

Interview Preparation

PREPARATION

Being prepared is the most important step in succeeding at interview. Ensure that you know your CV inside out and be ready to give answers that expand upon the information that the interviewers have in front of them. When providing examples, look to demonstrate:

- what your role was
- what was the specific nature of the matter
- what challenges did you have to overcome
- what did you learn. Obtain as much information about the firm as possible.

Interviewers will always be keen for you to demonstrate why you are specifically interested in their firm and what you already know about them. This is a good chance to show that you have done your homework and assure the interviewer that this is a targeted application (rather than "my recruitment consultant suggested your firm"!)

TYPICAL QUESTIONS YOU WILL FACE

1. What are your strengths & weaknesses?

Find a context in which to reference this question rather than just listing a few attributes. For example, referring to your appraisals keeps your answer within a professional (and very relevant) context and allows you to list a few key strengths. It also allows you to demonstrate that you have been able to address a weakness and take advice on board.

e.g. "To answer this question I would probably refer to my recent appraisals, whereby A, B and C were flagged up as being very positive and X was flagged up as an area of my expertise that could do with a little extra work. However, by having this factor brought to my attention, I feel I have been able to address this issue, take on board advice and become a better and more rounded solicitor/individual."

2. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

If you are being interviewed by a Partner then chances are they have followed a fairly straight forward career path within the law to reach that status. They will be assessing your dedication, motivation, focus, self confidence, professionalism, loyalty and reliability to understand how you will benefit their firm (and vice-versa).

For more advice and useful tips, please contact a member of Cuff Jones :

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e.g. "I want to work hard to develop my career over the coming years (never let this be assumed - actually state it during the interview). In 5 years time I would hope to have established myself as a respected and valued member of my department and be held in high regard by both colleagues and clients. As a result, as I approach the Senior Associate stage of my career, I would hope that my name would be very much in the running when Partnership is being discussed."

3. Questions to Ask

- Who do you see as your competitors?
- What attracted you to the firm?
- How has the role arisen?
- How is the department structured and who will I be working with?
- What are the firms/departments long term ambitions and aims?

DOs & DON'Ts

Do:

Go into the interview confidently - you are sat in front of the interviewer because your CV has done the hard work and opened the door for you.

Before the day of your interview write down questions that you want to ask and answers that you want to give so that you are clear, concise and factual.

Dress for the interview in a professional and slightly conservative style.

Keep good eye contact, smile and show enthusiasm and interest.

Do not:

Speak negatively about your current/previous employer.

Lie or overdo your answers.

Answer with just 'yes' or 'no' - relate your answers to the position and the firm.

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