty of time to make the journey, park the car and have a coffee. Even if you have to spend a few minutes waiting, it is better than being late. If you are late for any reason beyond your control, stay calm - explain and apologize.
- Switch off the mobile, or better still, leave it behind.

The initial meeting & Interview

- Shake hands warmly with a firm grip. It is quite surprising how much importance employers place on this. Handshakes have a far deeper significance than most of us would credit.

- Never smoke, not even if you are invited to.
- Know the names of the people you will be meeting. If there are pronunciation difficulties, clarify them before you arrive. The client's receptionist is there to help so ask them - phone and ask before you arrive.
- Be yourself, most people play this part well. Don't play roles - you are selling yourself, not something you cannot deliver.
- Without being arrogant or presumptuous, you should work on the assumption that is perfectly natural that you will be given the job. After all, you know that you can do it well and it is merely a matter of allowing the client to see that too.
- Relax, feel confident. Look alert. Smile if it is going that way.
- Look at people as you speak to them. If there is more than one interviewer on the panel, try to address each of them at some time during the interview.

Managing the Interview process

- Let the interview flow, don't try to manage it. Listen at least as much as you talk.
- Avoid one-word answers. Introduce what you are about to say, then enlarge upon it if necessary. Frame answers highlighting experiences and achievements. If an answer is complex, take time to sum up. If something seems unclear to you, ask for clarification.
- If there is an opportunity, ask questions about the role early on, then fit your responses to what you have learned.
- Don't wander, stick to the matters raised by the interviewers.
- There are no standard questions that MUST come into an interview, but some common ones will ask you to identify your strengths and weaknesses and to give examples from your experiences. You might be asked why you want the job or what style of management you prefer - keep your answers simple and honest. A current favorite asks what you would like to be doing in five years' time. Another asks you to consider your future in the light of contributions you might make to the company. There are no given answers to these questions.

- You may be asked if you have any questions. You will have questions!
You might consider asking how this particular vacancy has arisen.
What would be a successful outcome for this project/position?
IT changes and develops rapidly, what opportunities for training and advancement are envisaged?
What development and growth plans does the company have?
What opportunities exist for achievers within the company? Examples?
- It is acceptable to discuss remuneration once the client has suggested that you are likely to be successful. Otherwise you should avoid detailed discussions about money until the first offer is made.

A Few Nevers

(You will almost certainly be rejected if you fall into any of these traps.)

Never make negative or derogatory comments about your past employers.

Never gossip.

Never allow yourself to be led into matters of politics or economics even if you hold strong views on such matters - if the interviewer makes statements which you find unacceptable you might wish to consider a polite withdrawal from the interview.

Never lie - you may get the job.

Never say you have other options to consider without offering responding within a reasonable time.

Accepting the Job

Try to decide whether you want the job during the interview. If it is offered and you want it, accept there and then. If you need time to think about it, say so - but give a time within 24 hours by which you will respond.

Remember that if you accept a job, you have given your word - it is a verbal contract. If you change your mind and want to retract later, you will plunge everyone concerned into an

awkward mess. You will also jeopardize your standing as an ethical professional. If you have any doubts, ask for time to think.

When it is all over, call your ICON account manager. This is the debriefing. Your account manager will want to know your perceptions of the interview. If you were unsuccessful, we will want to build a strategy for the next time and this will be determined by the client's observations and your own.