



Career Information – Interview Techniques

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Before the Interview

Preparation

- ✓ Research the company – website, brochures, phone book ad, receptionist
- ✓ Research the job – receptionist, job contact
- ✓ Plan your transport
- ✓ Have the EXACT address
- ✓ Practice your questions – job, company, direction
- ✓ Practice your answers – tell me about yourself, what do you bring to the job
- ✓ Plan what you're going to wear 2 days before – iron it and put it ALL on to make sure
- ✓ Have your paperwork ready in your portfolio – spares of everything, clean
- ✓ Get up to speed on current affairs – read the headlines for couple of days
- ✓ Know the name and pronunciation of the interviewer along with position title – who are they and how do they fit into the picture, anybody else in the interview

Punctuality

Give yourself plenty of time to:

- Arrive
- Refresh and gather your thoughts
- Revive
- Read over your notes and resume

Presentation

Clothes – neat, clean, ironed and appropriate for position.

You – Be well groomed and confident. Carry a comb or brush with you and freshen up prior to going into the interview.

Resume – Make sure your resume is on clean paper and NOT creased or folded. Ensure the information is presented in an appealing, easy to read way and that is correct.

If you are in any way concerned that you may be late, call the Employer and notify them.

Dress for an Interview

Remember – First impressions last. If you look good, you will feel good.

Males

- Business suit
- Dark business shoes - remember to polish
- Business shirt
- Professional tie (leave the one with cartoons on it at home)
- Dark socks (match trousers and shoes, keep the cartoon birthday socks for BBQs)
- Neat haircut (if you have long hair, tie it back)
- Clean shaven (if you have a beard make sure it is trimmed)
- Trousers, business shirt and tie are acceptable if you do not have a business suit
- Be careful not to use too much aftershave

Females

- Business suit (skirt / trousers and jacket)
- Court shoes - remember to polish
- Neat haircut (if you have long hair, tie it back)
- Remove chipped nail polish
- Make-up (perhaps arrange to have a make-up consultation)
- Stockings (if wearing a skirt)
- Skirt / trousers and a business shirt are acceptable if you do not have a business suit
- Keep jewellery to a minimum
- Be careful not to use too much perfume

Preparing for an Interview

Before Interview

Arrive approx 10 minutes early. This gives you time:

- to gather your thoughts
- to check your appearance
- to ensure you are at the right address

Introduce yourself to the receptionist. Remember, their assessment of you starts as soon as you enter their premises. You must always be polite and friendly.

You should give to the receptionist:

- your name and the time of your appointment
- the name of the person going to interview. If you don't know it, ask the receptionist!

Thank the receptionist, wait quietly and:

- be careful how and where you sit
- be ready for the interviewer

Greet the interviewer

- The interview has now started so make a good impression. Be ready to shake hands and introduce yourself.

You must:

- be alert and quick to respond to the interviewer
- be mindful of your smile, your handshake and how you move

Enter the interviewer's office and:

- do not sit down until you have been invited to do so
- if you have a choice, sit about an arms length from the interviewer's desk

Watch the way you sit and be careful of your posture:

- do not lean on the desk or on the arms of the chair
- sit up straight, don't slouch, don't lean back and don't fold your arms
- do not put anything on the interviewer's desk until it is 'tabled'
- remember to keep smiling and be friendly
- avoid nervous habits
- do not play with your fingernails
- keep your hands off your ears, hair, beard and collar
- do not play with your jewellery
- never tap your fingers or feet on anything

Remember, once you are in there and the interview proper has started:

- volunteer positive information only – never anything negative
- stress your good points eg skills, qualities, experiences.
- do not talk about what you cannot do or what training you need
- answer the interviewer's questions as you have rehearsed

Do not smoke, even if you are invited to. Don't chew lollies, chewing gum. Only accept a glass of water or a cup of tea or coffee if the interviewer is having one.

At the end of the interview

- be ready to ask suitable questions
- summarise your qualifications and suggest that the interviewer contacts your referees
- tell that you are very interested in the job
- if the interviewer offers you the job accept it then and there
- thank them for the interview and don't ramble on

Job Interview Techniques

The statistics on how we make an impression:

Your appearance makes an instant impression when meeting people for the first time *actually, in the first 30 seconds). Statistics show that when we meet new people the impact we make is via:

- **55%** - the way we dress, act and walk through the door
- **38%** - the quality of our voice grammar and overall confidence, and a mere...
- **7%** - from what we actually say

What to wear

Choose clothes to show you'll fit in with the company 'look' or 'culture'. Check out what their employees are wearing and try to match that. If anything, wear on the side of conservative and formal. Even when going for manufacturing or blue collar jobs, it is definitely worth the effort to wear a collar and tie.

Stay away from lots of jewellery - one simple pair of earrings and a watch is sufficient. (Remember, we are trying not to rule ourselves out based on what our interviewer believes, so keep away from anything that is not mainstream - ie nose/chin/eyebrow/tongue rings)

Other Presentation & Grooming Tips:

- Have a shower, wash your hair and shave on the morning before the interview
- Have your clothes either dry-cleaned or washed and ironed properly
- Cut and clean nails and wear clear/pale nail polish
- Limit the amount of perfume/aftershave/jewellery you wear
- Have a haircut, beard trim and neck shave if needed
- Clean, and if necessary polish shoes
- Wear something you feel comfortable in - if you're not used to wearing a tie or makeup - don't wear it to an interview (studies have shown women who wear make-up to work get promoted more quickly.)

Body language / Non-Verbal Communication

Do...

- Smile
- Maintain eye contact
- Sit up straight
- Slightly lean forward in chair
- Acknowledge all people conducting interview
- Nod when appropriate
- Arrive 5-10 mins early
- Give good firm handshake

Don't

- Fidget, touch their desk
- Shake your leg, flick hair, sniff, scratch
- Yawn, look at watch at anytime
- Slouch, lean back, cross arms/legs
- Smoke, chew gum, swear or use slang
- Stare, look too serious
- Make any bodily noises
- Appear overly nervous or rushed

Tell Me About Yourself - the most common question asked

Very often this is where we begin to give out too much information, which is exactly what the employer wants. They want to hear all the reasons why they should not hire you. **Here are some dos and don'ts for answering this question.** In the space below write your good answer to this question.

DO

- Talk about skills and job qualifications
- Talk about how you can save, or make the company money
- Talk about community involvement which is non controversial
- Tell them about good grades / marks, relevant education or training
- Tell them about "the extra" you did in past jobs you enjoyed
- Common interests

DON'T

- Ramble
- Talk about hobbies unless they underscore abilities needed for the job or are
- Talk about personal problems, financial problems, recent illnesses, family issues, drug issues
- Talk about salary requirement
- Tell them about goals which do not benefit the company

Tell me about yourself

Eg: I have recently completed a Certificate III in Business at Sarina Russo Schools where I have developed advanced skills in MS Packages..... Then talk about your work experience and skills.

Rehearse rehearse rehearse – Practice makes perfect

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Typical Interview Questions / guide to answers

Be prepared to answer typical questions like:

QUESTION	POSSIBLE ANSWERS/SUGGESTIONS
Tell me about yourself	They want to know about your work accomplishments and skills – not your personal life. Keep your answer to 1 – 2 minutes; do not ramble, do not give your life history, summarise your resume, steer away from religion/politics etc
Why do you want to work for us?	Talk about how you will fit THEIR needs; how you can make a significant contribution to specific company goals
Why should we pick you for the job?	Give examples of your successes, your skills that the employer would require, your knowledge, experience and abilities
Why haven't you found a job by now?	Finding any job is easy, finding the right job is more difficult - tell them you are being selective
Can you work under pressure or to deadlines etc?	Yes, it's a way of life in business – give a specific example of how you have done this
How do you resolve conflict within your working team?	First, discuss the issues privately with the particular team, never get involved in politicking
What salary/wage are you asking?	Give a salary range you are comfortable with. You can find this information out on wagenet or www.jobsearch.gov.au
What are your weaknesses?	DON'T say "none". Try to turn a negative into a positive, or talk about a weakness you had previously, but have addressed and it is no longer an issue
What are your strengths?	Present at least 3 and relate them to the company and jobs you are applying for
What do you know about our company?	Show that you have done your homework – have a minimum of 3 pieces of information about the company i.e. "I read in your annual report..." or "I noticed in your brochures..."
What interests you in this job/career/industry? Why do you want to work for us?	Talk about the reputation of the company, the opportunity to start/develop your career path, the experience you gain from the company
Why did you leave your last job?	Always answer honestly, but never criticise previous employers e.g. "I Realised that the career opportunities I was looking for were not going to happen with that company" or "I needed more of a challenge."
Give me an example of...	Have a few examples rehearsed that address: customer service, dealing with people, team work, conflict resolution, your accomplishments

Questions to ask the Interviewer

During the interview, you should get the interviewer to talk at least 50% of the time. This will allow you to learn about the company, the position, your prospective supervisor and future opportunities.

You can use the information learned during the first interview to impress the employer in the second and third interviews. This information will also help you decide whether you want the job.

The following is a list of questions to ask the interviewer. Read through them and circle a couple that you may use for your job interview.

1. How many employees does the company/department have?
2. How long has the position been vacant?
3. What would the career path be for someone starting in this position?
4. Do you offer training?
5. Will there be any on the job training if I am successful?
6. When will I start?
7. When will I find out if I am successful for this position?
8. How do you think I have performed during this interview?

You may have a few more to ask, these are just some tips for you to think about.

Always have at least one question to ask.

Good luck.