

Personal Shopper interview questions

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What to expect

Personal Shopper interviews focus on how you read a client brief, manage budgets and stock limits, and keep the experience smooth from first consultation to delivery. Employers want evidence you can represent the brand well in front of clients, not just process a sale.

- **Client consultation and discovery:** Questions about how you unpack a client's needs, preferences, budget and timeline before recommending anything.
- **Styling and product knowledge:** Questions that test your eye for fit, occasion and value, and your ability to source across in-store and online options.
- **Budget and negotiation:** Questions about keeping to a budget, negotiating with suppliers or retailers, and explaining trade-offs to a client.
- **Logistics and delivery:** Questions on coordinating purchases, returns and delivery or collection, including when something goes wrong.
- **Behavioural and client relationship:** Tell me about a time questions that probe repeat business, difficult clients and working with confidential preferences.
- **Technical and systems:** Questions on POS, CRM, e-commerce platforms and how you keep client records accurate and useful.

The process usually starts with a short phone or video screen with a recruiter or store manager, covering availability, retail experience and client-facing confidence. A second interview may include a practical exercise such as building a look or gift list from a brief, or a role-play consultation. Final stages often include meeting the team you would work with, a discussion of pay and hours, and pre-employment checks such as reference checks and a police check or Working with Children Check if you will work with vulnerable clients.

1. Walk me through how you would prepare for a first consultation with a new client who wants a capsule wardrobe for work.

Why they ask

This is a process question. The interviewer wants to see whether you have a repeatable method, not just a good eye.

How to structure your answer

Use a step-by-step walk-through: discovery, budget, lifestyle and existing wardrobe, product research, presentation, follow-up. Keep it in order and mention what you would write down.

Example answer

"First I would send a short questionnaire before we meet, asking about their workplace dress code, the colours and fits they already feel good in, their budget range, and any events coming up. At the consultation I would look through the pieces they already own, identify gaps, and agree on a target number of outfits rather than a random list of items. I would then research options across two or three retailers, pull a small selection in their sizes, and present them with reasons for each choice. After the appointment I would log what they kept, what they rejected and why, then follow up with care instructions or a couple of online links if something was out of stock."

2. Tell me about a time you had to find a product or gift when the obvious options were unavailable.

Why they ask

A behavioural question about resourcefulness and supplier networks.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result. Focus on the action, including the calls, searches or alternatives you tried.

Example answer

"A client needed a retirement gift for a long-serving manager, and the item they wanted was sold out across the usual department stores two days before the presentation. I asked the client what the gift needed to signal, which was appreciation and longevity, rather than a specific brand. I called three independent retailers, found a similar handcrafted piece at a local store, and negotiated a same-day hold. I arranged gift wrapping and had it delivered to the client's office the next morning. The client used me for their next three corporate gifts."

3. A client asks you to buy an expensive item that you think is wrong for their stated needs and budget. What do you do?

Why they ask

Scenario question about judgement, ethics and client trust.

How to structure your answer

Show a judgement under pressure structure: pause, clarify the client's reasoning, restate their goal, offer alternatives with clear trade-offs, respect their final choice, document the advice.

Example answer

"I would not refuse outright or simply process it without a comment. I would say I want to make sure the purchase does what they need, then ask what attracted them to that item. If it conflicted with, say, a work wardrobe or a stated budget, I would restate the goal and show one or two alternatives that meet the same emotional need for less. If they still wanted the original item, I would buy it, note the advice I gave in their client record, and check in after they had worn it. That keeps the relationship honest and gives them a way to return or exchange if it is not right."

4. How do you manage several clients' requests at once, especially when deliveries are delayed or stock is low?

Why they ask

Process and prioritisation question for a role with many moving parts.

How to structure your answer

Give a prioritisation walk-through: list all commitments, rank by client deadline and impact, communicate early, log changes, confirm delivery, close the loop.

Example answer

"I start each morning by listing every open request with its deadline and the next action. If a delivery is delayed, I contact that client before they have to chase me, explain the new timing, and offer a substitute or a partial delivery if that helps. I keep stock levels and courier tracking in the CRM so anyone covering my leave can see the status. If two clients need the same limited item, I offer one an alternative and confirm the other's order in writing. At the end of the day I update every record and flag anything that will need a follow-up call."

5. What experience do you have with point-of-sale systems and CRM software, and how do you use them to keep client records accurate?

Why they ask

Technical and systems question. Employers want to know you can use their tools without creating data mess.

How to structure your answer

Name the systems you have used, describe a typical workflow, mention privacy and accuracy checks, and finish with how the records help the client.

Example answer

"I have used POS systems for purchases, returns and laybys, and CRM software to record client preferences, sizes, purchase history and follow-up dates. When I add a new client, I check spelling and contact details at the counter, then note the items they viewed and any feedback in the CRM before the end of the shift. I do not store payment details outside the approved system. Before a seasonal event, I run a report on clients who bought workwear or gifts last year and send a short, personal message. That keeps the database useful and makes the next appointment much quicker for the client."

6. Describe a time you turned a one-off purchase into a repeat client.

Why they ask

Behavioural question about client relationship and commercial awareness.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR, with the result measured in repeat visits or referrals rather than a hard sell.

Example answer

"A customer came in for a single interview suit and was clearly nervous about the appointment. I helped her find a suit that fit well, then suggested a second shirt and a simple alteration so she felt prepared. I wrote down her size, the brands she liked and her start date in the CRM. Two weeks later I sent a short message wishing her well and offering to help with a work wardrobe once she settled in. She came back three times over the next year and referred a colleague. The result was not one sale but a client who trusted me with her workwear."