

Network Marketing Guide to Interview Types

Open Interview

Open interviews are the most common form of interview and you are probably very familiar with the style of questioning.

Usually there will be a run through your CV, the role and the company. Make sure you are clear on all your past roles, the key competencies of the role and the dates that you worked there.

The types of questions asked in an open interview are as follows:

- Why do you want to work here?
- What do you know about this company?
- Tell me about yourself.
- How would you describe yourself?
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- Do you consider yourself successful?
- What motivates you?
- Are you a leader?
- What did you dislike about your current/last job?
- Why are you looking to change jobs?
- What would your ideal job be?
- What do you think about the last company you worked for?
- Where do you see yourself in five years time?
- What interests do you have outside of work?
- How often were you off sick last year?

Try to think about how you would answer the following questions before you arrive on the day of the interview. You can't predict what the interviewer will ask you but by covering these questions you're giving yourself a head start.

The interviewer will be looking for specific things in your answer. It is important that you understand the key areas of the job you are going for so you can tailor your answers to suit their requirements.

For example if they are looking for someone who is a team player and they ask you what you like doing outside of work it is no good saying reading, watching TV and walking. Be honest but try to pick out the activities which require you to work in a team or to be surrounded by people e.g. socialising with friends, playing 5 a side football etc.

Don't be over familiar with the interviewer but do let your personality come through. Mutual interests can be useful to break the ice. We have good relationships with our clients and will be sure to give you as much insider information as we can!



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Competency Based Interviews

Competency based interviews are incredibly common these days and are used by employers to assess your personal skills, knowledge and behaviour against the criteria of the role they are interviewing you for.

Each job has a specific set of competencies that can usually be found in the job profile. The competencies for a PR Manager for example might include verbal communication skills, writing skills, people management, ability to work to tight deadlines, ability to spot new opportunities etc.

Competency based interviews consist of a series of competency questions. These are questions used by the interviewer to tease out how you act in particular situations. Examples of key competencies are:

- Communication
- Leadership
- Motivation/Drive
- Organisation
- Team Skills

The interviewer will be looking for tangible evidence that you are capable of performing specific tasks by asking the following types of questions:

Communication

- Describe a situation when you had to successfully persuade someone who had a differing point of view.
- Tell me about the last book you read.
- When was the last time you worked on a project when you had to work across different departments? Explain how you went about managing the flow of communication.

Leadership

- When was the last time you had to discipline a member of staff? How did you handle the situation?
- When morale is low, tell me how you go about motivating members of your team.
- Describe a time when you have been responsible for helping to train a more junior member of the team.

Motivation/Drive

- What's your proudest achievement in your career to date?
- Tell me about a situation when you had to 'go all out' to complete a project on time.
- What opportunities have you identified and used to achieve success in your current role?

Organisation

- How would you prioritise your activities on a particularly busy day when you have lots of different deadlines to meet?
- How would you manage a project which you knew would run over timescales?
- What does your desk look like at work?

Team skills

- Describe a time when a colleague let you down, how did you react?
- Tell me about a recent project when you worked with others.

- Tell me about a situation when you had to work with a colleague who you didn't feel was contributing fairly to the team. What did you do about it?

Preparing for competency based interviews:

Read the job profile and highlight the skills and behaviours that are required for the role. For each one think of examples that demonstrate that you have those particular competencies. When thinking of answers recall examples from both your business and personal life. Think of the competencies you are strongest in first as these will be easiest to answer. Everyone has weaknesses so for those that you are weakest in think of times when you have had to overcome that particular weakness.

Competency based interviews tend to be more structured and formal than open interviews. Some interviewers may fire a number of questions and not allow much time for rapport building. Don't be concerned if this is the case, the same style will be used with all those being interviewed.

Panel Interviews

A panel interview is basically an interview where more than one person will interview you at the same time. Before arriving for the interview make sure that you know the names and job titles of each interviewer. This will help you to establish how each one fits into the organisation and what their role is in the recruitment process.

For example, the Line Manager will ask more marketing related, technical questions. The Managing Director may well be interested in your career aspirations and the HR representative will ask questions around your cultural fit and personality. The questions will be quite different from each member, as they will all have different requirements from a future employee.

During the interview make sure that you make plenty of eye contact with all of the members of the panel. Don't just focus on the person you will be reporting into. Remember when answering questions that you are talking to all of them and not just the person who posed the question. Don't underestimate the HR person on the panel (if there is one) as their influence in the recruitment process can be as important as that of the Line Manager.

Tests

There are a number of different tests used by employers today. The two most common ones are:

- Aptitude and ability tests
- Psychometric tests

Aptitude and ability tests are used to measure specific skills relevant to the job. They are also useful to help identify an individual's potential for acquiring relevant skills. The two most common forms of aptitude and ability tests are verbal and numerical tests.

There is normally little you can do to prepare for the tests beforehand; however, looking at some sample questions on the link below might help.

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Psychometric tests are used to assess personality. For most jobs regardless of level, the personality of the successful candidate will have a major impact on a number of areas including relationships with the boss, their colleagues, peers, department and the company as a whole. The tests are often used to establish cultural fit within an organisation.

The tests can be carried out in a number of ways, on a computer, with pen and paper and even on the Internet. It is important that you answer the questions honestly. Don't try to guess what personality the client is looking for as you might be completely wrong. The tests are also used to check for honesty so there is no point in lying as unusual patterns will catch you out! You can't prepare for psychometric tests beforehand because there are no right or wrong answers.

Assessment Centres

Assessment centres tend to be used by larger companies as a way of assessing a number of candidates in the same day. They can take place over a number of days but normally it will be carried out on one day. Assessment centres may take place at any time throughout the interview process or they can be the one and only stage. Assessment centres differ from company to company but they tend to include some or all of the following:

Client presentation

The client will often give a company and role overview, this is a good opportunity to find out more about why you are there so don't be afraid to ask questions or make some notes for the later interview. If you are taken on a tour then have a good look around and show interest in the culture. Remember even at this stage you are probably being assessed.

Interviews

There will normally be some form of interview on the day. Some interviewers like to interview all of the candidates together at the same time but this is quite rare. Normally you will be taken away to have an interview with one or more members of the company. The interviews will differ from company to company but will generally take the form of an open interview or competency based interview.

Group exercises

Group exercises are usually used as part of an assessment centre. They are used to establish how you re-act in a group situation. An observer will set a task and will observe how you take part in the activity. The outcome of the activity is less important than how you come across. The observer will be looking for how you interact e.g. whether you take a leadership role, are the quiet one, encourage less outgoing members etc. True personalities tend to come out in group tests so try to be yourself.

Presentation

As part of the assessment centre you will sometimes be asked to prepare a presentation. Some clients like to give the presentation title to the candidates before hand so that they can prepare the presentation before arrival on the day. Others like to give the title on the day. Whichever one they choose you will be in the same boat as the other applicants so you won't be at any kind of disadvantage. Presentations are used to assess various different skills including, research, analysis, communication skills, confidence and of course presentation skills.

Tests

Tests often feature as part of assessment centres. Tests used include verbal, numerical and psychometric tests. The HR person co-ordinating the day will be responsible for managing the process. They will spend time on the day explaining the instructions. You will normally be given the results either on the day or more commonly when an overall decision has been made.

Assessment centres are becoming more and more common as clients are having less and less time to devote to recruitment. They are a good means of assessing candidates but can be quite gruelling for those taking part.

As you can see, assessment centres tend to be all encompassing and are the whole interview process fitted into one day. They are not easy but are worthwhile and are the best way to get a real feel for the company and the people that work there.

Presentations

Presentations are often used as part of the interview process. The title of the presentation will often be given to you prior to the interview day so that you have time to prepare in advance. Some clients however like to maintain an element of surprise and will only give you the presentation details when you arrive on the day.

When we give you the title we will also advise you as to which type of presentation you can use. The most common ones are:

- Powerpoint
- OHP
- Handouts

Presentations are used to assess a number of skills. The client will be looking for evidence of research and analysis and will also be looking at your overall communication skills and how confident you are in presenting to a group.

We will be sure to give you the presentation title as soon as we receive it to allow you as much preparation time as possible.

The first step to a good presentation is planning. There are a number of key areas which you need to take into consideration:

- Objective
- Content
- Structure
- Audience

Objective

What are you trying to get out of the presentation? What messages do you want the audience to take away with them? How are you going to deliver the presentation, are you going to inform, persuade or entertain them?

Content

Make sure you take the time to do as much research as you need. Be selective though, there is so much information available that you can run the risk of presenting too much. Keep it concise. Brainstorm your key points and split them into key areas by relevance and importance.

Structure

All presentations should consist of an introduction, a main body and a conclusion. This is the universal format so I'm sure you are already familiar with it. Try to keep the message simple and your sentences short as this will help the audience to pay attention.

Use audio visual aids if you can. Network Marketing will advise you at the onset about the type of equipment available to you on the day. Use audio visual aids only as a support to your presentation when you either can't put across a point in words or if you want to add emphasis to a particular point.

Audience

Who is the audience? How many people will be attending and what will they be looking for?

Tips for Presentations

- Prepare well. This is especially important if you are nervous. The more you rehearse your presentation beforehand the more confident you will be on the day.
- Don't read from a script. It is OK to use queue cards or notes but you must try not to read from them, they are only there to prompt you.
- Try to speak slower than normal. Don't fall into the trap of speaking too quickly because you're nervous.
- Make eye contact with members of the audience and smile.
- Your body language is very important. Over 50% of your message will be communicated by what the audience sees rather than hears. Avoid distracting mannerisms like pacing, rocking on you feet, touching your face, placing your hands in and out of your pockets etc. Use your hands to make gestures if you feel comfortable doing so.