



# ASPEN GILCHRIST

SURVEYOR CAREER MANAGEMENT

## INTERVIEWS

### PREPARATION

Effective preparation is the key to a successful interview. Knowing you have prepared thoroughly enables you to relax and know that you stand the best chance of presenting yourself effectively. There are several areas that you should pay special attention to in the lead up to the interview.

#### The Job

Read and re-read the job description and note carefully any specific or unusual requirements. Think carefully about the skills and qualities needed and consider evidence you can draw from your own experience to demonstrate that you have them. The more you can demonstrate that you know about the job, the more credible you will be in the eyes of the interviewer.

#### The Organisation

Find out as much as you can about the organisation, useful sources of information include:

- The Annual Report
- Company Mission Statements
- Business pages and trade publications for information regarding the organisation or business sector.

The process of gathering information is becoming easier now more and more companies are putting information on the Internet. The type and depth of information varies from company to company but usually includes details of their service areas, their annual report, company background press releases, you may even pick up a gem not to be found elsewhere.

#### Self Awareness

Consider yourself from the interviewers point of view. Do you have any particular strengths or weaknesses? Is there anything that you think they need to know? Is there anything on your CV that is likely to require clarification? Be prepared to expand on any part of your CV.

#### Practicalities

Check the time of the interview, the date, the location and the name and job title of the interviewer. Always take the letter sent to you by your recruitment consultant along which will contain all of this information. Have their phone number available in case anything goes wrong.

Make sure you know how to get there and how long it will take.

### ON THE DAY

Interviewers are not just concerned about what answers you give to their questions. There are many factors that they will be taking into consideration, from how you dress to how you cope with the killer question.

#### First Impressions

Always arrive on time (preferably early give yourself time to calm down, go to the toilet, etc). Dress appropriately (as if you already worked for them). Watch your body language (firm handshakes, smile, make eye-contact, be attentive, don't fidget). Remember, first impressions matter.

#### Their Questions

Employers may ask you a variety of questions, but in essence they only want to know three things, and these are the questions you need to answer with evidence.

*(Continued overleaf)*

#### Head Office

New Broad Street House 35 New Broad Street London EC2M 1NH

T 0207 118 8200 F 0870 478 2436 E [mail@aspengilchrist.com](mailto:mail@aspengilchrist.com) W [www.aspengilchrist.com](http://www.aspengilchrist.com)



## Their Questions (Continued)

- Can you do the job? – Do you have the appropriate qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience to do what they want you to?
- Will you do the job? – Do you have the right motivation and enthusiasm? Are you really keen on this job or would you rather be doing something else? If you enjoy the job, you will work hard and they will get value for money.
- Will you fit in? – Do you fit in with the people who work there? Would people enjoy working with you or would you seriously damage morale by being around?
- Try to relax and be yourself. Breathing slowly and deeply before you go in can help. As you sit down, get yourself into a comfortable but alert position.
- Pay careful attention to the interviewer – answer the question they ask, not the one you wish they'd asked.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Give yourself time to think.
- Don't give 'yes' or 'no' answers. Volunteer relevant information about yourself. Your responses should be long enough to answer the question, but not too long.
- Always watch the body language of the interviewer: this can often tell you whether you need to expand on something or shut up.
- Avoid going off at a tangent or becoming involved in unnecessarily detailed explanations.
- Be truthful but positive. Even if you have to present negative information (eg. A failure or a weakness), say how you learned from it or overcame it.
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification if you don't understand the question. You may also ask for a little time to think (but not too often).
- Do be enthusiastic, interesting, animated, or whatever else comes naturally to you (with reasonable caution). Don't be an interview robot.

## DIFFERENT INTERVIEW SITUATIONS

Interviews can come at any stage in the selection process and can take many forms. You may be interviewed on a one-to-one basis by a personnel manager, someone from the relevant department, or even a psychologist. You may face more than one interviewer. You may be interviewed at the employer's premises, in a hotel, or possibly over the telephone. The important thing to remember is that the basic principles mentioned above apply to any situation.

### Panel Interviews

Interview panels of seven or more have been known. You can't talk to all of them at once. Concentrate on giving your answer to the person who asked you the question, but include the others with an occasional glance.

### Stress Interviews

The interviewer(s) try to test how you react under pressure by firing rapid questions at you, or being aggressive or offensive. This does not happen as often as rumour would lead us to believe. Keep cool and try not to take it personally.

### Criterion-based Interviews

Some recruiters try to give every candidate the same chance by asking them all the same questions. Whilst you must always answer the questions asked, be ready to volunteer extra relevant information.

### Telephone Interviews

Some organisations have started using these as a recruitment method. In some cases you might have to undergo a telephone interview to check your qualifications and experience before you can obtain a formal meeting. A possible development in the future could be interviews over a video-conferencing link.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Create Answers to Tough Interview Questions, *Martin John Yate*

The Perfect Interview, *Max Eggert*

© 2004 - Aspen Gilchrist Ltd

### Head Office

New Broad Street House 35 New Broad Street London EC2M 1NH

T 0207 118 8200 F 0870 478 2436 E [mail@aspengilchrist.com](mailto:mail@aspengilchrist.com) W [www.aspengilchrist.com](http://www.aspengilchrist.com)

