

TOOLKIT NUMBER TWO: ACE THE INTERVIEW!

ESPECIALLY FOR YOU

BY

# CAREER CIRCUS

• MY CAREER TOOLKIT •



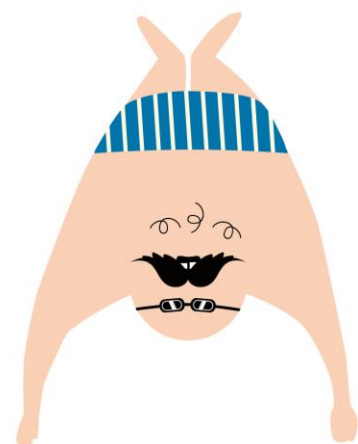
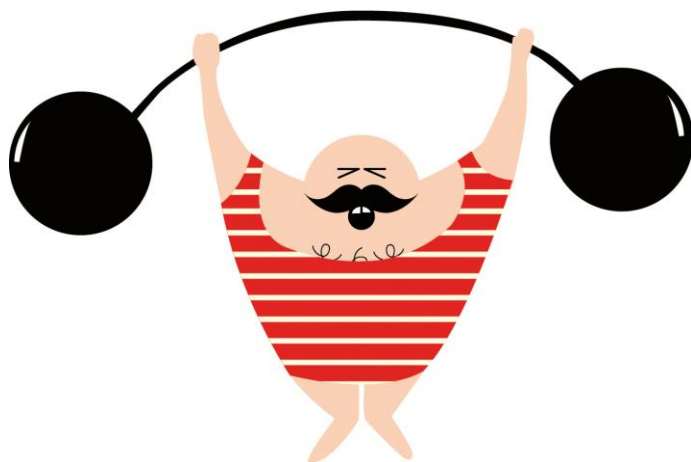
Welcome to our Interview toolkit!

You never know what to expect from the weird and wacky questions to the general 'tell me about yourself' Arghh! Interviews and trying to sell yourself is tough. So, we have put together a handy guide on how to give yourself the best head start when it comes to Interviews with our 3 step process:

- 1.) Research
- 2.) Prep
- 3.) Practice

Read over the pages for our top tips on conquering each step and let us know how you get on.

Good luck & best wishes, Saffron ([saffron@careercircus.co.uk](mailto:saffron@careercircus.co.uk))



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# ACE THE INTERVIEW:

## STEP ONE



### Research, Research, Research!

Great news, you have the interview secured, well done. Make sure you are well prepared so you maximise your opportunities and sell yourself with strategic answers. First, time to do some research....

**Know the Industry:** Brush up your knowledge and make sure you are up to date on key trends, mergers and movements within the industry

**Research the organisation:** Use the organisation website and any contacts you have to research the organisation objectives and priorities for the coming year and in particular look into the strategies for the department/section the job is within

**Look-up the Interviewers:** If you know who is on your interview panel then look them up. Do google, company and LinkedIn internet searches so that you know their role and position within the company and any relevant career history (is there any common ground? What does this tell you about the make-up and values/skills of people who work for the company/team you would like to join)

**Review the Job Description/Person Specification/Job Advertisement:** You may not have looked at this since you initially applied so make sure you look at it again and review your answers and examples on how you meet the job criteria. Start to think/review your application for evidence/examples against each of the key competencies/skills/experience that they have mentioned as 'Essential' and also where you can for the 'Desirable' criteria as well. Do not forget about areas you do not meet/weaker on, turn these in to an opportunity and think in advance how can you develop those areas? Know the job inside out and highlight your strong and weak points by circling and starring it – this will help you in your preparation stage

And lastly... **Get in the interview mind-set:** What type of interview have you been asked to attend, a telephone? Face to face? Formal or Informal/social interview? Think about why they are conducting that type of interview and what it is they are looking to find out from you. Put yourself in the mind of your interviewer, what would your interview objectives be? What would you want to know? What questions would you ask?

# ACE THE INTERVIEW:

## STEP TWO



### Prep your answers!

**Rehearse your best case studies:** In advance prep some 'perfect answers' using case studies and examples from previous experience (work, life, and academic – whatever is strongest) use a range of examples that highlight key achievements and career accomplishments. You need to be able to demonstrate the challenge within the task - you want to impress.

The following methodology is useful to use when practicing and structuring your examples:

#### S-C-A-R

**S = The situation (give a little background for context)**

**C = The challenge (what was particularly difficult/different/innovative about this task)**

**A = The actions (what you did)**

**R = The results (how your actions resulted in a successful outcome and quantify what that outcome was or if undesirable outcome – how have you learnt from it/improve for next time)**

Although you should be talking through each section you want to spend significantly more time on the 'A' action part of the example – what you specifically did, what impact this had etc. Being able to add an example to your answer in this way really strengthens your evidence especially for competency/skills/technical questions where they may be asking you about your ability to perform certain tasks, work in a team, problem solve, communicate, lead, engage and organise your own workload. Look at the Job Description/Job Advert to scope out the competencies and skills they are looking for and prep SCAR answers for each one.

#### **Standard Questions to prep for every interview:**

- Why are you interested in this organisation and role?
- Why are you the best candidate for this role?
- What are your strengths & weaknesses?
- Where do you see your career going in the next 5 years?

# ACE THE INTERVIEW:

## STEP THREE



### Practice makes perfect....sense!

So by this step you should have researched and prepped your answers and will most likely have numerous pieces of paper in front of you with your scribbles and answers written all over them. Great! Now it is time to practice them out loud and this how you can do it:

- **D.I.Y** - practice at home in front of your mirror, especially good for practicing pace and length of your answers and observing body language/facial expressions
- **Rope in a friend/family member** – give them the Job Description and a list of questions and tell them to give you honest feedback on whether they would hire you or not
- **Do a mock interview with a career professional/recruiter** - yes it is scary but so useful and worth doing before the real thing, get expert advice on how you are structuring your answers against skills and competency frameworks and get non-biased feedback on your interview style and conduct \*

Do as much practice as you can and a variety of the above where possible. Make sure you are as ready and rehearsed as you can be whilst also building in flexibility into your answers as you never know/can predict **exactly** what they will ask you so need to be able to think on your feet.



**\*Career Circus conduct Mock Interviews via skype or in person, the Mock Interview session is 60 minutes long (including a 30 minute professional interview and 20 minutes of expert feedback). We will challenge you! But it will be constructive as we want you to excel and showcase your best abilities by getting you interview ready.**

**Contact us to get your Mock Interview scheduled:**

**[info@careercircus.co.uk](mailto:info@careercircus.co.uk) / 020 3005 4932**

**More Info on our website: [www.careercircus.co.uk](http://www.careercircus.co.uk)**

## NOW YOU ARE READY – TOP TIPS TO REMEMBER ON THE DAY OF YOUR INTERVIEW:

### TOP TIP #1: Be professional at all times

- Plan your journey and arrive early
- If in doubt go smart, wear a suit
- Take a copy of your CV and application so you have this to hand if needed

**TOP TIP #2:** Be aware of your **body language** throughout the interview and **listen** attentively to the interviewer directly answering their questions when indicated to do so (do not interrupt or talk over them)

### TOP TIP #3: Ask them questions!

Prepare some questions to ask them that leave a good impression about how positive and in-tune you are with the role/organisation and industry

### TOP TIP #4: Follow Up

Follow up the interview with a letter/email of thanks afterwards

Best of luck with your interview and let us know how you get on!

Best wishes, #TeamCircus

Tweet us [@CareerCircus](#) & join our [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook groups](#) for free, friendly advice and support.



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