

## CONSIDER THE 'REAL' MEANING BEHIND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Most interview questions are designed to reveal experience, character and behaviour. Look for the following types of questions and have your responses ready:

THE QUESTION:

**Describe a time when things were difficult and you were working under pressure**

THE REAL QUESTION:

- How do you cope under stress?
- Do you panic?
- Can you respond to challenges and set yourself goals?

YOUR ANSWER:

- Briefly outline the task and the difficulties.
- Show the steps you took to cope with the situation.
- If other people were involved, explain what your role was and how you involved others.

THE QUESTION:

**Describe an experience of working with other people. What did you contribute and what was the outcome?**

THE REAL QUESTION:

- How do you get on with other people?
- What role do you take in a group?
- Are you able to focus on goals and targets?

YOUR ANSWER:

- Outline the situation, your particular role and the task of the group overall.
- Describe any problems that arose and how they were tackled.
- Say what the result was and what you learned from it.

THE QUESTION:

**Give an example of a situation where you solved a problem in a creative way**

THE REAL QUESTION:

- How do you cope with solving problems?
- Can you think laterally?
- Are you flexible enough to cope with changes and challenges?

YOUR ANSWER:

- Outline the situation and what the problem was.
- List the various approaches you could have taken and the one you adopted.
- Explain why you chose to tackle the problem this way and what was the result.

THE QUESTION:

**Describe how you handled a situation where you had to complete a task in the face of resistance from others**

THE REAL QUESTION:

- Are you a leader? Are you willing to take on responsibility?
- Do you believe in yourself and your aims?
- Can you persuade, rather than coerce people and gain their co-operation?

YOUR ANSWER:

- Outline the task, who resisted you and why.
- Show how you countered their objections.
- Explain how you went about completing the task and what the outcome was.

THE QUESTION:

**Why are you applying to us?**

THE REAL QUESTION:

- Have you prepared properly?
- Have you read about our company, thought about what we are looking for and what you have to offer us?
- Are you committed to this career?

YOUR ANSWER:

- Discuss the good public image the company has as an employer.
- The opportunities it offers for training and career advancement.
- Your experience of the organisation, through a vacation job, course or just a consumer.
- Information you have gathered from talking to other employees, competitors or customers.
- Information you have gathered from reading business press or searching the internet.  
Remember, just reading the organisation's website will be taken for granted.
- Because the company's area and style of business fits with your personal, academic or career interests.

**IN GENERAL:**

- Prepare, research and practice.
- Give examples from work, study or personal life, but give variety.
- Think of the most relevant examples, rather than the most impressive.
- **Prepare, research and practice some more!**