

How to present yourself in an interview

36

In this unit you will learn language to describe your professional skills and work qualities.

Starter

- 1 Number the following selection methods 1–5 according to how effective you think they are (1 = most effective).
 - work-related task (pre- or post-interview, on paper or online)
 - psychometric test
 - telephone interview
 - one:one interview
 - panel interview
- 2 Which of the methods do you think candidates find most challenging, and why?

Expressions

- 1 Beatrix Lang is a 33-year-old economist from Berlin. She has applied for a new job with an international investment bank. The selection process began two weeks ago with a psychometric test and a first interview. Read the extract from the report about her first interview. Then answer the questions.
 - 1 What's Beatrix like?
 - 2 What doubts do the consultants have?

The candidate is no stranger to pressure or responsibility and can cope well with these. Her potential to come up with ideas and innovation is very strong and she copes well with the more challenging, independent tasks. However, the new post requires considerable expertise at working with international teams and the candidate may find this a challenge as she can be quite demanding and critical. My recommendation is that she be shortlisted but that her networking and leadership skills are assessed at the second interview.

Speaking

- 1 You are going to be interviewed by a consultant for a new job. Recently a colleague was interviewed by the same consultant and she gives you this tip: 'The consultant will give you a minute or so to speak about yourself in relation to some points.' Using language from Expressions and the Language box, what would you say about your ability to:
 - work in an international environment, with different conditions and practices in different countries?
 - establish clear and reasonable objectives?
 - communicate successfully in a global company with a multicultural staff?
 - motivate an international team?

Language box

The following constructions are important when describing personal qualities.

The combination *find + it + adjective + an infinitive* to express how a person feels about a particular activity or task:

I find it difficult to work with them.

We can express the same idea using a gerund form. In this case, *it* is not required:

I find working with them difficult.

The adjective can be qualified using *quite* or *rather*. Although these two adverbs mean the same we tend to use *rather* with more negative or critical statements:

I'm quite reliable. I don't usually forget things.

I can be rather demanding in terms of my expectations of the team.

Hint

There are several compound adjectives that use an adjective + -minded:

She can be very **single-minded**. (= she only thinks of one thing)

He's a bit **narrow-minded** at times. (= he doesn't accept other opinions)

I get on well with her. She's very **open-minded** / **broad-minded**. (= she accepts other opinions or viewpoints)

My colleague and I are very **like-minded**. (= we share the same opinions)

Writing

1 As part of the selection process for a new job you have been asked to write answers to the following more open-ended questions. Write a maximum of 40 words for each question.

- 1 What qualities do you have which would make you a successful international manager?
- 2 Convince us you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments.
- 3 How would you define a 'global company'? Do you think it's possible to be truly 'global'?



Look

Look at listening script 36.1 on page 135 and underline examples of these different constructions.

2 Samantha Chapman is one of the senior partners at ATG Consultants. Which two of the following questions is she most likely to ask Beatrix during her interview?

- 1 How long have you been working in the financial sector?
- 2 How would you achieve a good working atmosphere in a multinational team?
- 3 How well do you think you can work under pressure?
- 4 Describe a recent situation in which you convinced a group to do something.

Listen to the extract from the interview and check which questions Beatrix is asked. Do you think that Samantha clarifies the doubts that were mentioned in the report?

3 Listen again and number the eleven adjectives which Beatrix uses to describe herself in order. In your opinion, could the adjective that Beatrix doesn't use also describe her?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communicative | <input type="checkbox"/> focused |
| <input type="checkbox"/> frustrated | <input type="checkbox"/> realistic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> motivated | <input type="checkbox"/> goal-oriented |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined | <input type="checkbox"/> understanding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> experienced | <input type="checkbox"/> demanding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> enthusiastic | <input type="checkbox"/> persuasive |

A similar construction is **quite / rather + a / an + adjective + (sort / kind / type) of person**:

I'm quite an independent sort of person.
(= I'm quite independent)

We can use adjectives to reinforce the meaning of a noun or when we talk about something that is special or unique:

You'll have to help me with this. I'm an absolute beginner. (= intensifying)

Other intensifying adjectives include: **complete, entire, extreme, perfect, real, sheer, total, utter**:

He couldn't give a specific reason for the malfunction. (= restrictive)

Other restrictive adjectives include: **chief, exact, first, main, major, only, principal, sole**.

Lesson record

3 new words from this lesson

3 useful phrases from this lesson

1

1

2

2

3

3

Things to remember