

Career Advice – Travel Job Interview Techniques



"Working together, we understand that your needs are unique in your job search. That's why we pride ourselves on giving you as much information as possible prior to your interview."

Angus Chisholm, Managing Director, C&M Travel Recruitment

To help you prepare properly for your interviews and to give you the very best chance of making a good impression on the day, we've created the C&M Travel Recruitment indispensable interview guide.

Firstly, it's vital that you do your homework and check out the company you are going to see. If your interview is through C&M, we have a good relationship with all of our clients, so your Consultant will be able to give you with lots of useful background information about the job itself and the culture of the environment you're going into.

Here's a list of some of the things you should know:

1. The company's main product or service and whether have they launched any new products or services recently.
2. A basic history of the company - when was it established, where, is it part of a group.
3. Any recent awards they have won, or any news items.
4. The job spec and what that role entails.
5. Who the main competitors are.

And don't forget to make some notes about your own experience and achievements, so that you can recall all your relevant personal and career moments in previous positions at the interview. You will be expected to know a lot about the companies that you have previously worked for. Take along a spare copy of your CV and a notebook and pen to take notes with. Written references are also advantageous.

Don't be late! Allow plenty of time for your journey, as it's always better to arrive early and wait, than late and in a panic. Find the best route before you travel and take a map.

First impressions count. Your appearance speaks volumes before you've even said a word, so make sure it's saying the right things about you. It's important to look well groomed and smart, with a suit, or suit and tie for male candidates, recommended. Keep jewellery and make-up discreet.

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Body talk says a lot about you. Ponder your posture; sit up straight, look alert, focussed and interested in what the interviewer has to say. Start and close the interview with a firm, confident handshake, maintain eye contact throughout, keep an open stance (no folded arms, pen twiddling or hair fiddling!) and remember to smile. These small things can make a big difference and help you to come across in a more genuine, relaxed and friendly way. Always conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are discussing. Never close the door on an opportunity. It is better to be in the position where you can choose from a number of jobs rather than only one!

Be positive. Don't make derogatory remarks about your present or former employers. Even if your former boss was Attila the Hun, never state your ill feelings about him/her. When faced with the challenge of talking about former employers, make sure you are prepared with a positive spin on your experiences.

You're unique, so be yourself. You're bound to be a bit nervous at the interview, but always try to be yourself. The interviewer is likely to have seen several people within a short space of time and will be able to see through any false performances.

Questions, questions, questions....

There are many questions that you could be asked at an interview. But the essence of all the questions fall into these three categories:

1. Do you have the skills and the ability to do the job?
2. How enthusiastic are you to land this job and are you willing to do the job?
3. Are you going to fit in with the company and the present staff? Your personality is probably the most important factor that will secure the position. The interviewer wants reassurance that he can work with you and you are manageable.

Work through the following questions and practise your responses, remembering to answer the question asked and to demonstrate how you fulfil the three criteria above:

- Why did you choose a career in this industry and tell me about yourself?
- What interests you about our company/product/service and why do you want this job?
- Why do you want to leave your present job?
- What do you feel you can bring to our company and where do you see yourself in X years?

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- What do you look for in a job and how long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our firm?
- What are your major weaknesses, what are your strengths and what adjectives would you use to describe yourself?
- What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held, what did you enjoy the most and why, what challenged you most and why?
- What is your current salary and when was your last salary review?
- What have you done that shows initiative in your career and give me details of three of your most significant accomplishments?
- What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
- What does teamwork mean to you?

You have the opportunity to ask questions as the interview draws to a close. Always have some questions prepared to demonstrate your initiative and forward-thinking.

- Here are some of the questions you may wish to ask:
- What is the working culture/environment like?
- What are the other people in the department like?
- What are the most difficult aspects to the position and can you give examples of the best results from previous candidates in this position?
- What is the company's plan over the next five years and how would this impact my position?
- Why is the position available?
- How many people have been in the position in the last five years?
- What would be expected of me in the first 6 months?
- Is there an induction or training programme?
- What would be the next stage of the interview process?
- If I am offered the job, when would you like me to start?

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Don't enquire about salary, holidays or bonuses at the initial interview. This can be discussed at a later date, or your consultant will liaise. We strongly recommend for you to encourage the interviewer to correspond with the consultant on all these issues. Your C&M Recruitment Consultant is an expert in salary negotiations so it is in your best interest to use them.

Final Impressions Finish the interview on a positive note. Let the interviewer know that you are interested in the position and be sure to enquire about the next interview stage. If the interviewer offers you the position and you feel that all your questions have been answered and you are truly interested in the position, accept the job offer on the spot as this will secure you the position and you will no longer be competing with others. Thank the interviewer for the time spent with you and shake their hand firmly at the end.

After the Interview Immediately after the interview jot down all your thoughts and important information that was uncovered during the interview. It is amazing how much one forgets and this may help you if you are called for a second interview. If you are definitely interested you could write a formal letter/email to the interviewer expressing your interest. This shows you to be enthusiastic and proactive and may secure you that dream role.