



# the employment interview

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THE NOTION OF BEING JUDGED at an interview on both a professional and personal level is not a pleasant thought. But there are advantages.

What we need to acknowledge is that interviews provide a fantastic opportunity to show the employer what you are all about! This is your time to show off and a perfect excuse to talk about your successes to an eager audience. Working in recruitment, I interview candidates on a daily basis. It amazes me when an individual drifts into my office without any apparent preparation for the interview and only the vaguest idea of what they are going to say. Jobseekers need to realise that whilst their resume has obviously caught the attention of the interviewer and prompted them to organise an interview, the employment process has only just begun. Below are some tips to guide you through the interview process.

## 1. Preparation is the Key!

- Know the exact location of the interview, how to get there and what time and date it will be taking place.
- Know the interviewer's full name and how to pronounce it.
- Research the company via their website and find out what they do, the size of their team and the history of their organisation where possible
- Refresh your memory on the facts and figures of your present/former employers, when you undertook and finished your education, etc.

## 2. Dress Appropriately

I can't emphasise enough that first impressions DO count. Please dress in corporate attire. Wear a business suit or a collared shirt with corporate trousers/skirt. For women, avoid liberal use of perfume and makeup and if you wear jewellery, please ensure it is conservative. Men should wear a suit, plain tie and steer clear of cartoon prints.

## 3. Getting to the Interview

Arrive at the company's premises at least five minutes before the scheduled interview time. When travelling to the interview, allow extra time for any delays in transport and sufficient time to find the location. If you arrive too early, don't go inside. Employers have their own work to do and have scheduled a specific time to fit you into their busy day. Arriving too early can be just as inconvenient to the employer as arriving too late. Where possible, avoid having to reschedule or cancel an interview as it gives the impression that you are not committed to finding a position.

## 4. At the Interview

When you arrive at the interview, be sure to know the full name of the person who will be interviewing you. When you meet them, shake their hand firmly, look them in the eye and greet them warmly with a smile. Ensure that your mobile phone is turned off to avoid receiving any unwanted phone calls during the interview and if you do forget to turn it off DON'T ANSWER THE CALL! Be positive in the interview and focus on your strengths and achievements throughout your career to date. Be clear and concise in your answers, keep to the point and avoid waffling. If you have had a bad experience in a previous workplace, it is fine to briefly explain what the problem was, but there is a difference between stating something objectively compared to completely "bad mouthing" former employers or team members.

## 5. Questions to Expect

Employers differ in their interview techniques, but you should be prepared to answer questions relating to your previous employment and education, reasons for your interest in this particular role, why you are seeking employment at this time and what you want in the future. Other questions might include "Why would you like to work for our company?" or "What interests you about the events that we co-ordinate?"

Another approach sometimes employed is what is often referred to as a targeted selection technique. Typically this will involve questions in the form "From your own experience or past history give me an example of how you have handled a certain situation?"

## 6. Questions You Should Consider Asking

To confirm your interest in a role but also to determine whether it will be suitable for you, prepare a couple of possible questions to ask during the interview. Remember that an interview is a two-way exchange and you will need to decide whether the company will give you the opportunity for growth and development that you seek. Questions you could ask include "Is there a detailed description for the position?", "Why is the position available?".

## 7. Closing the Interview

If you are interested in the position, let them know. Also, thank the interviewer for their time and their consideration of you.