

Interviews – prepare, prepare, prepare!

Preparing for an interview is critical to the success of any meeting with your potential employers: research the company by visiting their web site; talk to people in the market; read trade publications; if time allows, request for company literature, including product/service brochures to be sent to you; ensure you know the nearest tube or train station, or have clear directions to find their offices; and finally, prepare a number of questions to ask at your interview. The following questions may help you prepare:

General questions

- Who is your competition?
- Why do your customers choose you?
- What would you say is your value proposition?
- How do you define success?
- How is it measured / rewarded?
- What are the company's core competencies: products and/or services?
- What areas does the company see itself investing in and/or moving into in the future?
- How much has the company grown in the last 1/2/3 years?
- What is the company's "go to market model"?
- What does the support structure look like?
- Describe the company culture.

Sales questions

- What is the structure of the sales function?
- What is the average length of tenure of sales staff?
- How are sales are targeted: revenue, GP, product?
- How is the current team performing against target?
- What is the average sales cycle?
- What is the average order value (AOV) for the team?
- What CRM / sales methodology is used?
- What makes the company / products stand above the other in the market place?
- Are sales focused by vertical, geographic or named accounts?
- How often will I receive sales and product training?
- Can you give me an overview of your expectations of me in the first 3 months?

Only ask these questions if you have practiced them and are able to discuss the subjects in depth. When asking about average order value (AOV), they may well ask about yours, likewise with sales cycle and ratios etc.

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