

# JOB INTERVIEW SURVIVAL – TEN TIPS



YOU'RE UNLIKELY TO GET QUITE THE GRILLING THAT CONTESTANTS RECEIVED ON *THE APPRENTICE*, BUT **KATHERINE COWAN** WARNS YOU MUST STILL BE PREPARED FOR THAT ALL-IMPORTANT **INTERVIEW**

## 01 DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Preparation, preparation, preparation. Your application was impressive, so don't let real life let you down. Research and glean as much info as you can about the job, the department and the organisation. And remember to revise and be able to talk in detail about everything you've mentioned on your application.

## 02 ARRIVE EARLY

I know it's an obvious one, but being late just looks so awful. We all know the bus/train/tube can be subject to delays in our fair city, so plan for all eventualities – you can always use any spare time to scope out the neighbourhood and identify nice places to eat lunch/blow your pay packet.

## 03 THEY'RE WATCHING YOU

When I was a PA, I was asked to meet and greet some very senior candidates and make small talk with them in the lift. The panel wanted to know who I'd liked or disliked (those who barely said hello to me fell into the latter category). There are spies everywhere, so if you're waiting in reception, grab some company literature and be seen to be showing an interest.

## 04 GENERIC QUESTIONS

"What are your strengths and weaknesses?" "Why do you want the job?" "Why should we employ you?" Generic questions can come up and it's worth having a snappy answer down pat. (P.S. The weaknesses of 'perfectionism' or 'workaholic' are a bit clichéd.)

## 05 LOOK INTO MY EYES

However nervous you're feeling, try your best to appear friendly, interested and likeable. Don't forget to make eye contact, and ensure you address each person on the panel equally. You'd be amazed at how many people just stare at their own fingernails.

## 06 GIVE EVIDENCE

"I'm a team player but can also work alone and will give 110%." Blah, blah, blah. We can all say the words, but unless you can back them up with concrete examples of past experience, you will just sound like you're auditioning for *The Apprentice*. You're fired!

## 07 I AM A GAY!

If you want to tell them that being Chair of your college LGBT Society has given you excellent

leadership skills then do. If you feel it's not relevant to mention that you're gay, then don't. It's up to you. You are legally protected from homophobic discrimination even at interview stage, so if you do out yourself and they recoil in horror, the law is on your side.

## 08 PREPARE YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

There may be things you genuinely want to find out. You may simply want to demonstrate the fact that you're super-prepared. Jot some questions down and refer to them at the end. Answering "nope" to the "do you have any questions?" question implies you don't really care.

## 09 TELL THEM THAT YOU WANT THE JOB

I'm not suggesting you resort to begging, but if at the end of the interview you still really want the job and think it would be a great opportunity, there's no harm in reiterating that.

## 10 IF THE WORST COMES TO THE WORST... GET FEEDBACK

What? They didn't hire you? What is *wrong* with these people? Look, it wasn't meant to be, but learn from your experiences by getting feedback. You can only improve and be in with a better chance next time.

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