

cranberry panda



Ecommerce Candidate Guide: Interview Stage

Your very own ecommerce candidate handbook
to help you get that job you have been working for!

Interview Stages.

We know a job search can be daunting and I am guessing a lot of you did not consider even half of the above points. Ensuring you have completed these steps, increases your chances of finding the right job for you the first time around. It will save a lot of time down the line and allow your CV to include all the jobs that have pushed your career forward. There is method to this madness!

Initial Stage - What to expect

You are entitled to be excited at this point...perhaps a mix of first interview nerves are creeping up too. You have just had the call from a recruiter saying that the hiring manager likes the look of your CV and wants to interview you. (You must have read the section on making an awesome CV in our guide!)

Initially, the recruiter will find out your availability and arrange an interview with you. Throughout the interviewing and offer stages, they will act as the middle man and sometimes negotiator. It is not uncommon but before a face to face interview, a hiring manager may arrange an initial stage telephone interview with you. This can be to suss out your knowledge and suitability along with telephone manner!

1st stage - First impressions

Arriving for your first stage interview can be extremely intimidating, but you need to remember that you are not alone in this. Using a recruiter means you have that extra support system and they will be able to give you helpful tips on the hiring manager and interview techniques. That would be a good starting point! Ask your recruiter as many questions as possible; from what the hiring manager is looking for, to the feel and style of your potential office.

It may seem obvious to state but ensure you know everything about the process:

- Location
- Time and date
- Portfolio / example of work required

Do your research! Look up the managers, directors, potential team, recent projects, company news and industry updates. The more prepared you are the more the manager will see your commitment to securing this job. You will stand out from the rest! Simple steps to remember ...

- 1) Arrive at least 15 minutes before your interview time
- 2) Be prepared when it comes to the companies background/history and bring any questions you may have about the role (questions are essential!)
- 3) Remain calm, and do not be afraid to think about each question before answering
- 4) If there is more than one manager, ensure to engage and make eye contact with all present
- 5) Keep your nerves under wrap and give clear, concise answers
- 6) Positive attitude and positive mindset will show through

You've got this!

2nd stage/Final - Bringing your A game

So, you aced your first interview and you have been told they want to see you for a second. You should be incredibly proud of yourself and acknowledge how well you are doing. Now, second interview is where you need to knock their socks off and show what you are really made of.

Depending on the position, but typically within digital design and senior/director level roles, the hiring team will require a portfolio of work from you. They may even set a task for you no matter what sector of Ecommerce it falls into.

For your 2nd stage interview the hiring manager will be looking to ask you specific questions. These will be based around your skill set, programmes you can use, and how you handle certain situations under pressure. It is important to review your CV before the second interview and pick out the essential parts of information. First stage interviews are looking at your personality and fit for their team. Second stage interviews are to make sure you can do the job itself and what benefits you can contribute.

Top tip: be switched on for your interview and focus on the end game. Listen to everything they say and take the time to respond. Show your passion for the role!



What to wear to an interview?

This is a difficult subject, simply because no two people are the same. We all know the rule of looking smart and presentable for your interview, man or woman. But it is not that simple anymore, depending on the industry and role you are interviewing for, you can add a little spark to your outfit.

For a design role in a start-up company, for example, you may be able to scrap the suit and go for smart shirt and trousers or, a dress and boots. If you have done your research for the interview, then you will know the culture and feel of the company. For any industry avoid outfits with words or quotes on (especially offensive) and keep trainers for weekend use.

When it comes down to piercings and tattoos, we would recommend you keep them to a minimum just for first interview impressions. Do not worry, the company will get to know you and who you are if you secure the role!



Tasks - How to ace these and what to prepare

There is no better way for a hiring manager to see what you are made of then by setting you a task! This may be alongside a request to provide previous work, but a manager will want to make the task specific to their company and guidelines. The most important aspect of this, is to demonstrate your understanding of the brand, culture, guidelines and target audience. If you want to stand out from the other candidates, then go above and beyond. Look at the task, and see how you can expand on it, provide additional information and really engage with those you are presenting to.

How to approach each task primarily depends on the specialism you are interviewing within Ecommerce. Below is listed a sample guideline to each of the sectors we recruit for to give you a better idea of what to expect!

Interview Task Examples

Ecommerce interview tasks may involve:

- > Looking at the company's current website to provide pros and cons
- > Suggestions of aspects you would change and improve (providing reasons why)
- > If you were successful, what would you want to achieve and provide within your first 90 days
- > Conduct competitor analysis
- > General analysis of the entire site and its functions

Ecommerce Product Management interview tasks may involve:

- > Presenting a customer journey analysis or road mapping information
- > Review and analysis on the company and brand gathering as much information as you can
- > Looking at the potential problems products and the site may face including providing an analytical aspect

Ecommerce Analytics interview tasks may involve:

- > SWOT (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) looking at the current site
- > Conducting competitor analysis and providing information on what works and what doesn't
- > Data manipulation task
- > A question will be provided and a set of data - answer the question by analysing the data
- > Communication task, demonstrating the ability to relay technical terms to stakeholders

Ecommerce Design interview tasks may involve:

- > Creating an email campaign along with the design template and content
- > Designing a banner ad for an upcoming campaign
- > Creating social posts, gifs, showing use of multiple design tools

Do not fear! Go to the following page for your specialism ...

Interview Task Examples 2.

Ecommerce Social Media tasks may involve:

- > Creating a campaign ad and showing it across multiple platform
- > Taking 3 products from the site and creating 3 posts to demonstrate this to the public
- > Creating from scratch a social media campaign based on the current site and guidelines
- > Modelling a content calendar based on the information provided
- > Proof reading tasks for content in place and creating new content

Ecommerce Contract interview tasks may involve:

- > Dependent on the timeframe, usually contractors with a placement of 2 months or under may not have to complete a task unless it is essential.
- > Email testing and marketing roles will include a task to demonstrate immediate skillset

Tasks will be the same as the above relevant specialism or longer contracts

What questions to bring?

You have probably heard this a lot from previous recruiters, but it goes a long way when trying to impress the hiring manager. Your potential new company will want to see you have taken great care into learning who they are and what your role will involve. Preparing questions will show you have done your research and see yourself as a permanent member of that team. Even from a contracts perspective, they will be impressed to hear you asking questions about the differences you can make while there. A few questions to bear in mind for your interviews:

- 1) What are the progression routes within the company?
- 2) What departments will I be working alongside, and will I be able to cross over or learn more?
- 3) What projects will I be working on within the first 3 months of starting?
- 4) What changes and improvements are being made in the company? What does the future hold?

“The people who will be successful in life, have already decided.”

This mix of questions shows you are curious for your personal career and what the company has planned for its future! They will want to hear your supportive of the company and how you can contribute.

Presentation preparation - if you have to do one!

In most occasions, a recruitment consultant will let you know the requirements from the hiring manager for the interview. Whether that be a task set, examples from previous work or questions they will want answered. But, that does not mean you cannot go the extra mile. Whether it be an entry level position or director vacancy for a brand, you can create a presentation to showcase your skills and understanding of the company. Ensure it is relevant to the role you are applying for and the sector you will be working within, but even a 5-minute presentation can prove the effort you are putting into securing the position. This is not to say that for every interview you should create a presentation, but if you decide to do it then go for it!

Preparation for an interview is key. The more prepared you are, the less you have to be nervous about. It also gives you the chance to relax and be yourself. They want to see who you are as a person and also what skills you can bring to their company. Keep them wanting more!

