

The Next Opportunity – Guidance and Advice

When you are looking for a new role, there are many things you need to consider. At Kirby Solway, we do as much as we can to support you, offering guidance and advice throughout the process. We understand that this can be a difficult time, and making the right decisions for your future can be stressful.

We have put the following information together to help you during this process.

Why do employers interview employees?

During interviews, employers want to see if the candidate's goals match the opportunities that may arise in the work place. They are looking for employees who have the potential to become valued and trusted team members. Employers interview prospective employees to help them decide which applicant has the skills, knowledge and willingness to contribute to the organisation and which candidate best fits the job role. If a number of people have applied for a particular job position, interviews help employers to narrow down and select one particular candidate that is right for the job.

What employers look for

- **Gaps in your CV** - If you have gaps in your CV, you will need to be able to explain them to the employer. For example, if you have worked in a temporary position but didn't put it on your CV, you will need to be able to explain who you worked for and how long you worked there. You will also need to recall all the places you have worked. If you haven't worked or had a period of unemployment you will need to give examples of how you spent your time, for example, researching the job market, methods used to search for vacancies and how you found the position for which you are interviewing.
- **Think about the job** - Before you go into an interview, you need to think about why you applied for the position in the first place. You also need to think about what you have to offer the company or organisation. Think about, and be able to discuss, your long-term and short-term goals, and which direction you would want your career to go in.
- **Reasons for leaving other jobs** - You will need to be prepared to discuss your reasons for leaving previous roles. If you left because a better job opportunity came up, you need to explain why and how it was a better opportunity for you. If you left your job due to any other reasons, you should state them in the best possible way, always remembering to be honest and positive about your responses.

- **Researching the job** – You must research the job position before the interview. Below are some key factors you should research:
 - Job description – what skills are required;
 - Major competitors - who are the major competitors? What strategies are they using to compete against the company/organisation you are applying for?;
 - Size of the organisation – research staff numbers, departments within the organisation and the size of key areas of the business;
 - Organisation history - research the history of the organisation and look for things such as the how long the organisation has been in business, how it started and who initiated the start up of the business. Look at the structure of the management team and ascertain whether the company is affiliated with any other organisations or whether they are in partnership with third parties.
 - Future plans - try to find out what future plans there are for the organisation, for example, expansion, acquisition, branching out into new areas, and how new technologies or legislation might affect the business.

What to consider during an interview

Whilst you are in an interview, you should consider different ways in which you can display your experience and skills in a candid and honest way. Here are a few typical interview questions: take some time to think about how you would answer these, use them to your advantage by ensuring your answers demonstrate that you are the perfect candidate for the role.

- Can you manage your time effectively?
- Do you work better in a team member or on your own?
- Do you prefer working in a team or on your own?
- How well can you work under pressure?
- Can you work to deadlines?
- Are you enthusiastic and easy to work with?
- How well can you handle a work crisis or sudden unplanned work?
- How do you plan and structure your working day?
- How do you plan and structure your work for longer periods - week/month?
- Are you able to work on your own or do you have to be constantly supervised?

- Can you handle constructive criticism?
- Can people depend on you in critical, unplanned situations? For example, a job comes up with an immediate deadline.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Can you work well with a variety of people?
- How would you help a team of people work better together?

Preparing for an interview – top points to consider

- Always remember to concentrate on the employers' needs, not yours.
- Do your best to emphasise how you can best help the organisation and guide it to achieving its goals.
- Think about the skills the employer is looking for in an applicant and what characteristics will be required for the job.
- If you are not sure about a particular question, never hesitate to ask.
- Concentrate on the questions asked, don't ramble or go off on a different subject.
- Explain your past successes and accomplishments - remember the more clearly you explain your experience, the people involved, what problems arose and how you solved them, the more clearly you will stand out in an interviewer's mind.
- If you are/were in a job where you have to carry out different projects, explain the types of projects you were involved in and the solutions you put in place to overcome any problems.
- Be prepared to answer any questions - remember the interviewer could ask you anything and you cannot predict the questions, practise typical interview questions like these with a friend and role play the interview.

Remember to prepare, prepare and prepare for the interview, and then practice, practice and practice.

If you would like more information, advice or guidance, or would like to find out more about the roles we are recruiting for, please call us on 020 339 71338 or email us at claire@kirbysolway.com.