

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE: TRUE OR FALSE?

Whether you've been to countless interviews and are quite confident or are new to the job market and dead scared of interviews – take this interesting questionnaire on Interviews, chances are you'll learn something new and valuable!

1. The best-qualified candidate always gets the job.

False. Interviewers consider other things in addition to qualifications. They try to also assess how willing you are to work hard and how well you'll fit into the client's department/team/organization. In outcomes-based interviews, the interviewer will assess how strong you are in the competencies needed to be successful on the job.

2. If I prepare well, I will do well in my first interview.

False. Preparation is definitely a must, though most interviewees don't do as well in their first interviews as they will in later interviews when they are more comfortable with the interview process. So try to have a 'practice' interview (ask a family member, friend or mentor for assistance) before you have one that really matters to you.

3. The first few minutes of the interview are the most important.

True. Most interviewers make up their minds quickly. Things like your body language, clothing, use of language, personality, etc. makes an immediate first impression and along with the first few interview questions, could already give an interviewer an indication of whether you'd be a good fit into their client's company/team/department or not.

4. Wear conservative clothes to an interview.

True. But make sure that what you wear is still considered professional for your specific industry. It is important to wear conservative/professional clothes because you want the interviewer to perceive and remember you for how professional and smart you are and the good quality answers you gave in the interview – not for the clothes you wore. If the interviewer remembers you for the clothes you wear, it is not a good thing. So, as a rule of thumb, dress professionally but rather under-stated than over-the-top.

5. Take a planner or a notepad to the interview.

Trick question. Take them to the interview but don't pull the notepad out to take notes during the interview. If you take notes during the interview, the interviewer is likely to perceive you as having a poor memory, not paying attention (less eye contact) and perhaps more interested in taking notes than answering questions. Immediately after the interview, when the interviewer is discussing the client/company and the position in more detail, take some notes on your notepad or in your planner. Make sure you take down the interviewer's Name and send a short thank you e-mail/call the next day.

6. It's always good to arrive 20 to 30 minutes early for the interview.

False. In general, always allow extra travel time but only report to the interviewer/receptionist ten to five minutes before the interview. If you arrive too early, realize that you may be inconveniencing the interviewer, who will not expect you to arrive that early. Although it *is* better to be early than late, too early is also not good. Get to the location early, but wait in your car, downstairs, across the street, etc. Use the time to review your CV and check to make sure you are still looking as professional as when you first dressed for the interview. Take a few deep breaths (while you're at it, make sure you have a fresh breath!) to relax, smile and look the interviewer/receptionist in the eyes when you introduce yourself.

7. When asked to talk about your background, you should plan to keep your response short and sweet; some say to about two minutes.

True. Don't be too brief or too wordy. Watch the interviewer's non-verbal communication (body language). If the interviewer is giving you non-verbal cues that he/she is bored, pick up the pace of your answer and finish talking. Emphasize the competencies that are critical to the position.

8. During an interview, avoid too much eye contact so as to look less nervous.

False. Maintaining good eye contact is perceived positively in interviews. Just don't stare!

9. It is best to be honest and tell the interviewer exactly how negatively you felt about previous employers/supervisors/managers if you are asked for your opinion.

False. Remember that *diplomatic honesty* is better than *brutal honesty*. If you talk negatively about a former employer/supervisor/manager, the interviewer might think that you will be talking negatively about his/her client in the future or that you are unsure of what you want or that you are constantly complaining about everything and everyone. So be professional and discreet.

10. What you mean in your answers to the interviewer's questions counts for more than the interviewer's perception.

False. The interviewer will make his/her decision based on his/her perception of how successful you will be in the job compared to other candidates. So it is up to you to communicate what you mean as clearly as you can so you can increase the chance the interviewer will perceive you accurately.

11. Exaggerate your accomplishments, because the interviewer won't be able to tell whether you are telling the exact truth.

False. A good interviewer will be able to tell when you are not telling the truth from your verbal and non-verbal (body language) communication. Make your best case but make sure you stay honest.

12. Your job in the interview is to sell yourself.

True. Your job in the interview is to persuade the interviewer that you deserve a second interview or to be short listed. However, do not try so hard to sell yourself that you overdo it and start sounding just too sure of yourself. That will have the opposite effect as what you are trying to achieve! So give the interviewers detailed answers, give examples of how you have tackled certain tasks and responsibilities, your reasoning behind your decisions and explain what the outcomes were. All the interviewers want to determine during the interview, is whether your way of doing and thinking, your approach, your personality traits – all of these combined with your qualifications, skills and competencies – would meet the client's requirements for this job and whether you would be a good fit into that company/department/division.

13. Preparing for an interview is a waste of time as you don't know what questions you'll be asked and your CV has probably already impressed seeing that you were invited to the interview.

False. No matter how many interviews you have been to before, you still need to prepare for the one that you are going to next! Preparing for the interview is the best use of your time and a worthwhile investment in your own future – if you care about being seriously considered for the opportunity. This is especially important if you have passed the interview (-s) with the recruitment agency, were short listed and their client has invited you to an interview. Make sure you get to know as much as possible about that company, their history, their services, their clients/market and the position BEFORE the interview! That not only shows the client that you are serious about the job, but also puts you in a better position to answer the interview questions in relation to the company as well as enable you to ask the necessary questions from the client to ensure that you fully understand the expectations around that specific job, the further opportunities offered, etc.