

INTERVIEW STRATEGIES

- **Preparation**
- **Making the Best Appearance**
- **The Interview**
- **After the Interview**

Preparation

It is important to ensure that you are well prepared for each interview you attend. Not only will you be more knowledgeable but you will also be more relaxed and confident.

Do some research about the organization before your interview. This preparation will help you ask some good questions. Most companies have websites. These sites are full of useful information that you can use at the interview.

It is useful to know:

- What the company does
- How does the company compare to others in the industry and its competitors
- Annual growth in sales/turnover for the past 5 years
- The organization structure and how could this effect your promotional path
- Any developments which have occurred recently
- Location of offices, company size and number of branches

This knowledge will not only allow you to demonstrate your interest in the company but will also help you decide if it is going to suit you.

Your preparation should also include ensuring you know the interviewer's full name, the correct pronunciation and their title together with the time and location of your interview. Arriving late always creates a bad impression so plan your journey well and allow sufficient time for heavy traffic, bad weather and parking.

Making the Best Appearance

Aim to arrive at least 10 minutes early to ensure you have time to freshen up and be aware that the interview begins when you arrive at the reception and finishes when you leave the premises. Receptionists and secretarial staff are often asked to give their opinions on candidates so creating a good impression from the start is essential.

As always an interviewer's first impression of you is important. You should dress smartly and appropriately for the company concerned. If possible visit the job site before your interview and get an idea of how other members of the workforce are dressing.

Does it really make a difference how you dress and act? In many cases, it does.

In the conservative business climate, appearances do matter. In other environments it isn't as important. However, it does make sense to dress your best for the interview, regardless of the dress code at the organization. If you're in doubt about how to dress for an interview, it is best to err on the side of conservatism. It is much better to be overdressed than underdressed.

Remember, you are marketing a product -- yourself -- to a potential employer, and the first thing the employer sees when greeting you is your attire; thus, you must make every effort to have the proper dress for the type of job you are seeking. Will dressing properly get you the job? Of course not, but it will give you a competitive edge and a positive first impression

The Interview

Walk into your interview confidently with your head up, a smile on your face and a positive attitude. Shake the interviewer's hand firmly and maintain eye contact with them throughout your interview.

The type of questions you will be asked will vary from position to position and may depend on whether the position is temporary or permanent. In an interview for a temporary position more emphasis will be placed on past experience and the ability to complete the task at hand while for a permanent position the interviewer will wish to find out more about your background and how it will fit into the organization and what your career objectives and aims are.

Try to avoid yes or no answers. You should keep things concise but give something back by explaining things wherever possible.

Remember that every interview is a two-way street. Always prepare a few questions of your own as you need to evaluate the employer as much as they need to evaluate you. Don't bombard them with your knowledge of their company but ensure the interviewer is impressed, as it will show that you have given serious thought to joining their organization. When explaining your reason for leaving your present or former employers, limit your comments to those necessary to explain your rationale and avoid making any derogatory remarks.

After the Interview

Afterwards make a note of everything you need to remember. This may include the date the company expects to make their decision and any questions you were unable to answer.

Consider all job offers carefully and make certain that you want the position. It is important to think back to your reason for wanting a particular job and ensure that the prospective position will satisfy those requirements.

Even if you are unsuccessful, use what you have learned from the interview to help you prepare for the next one. Look at what went well and what needs improving and work at making each interview better than the last.

It is highly suggested to write a 'thank you' letter to the interviewer. This letter should be mailed no later than the next day after your interview. It is now acceptable in less formal situations, to send a 'thank you' email. Which ever you decide on, your letter should thank the interviewer for their time, reiterate your ability to do the job and express your interest for the job.

In your thank you letter, **do** show appreciation for the employer's interest in you and **do** remind the employer about why you are the perfect person for the position.

Don't worry so much about hand-written versus typed thank you letters, but **don't** make a mistake by sending it through the wrong medium; make sure you know the best method of reaching the employer, whether by regular mail or email.

Some Do's and Don'ts of the Job Interview:

DO . . .

- **Prepare for the interview**
- **Shake interviewer's hand
firmly**
- **Maintain eye contact**
- **Ask for the job**
- **Thank interviewer**

DON'T . . .

- **Be late**
- **Talk negatively about
your previous employers**
- **Give YES or NO
answers**