

How to overcome interview nerves

Relax. Interview nerves are your body's natural response to 'venturing into the unknown'. Keep them in check and they will work positively for you.

THAT positive stance should begin by feeling good about being offered the interview in the first place and secondly the opportunity it provides to find out more about the job itself as well as the career path beyond it. If you are working with a good sales recruitment company, they will take time to remind you of your strengths – which in turn may lead them to asking to work on understanding your weaknesses. How to present them in a positive light is something they can coach you in. If they know their client as well as they should, they will also be able to reassure and guide you for the specific challenges you are likely to encounter at that particular meeting. So preparation is vital. "Train hard, fight easy!" as Julius Caesar famously counseled his troops.

Read again the letter they sent you, read again the advertisement that prompted you to write in the first place. Then read again the CV you

sent them. That CV is going to be especially important because therein lies the basis for most of the questions the interviewer will be asking you and if you think about it nothing builds confidence more than going into an exam with the answers to all the questions already filed away in your head.

So it's a good idea to get someone to question you on your CV as a trial run – or do it to yourself – out loud is best. If for instance you can't remember where you worked and for how long, you may give the impression that you didn't work for the company you said you did and for the time you claim. This may cause the interviewer to think that you are hiding something or have missed something from your CV deliberately - perhaps because you're concerned that the reference wouldn't be all you hoped for. If in doubt about a 'blotch' on your CV, ask a good sales recruitment company for their advice on how to overcome the difficulty.

Also write down the key points you would like to cover about yourself at interview – and then put it away. These key points need to reflect your qualities in the best possible way. Don't make remarks that you cannot justify but by the same token, don't be afraid to make sure that you tell the interviewer how well you have done. Women in particular can be reticent about promoting their achievements but all applicants for sales jobs should remember they are not boasting but helping the interviewer come to an understanding of just who they are.

Finally, make sure you're punctual and that you look presentable.

Make eye contact and smile as you are introduced and make a point of listening attentively as the person who greets you gives you their name – you may want to use it periodically in your answers – you will certainly want to use it at the end of the interview when you thank them for their time in seeing you.

Above all, LISTEN to what is being said or asked of you and respond clearly and positively.