

# **Acing The Interview**

## **Tips and Techniques That Win You the Job**

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# **How to Ace That Interview – Tips and Techniques That Win You the Job**

Now that your cover letter has got you the interview, all you have to do is to hit a home run and get that job.

Here are some killer interview tips and techniques that will seal the deal.

First off I want you to know that for you to even make it this far means that they're very interested in you. The job is close enough to taste and basically has your name on it.

Now you just have to knock the hiring manager or employer's socks off in person and leave the other contenders eating your dust.

How exactly do you do that?

By being prepared and taking a similar approach as you did with your cover letter. Doing the background research will give you the edge over your competitors. Half the battle is won, no doubt your employer would have received hundreds of job applications and the fact that you have been selected speaks volumes about you.

Be proud of yourself, take a deep breath, we need to ensure that you land this one.

What's the most important part of the interview?

What determines the ultimate success of your interview are the things that take place before you even get into the interview itself.

Things like:

- Mental preparation, Do you have the right mindset,? Do you have a winning attitude? Do you believe the job is yours?
- Your knowledge of the company you plan to work for
- The types of questions you will be asked and the answers you give

- The types of questions you plant to ask in return
- Your choice of dress

We're going to break up the interview process into 3 important components because every piece is an integral part in the success of your interview whether you may realize it or not.

**These are the:**

- **Pre-interview Process**
- **Interview Process**
- **Post Interview Process**

We're going to perform an autopsy on the interview process itself and break it down to its inner workings. Every step is important and plays an important role in securing the job.

**Pre-interview** are the things you need to do to prepare mentally and to get yourself into the right frame of mind for ultimate success.

**Interview Process** is taking all of that knowledge and skill and applying it to your interview for the best possible outcome.

**Post Interview Process** is a time for reflection, assessing where you went wrong, identifying your strengths and weaknesses and where can make improvements for next time. It also involves following up with the interviewer to take the process even further.

## **The Pre Interview Process**

It's really all in your attitude, always be just a little bit hungry and you'll get the job. This really is like preparing yourself for the battle. Applying your war paint which is your makeup and hair, donning your armour which is your clothing and arming yourself with your weapon of choice which is your resume or portfolio of work.

Warriors also prepare themselves mentally for battle, as do Olympians, astronauts, even actors before performing a big scene, going through their rituals to psyche themselves up. This is so that they can be at the top of their game and perform to their best.

You can employ some of these tactics too. Do you have any rituals that help get you mentally prepared and into the right mindset?

If you don't here are a few things you can do that will not only help you to stay calm but to call and retrieve the information when it really counts.

Here are some things that are bound to crop up and some things you should do to get prepared. Don't worry, we're going to delve into these in more depth throughout this book, this gives you something to think about.

You need to be aware of the company and product knowledge.

Think about what attracted to applying for the job – they want to know that you have a genuine interest rather than just for the sake of applying. They don't want to hire you knowing that it may have cost a sincere applicant from getting the job.

Think of the types of questions they'll ask you.

Is it a group panel?

Practice speaking in front of a mirror to give you an idea of your body language and your mannerisms.

Go a step further and video yourself so that you can see any involuntary habits you might have like saying "ummmm" or "uhhhhhhh" when you're trying to think. Train yourself not to do it.

Set up a mock interview situation with your friends or family so they can give you some pointers.

Print off some of the questions at the end of this book and get your family and friends to quiz you on them.

Organize your resumes, degrees, relevant qualifications certificates, references, work portfolio, disc of your work if you're an artist.

Talk to others that already work in your industry, try to get some ideas of the interview process and the types of questions asked. Do your homework and it will pay off in a big way, are there any tests that you need to take?

### **The Pre-Emptive Telephone Screen Interview**



Here's something you need to remember, you may be spending all this time preparing for a face to face interview when in reality there's a high chance you could be interviewed via phone which is a pre-interview before the real one designed to weed out candidates before a meeting in person ensues. This interview generally tends to be around 10 to 20 minutes in length and covers general questions.

In fact this is the technique employers use to screen candidates before they get to the point of interviewing them. It also helps to cull down that short list even further.

The staggering figure of employers using the phone to screen is over 50%. This is because it's not time effective or efficient to interview everyone face to face, the process is time consuming and labor intensive so it pays to further narrow down that list via phone.

So instead of interviewing 30 shortlist applicants, that number might be then screened down to just 3 which is a more manageable figure with the advantage of getting the distillation of the best of the best. If an employer has a difficult time narrowing down the list they may enlist the help of associates by way of conference call.

Don't let this discourage you, it just means that you always have to be on your game, no matter what. The phone is also a great way to catch you off guard so plan ahead to avoid unexpected surprises. Be ready for anything.

Don't panic either, they've liked what they've seen on paper and have shortlisted you. They want to know more about you and want to know that you're the right candidate for the job.

Phone interviews can be challenging and adds a whole different dimension when you're trying to read the situation. Not being able to sight their physical body language tends to leave you guessing.



However, when talking on the phone, “smile”, you may feel like an idiot, but it actually works. Your smile permeates the phone and can be felt by the person on the other side, whoever said you can’t hear a smile?

### **So what are these questions?**

Your skills, experience and qualifications and the biggest one of all, salary. It’s important to know what you are currently worth at this moment so that you can convey numbers to the interviewer. This is so that they can gauge whether or not you fit into their organization in terms of waging structure and will want to test your flexibility on this. Other things they’ll be checking for is whether or not you are willing to relocate for the position.

Some other questions you might expect which helps them to deem if you’re a good fit:

- **Are you a team player or work better independently?**
- **How do you feel about re-locating?**
- **Do you have any prior commitments that would hinder you from working overtime?**
- **How do you work under pressure?**
- **How do you handle deadlines?**
- **Do you like routine or structure?**
- **Are you a leader or are you more comfortable in a support capacity?**

If you’ve read the accompaniment to this e-book “You’re Hired”, you’ll notice that there is a section specifically designated to these question types. They enable you to really examine yourself and your experience and scenarios where you’ve applied judgment and decision making. This helps to get you thinking about yourself so that you can think quickly on your feet in the event that you have to.

Don’t skip that section.

### **Questions To Ask**



Interviewers, over the phone will want some feedback from you and will want you to ask questions, even at this stage.

Being prepared with the right questions will ensure that you’re not thrown off especially if they call unannounced. Be prepared for any eventuality and you’ll beat out the

competition as they flounder and grasp for things to say but you'll never be at a loss for words.

What are the right questions? The kind targeted and specific to the organization you're applying to. No generic questions. These questions should show you're thinking seriously about the company and are valid. Also planning your questions ahead of time takes the pressure off being put on the spot. Remember the kinds of questions you ask are almost as important as the answers you give,

Another great thing about asking questions during the phone interview stage is that it thoroughly prepares you for the face to face meeting to come. You can bring facts pertinent to the company with you and gives you an edge in the real interview because it gives you insider information regarding the organization that only those interviewed via phone will have. That puts you in a very exclusive group.

### **Some questions for the interview:**

- **The person that held the position that I'm applying for, where are they going?**
- **When do you hope to fill the position by?**
- **With your expectations regarding my level of expertise, how do you see that translate to the job I'm applying for?**
- **What types of software packages will I have to be familiar with for the position?**
- **When do you intend to fill the job vacancy by?**
- **How would you explain the working environment and team dynamic within your organization?**
- **What were the challenges the last employee in this role faced?**
- **Is there room for development and advancement within your organization?**

This is like a cheat sheet of questions. Writing down all the answers the interviewer gives over the phone to these questions will give you a major edge in the interview. It not only demonstrates your knowledge within the company but it also breaks the ice by putting you on the inside.

Only those interviewed over the phone will be privy to this insider information so take advantage of it.

Also if there are any types of programs or software you must be versed in, gives you a little grace time to familiarize yourself with them prior to the interview. It also gives you an insight to the inner workings of the job and will get you extra brownie points during the in person interview.

## Tests



Depending upon the type of job you're applying for, do your homework ahead of time to determine if there are any tests you need to know about.

Some technical departments require you sit a test as part of the job application process and details can usually be located on the company's web site or by contacting a member of administration within the relevant department.

Testing is more a filtering process just as the pre-emptive telephone interview is and discourages applicants from applying for the sake of doing so. Those who are serious about the job and feel they are a good fit for the position won't be afraid to take a test if it means getting them one step closer to the position.

Don't let the thought of a test discourage you, if anything it only increases your chances and filters off the less serious candidates who are just trying their luck on the off chance they might get it. Prepare and take the test and you'll be light years ahead of the competition.

## Some things to consider

The things that your employer is looking for and how you'll be evaluated will be based on a few important things.

## Such as

- Education
- Qualifications
- Skill
- Experience
- Attitude
- Personality
- Leadership qualities
- Your core values and beliefs
- Ability to be part of a team
- How well you will fit into current company dynamics

- **Your references and how your colleagues view you**
- **General health**
- **Work attendance**
- **How you represent the company and your attitude towards it**

Of course, ultimately the thing that drives you closer to sealing the deal is having as many of the above as possible.

And remember that different employers give different value and weighting to different things, for example one employer may feel it important to have skills over qualifications while another may feel the opposite is true.

Some employers may like team players while others are looking for a leader.

Best thing is to try to be as well rounded as possible and to try and cover as many of the points above, although no one can be everything to everyone, to be as many as you can puts you in a good position and gives you the range to be suitable for a maximum number of jobs, just try to think of situations in your working life where you exhibited these qualities.

Don't forget that your experience and qualifications aren't the only points of interest to potential employers.

### **The Elephant In The Room - The Uncomfortable Questions**



What happens when you have an incident that you would rather strike off your resume?, such as a conflict with an employer?, which was why you got fired from your last job.

Don't try to hide it, embracing it shows confidence and ownership of responsibility. Sweeping it under the rug only raises more

questions which only to be answered by the disgruntled ex-employer anyway when the interviewer talks calls them to dig a little deeper.

Instead admit to it, be honest about it and the most important thing of all is to explain how you grew from it. How it made you a better person because of it. Employers love a redemption story and will be more willing to take a chance on you than if you were to hide it from plain sight.

Remember, the truth always comes out in the end, just make sure you have your say and there are always two sides to every story so do it with grace. Don't play yourself to be the victim, tell them what you learned, how you grew and progressed and overcame and do it all WITHOUT putting down the ex-employer. This is important because even though the person who's interviewing you may not be them, I can promise you more than you realize, they're looking at you through the same eyes.

If you put down your ex-employer, they're seeing themselves through your eyes and are thinking that if you ever move on for reasons that are less than cordial, will YOU do the same to them?

I remember when I left an earlier job of mine because my employer was incompetent and blamed her shortcomings on all of us staff in order to make herself look good once wage appraisal time came around, I left because of the office politics, she would not allow us to grow and by the end of it, I was unhappy. I needed a new challenge and a job where my employer would be open to my ideas and improvements, rather than be dismissive about it.

After speaking to a colleague about being honest and telling the next person interviewing me everything, I learned a valuable lesson.

As she put it so beautifully and eloquently and no doubt these words will be burned onto your brain too..."**DON'T PUKE ON YOURSELF!**"

I know she cared about me and only wanted the best but she was right. How you conduct yourself, and even though you're in the right, speaking ill of your last employer only reflects poorly on you. Doing so could shoot you in the butt making those interviewing you think twice about bringing you onboard. They wonder if they want to hire someone who is capable of the same and who could damage their reputation long after you've moved onto the next job position.

So keep positive and your attitude will pay off. Just to recap, I asked one of my old colleagues about that boss and she was encouraged to leave not long after me. Needless to say having very little staff left to blame your shortcomings on only leaves

the finger firmly pointed back at yourself, and ultimately being accountable for your own mistakes. Let's just say there was no one left to blame.

Karma baby.

When explaining such situations, only go into as much detail as they ask. Don't give away the farm unless you haven't completely answered the question and the employer is probing further and as the song says "accentuate the positive", "eliminate the negative" and the rest will just kind of fall into place.

Other issues may be a gap in your work history, perhaps because of a criminal incident. Maybe you were a stay at home parent raising a child?

Again, just fess up and be honest. What was your misdemeanor? What did you learn?, how did it make you a better person or a more productive member of society?

Something employers are interested in is if there was ever a situation where your ethics may have been challenged and what was the outcome?

Employers use these questions as flags, if an interviewee says they were never ethically challenged then it sends up a red flag to the employer. Unless you're perfect then of course you may have never been challenged in this respect. But for the majority of us mere mortals, it's best to admit it. They're not so much interested in the issue itself but rather how you dealt with it. What was the outcome?

Of course if you haven't been challenged in this respect, then by all means mention it, don't feel pressured to create a scenario for the sake of admitting something. Remember, always be honest.

If you were a stay at home parent which is an incredibly self less and honorable thing to be and more credit should be given to those taking up this challenge, you may have gaps in your work history but what did being a full time parent teach you?

Believe it or not but being a parent has workplace applications too such as time management, conflict resolution, working with sometimes difficult individuals, being eternally creative and thinking fast on your feet, planning, budgeting. If you think a little outside the box you can easily show how real world child rearing has its place in the workforce.

## **Weaknesses**

Employers want to know firsthand what your weaknesses are, think of some things that won't let you down or go against you. If you have weaknesses of concern, think of ways you're correcting this or ways that you've fixed this issue in the past. This lets your employer know you're a real person because if no one can spot flaws in themselves then you must be perfect, and let's face it no one is perfect.

Case in point, I once remember watching a documentary about what made a great comedian, it wasn't the most attractive people or the ones that were perfect and couldn't poke fun at themselves.

If you look throughout the ages, the comedians that made the most memorable long-lasting impressions were those who were inherently flawed and it was because it made them real and we could see ourselves in them, this is along a similar vein, that's not to say that you go on a fault finding mission and talk yourself right out of the job, what I'm saying is to be selective about what you decide to share, because they will bring it up, practice now and at least be prepared for it.

No employer expects you to be perfect. They want to know what makes you tick and if you avoid being honest then they miss the chance to get to know you and it could cost you the job, for goodness sakes they wanted to hear from you because you are on the shortlist from a ton of other competing candidates. You've made it this far, trust me, they want to hear from you. They're trying to size you up on how you can fit into their corporation.

One time I was thrown that question and within a second I replied "chocolate", the employer laughed, yes I say employer because he became mine 2 days later.

He found it humorous enough to break the ice for me to say that I sometimes try to do too much but I now know how to better allocate my time so that I'm pacing myself. He appreciated my honest answer, it made me real and I addressed how I dealt with the issue so that it was no longer a weakness.

The same goes for the opposite, be honest but don't shoot yourself in the foot by confessing everything. Be selective in what you share, give your shortcomings but how you dealt with them. This shows character and builds trust and respect that you not only admitted that you have weakness but that you were aware of it and progressed past it.

## Another Hot Topic of Debate - Salary



Employers want to know first and foremost that you want the job and that you're passionate about it, money although important is a secondary issue and the reality remains that it will always crop up, it's only a matter of time so don't feel the need to charge forward insisting you get some figures and estimates right away.

The most important thing is what you propose to bring to the table and the rest is all in the detail.

Don't worry; salary negotiation will come up, just be patient.

### What Can You Offer?

It's time to be the show pony prancing around the stables now. You're on display you've got to give it all you've got.

One of the more quintessential questions you can answer with complete purpose and clarity is what you can offer the company and what you hope to get from working there.

The priority should also be what you can bring to the table in terms of your abilities and skills but you need to know how you will answer this in advance because this is the question that is the tipping point for success or failure, it's the maker/breaker of the deal.

Write down your qualities on offer and what that means to the company, for example do your skills translate into more profits?, more time and efficiency in streamlined processes?, greater productivity?, etc.

It's not just enough to list your skills, that's great that you can design scheduling programs from scratch but what exactly does that mean?, why should the employer care?, if those custom designed scheduling systems allow the employers business to run with greater efficiency, it can save money with reduced man hours. Saved money equals greater profits.



If you focus on how your skills can be of benefit, you're on a winning track.

Another important point of interest is why you want to work for them, just as it's important to state what you bring to the table, what do you expect in return?

It shouldn't just be about the money, in fact using money as the answer is interview suicide. Focus on why you applied in the first place. Don't just give the token answer of wanting a new challenge, why do you want a new challenge? outline what you define as a new challenge because what you may deem as a challenge may be different from other applicants perceptions. What are you hoping to get with this company you weren't getting with the last one?

Think about what made you apply, what attracted you to the company. These deeper answers definitely set you apart than the token "new challenge" answers floating around in abundance out there, it also shows you as an independent thinker, something that will get you noticed head and shoulders above the others.

## **Outside Work Skills**

Did you know that your relevant work skills aren't just the only ones that are important? Your extra curricular skills are just as important too.

Just ensure that when you share these skills that they do have some relevance to the job position you're applying for.

For example to help buff up your skills, fundraising for your church's roof can also have workplace relevance. It enabled you to manage resources, organize and manage a team and to network with sponsors and within the community. This is a great skill with real world application and experience that can be tied to the job you're going for.

For instance, that networking could come in handy with networking within the business community and with forming business relationships and bonds, a real asset to any organization especially in terms of growth and expansion.

Something else to your credit is to keep your jobs evaluations especially with respect to wage rises, hitting targets and KPI (Key Performance Indicators) which shows ambition, determination, hard work, achievement and that your wages continue to rise showing progression through the ranks,

Organizations love to feel they've snapped up a person with potential especially when it's been at another company's expense, they get to enjoy the fruits of your training, learning and achievement where you will slot in and continue to perform and achieve the same for them.

So list everything you can. Having this knowledge at the forefront of your mind makes it easy to recall when you're in the actual interview and it shows that you know yourself and what you've achieved, it gives a very real sense of self awareness and individual worth.

## **Mock Interview**

It's vital that you practice ahead of time. If you did get the phone interview, keep a note of these questions to answer in the real interview.

Why is it important to have a mock interview? to get a feel for the real thing. You're also training your mind of what to expect, when you've practiced something in advance it has a certain element of familiarity to it so that when it comes to taking the real interview you feel as though as you've already done it before. This helps you be more calm and relaxed when it comes to the real thing.

Top Olympic training programs train athletes to visualize winning before they've even stepped onto a running track. This way they visualize the state of mind and mental preparedness required to perform at their peak. When they get to the running track because they've been there in mind, they follow in body. The next step of running at the top performance becomes second nature to them.

The same also applies for you.

If you visualize being calm, in control of yourself, armed with the right questions and answers then you're grooming yourself to win. When you get to the real interview you feel as though you've done this before, you're not out of your comfort zone and you're truly mentally prepared for what comes next.

It's incredible just how unprepared people are for the interview. They assume that every interview will be the cookie cutter same when they're not. They don't bother to do their research ahead of time and just hope to squeak in under the radar and wing it. If you want anything in life, you have to prepare for it, you have to purposely pursue it.

Write down your questions and get your friend or sister, mother, father, brother, cousin, aunty or uncle to interview you. Get them to ask those questions and to throw in some of their own. Even though a familiar face will be sitting directly in front of you, you'd be amazed at how the mood changes the minute you're faced with an interview type situation, family or not which is good.

Getting practice like this cements your answers so that they become ingrained and they flow without you having to force them and "um" and "ah" your way painfully through your answers.

The more you do this, the more comfortable you become with the whole process.

Get feedback from each person so that you can make improvements where necessary. What questions did you stumble on? What was your body language?, your facial features? Which questions could you have answered better? Make a list and then strengthen those areas,

### **Some mock interview questions to consider**

- **What attracted to the company to apply for the position?**
- **What makes you the best candidate for the job over everyone else?**
- **Why do you have regular gaps in your work history?**
- **Where do you expect to be within 5 years time?**
- **How did you hear about the company?**
- **Why should I give you the job?**
- **What makes you the ideal fit for the organization?**
- **What skills can you bring to the company?**
- **How did you get into this particular line of work?**
- **Why did you leave your last job?**
- **What do you hope to achieve within this organization?**
- **What do you hope to contribute to this company?**
- **What would you say are your major weaknesses?**
- **What were the main challenges of your last job and how did you overcome them?**

Whatever you do, don't give answers like "I'm desperate", "I need the money", "I'm broke so please just give me the job now", even if you are. Turn that desperate energy into fire in your belly, let it motivate you to be better and to be on top of your game. No employer likes desperation, it makes you view them as nothing more than a means to end, they want someone energetic and passionate about their organization and what you can contribute to it, not just what you intend to get out of it.

By focusing on your attributes and what you can bring will steer you closer to the job than to be boldly upfront and brutally honest which could cost you the job.

Remember, it's about what you can do for them, keep that in mind and you won't go wrong. When you satisfy this you'll get what you want.

### **Why Exactly Do You Want the Job?**

Let them why you want the job. If it's true let them know how their core values and beliefs tie in with your own.

Tell them what drew you to their company and why you can see yourself as their next employee, cheeky I know but what employer doesn't like that?

Confidence is appealing and will mark you as a leader for the job. Be careful however, this is a double edge sword, confidence is great, in fact it's a must however too much and you can come across as arrogant which can hurt your chances.

Your confidence should always be directed at the company and what you can bring to it rather than the focus to be entirely on you.

For example, "Why I chose to work for Firth & Meyer is because I've been following your company's progress throughout the years and am impressed with the amount of growth and development your firm has experienced. With my skills I would like to contribute further to that growth by.....", then give details to back this up with.

### **Pre-Interview Jitters**

It's perfectly normal to be nervous before the interview. Just remember what we discussed about visualization, just as athletes training for the Olympics do. This is the same thing it's literally the best contender winning the race.

Pre-visualize yourself there, calm and collected, in control of yourself.

Be aware of your body language, don't fidget; don't be awkward because this puts yourself and the interviewer on edge. Nervous energy is contagious so try to minimize it.

Make sure you get a good night's rest the night before the will ensure you perform to the best of your abilities.

Studies have also revealed that getting a good nights rest also helps you to retain more information as a result of the REM, or truly deep sleep. This helps you to easily recall the information you need for your interview.

If your schedule allows for it, lose some of that pre-jitter energy by going for an early morning walk, this helps to clear your head and helps you to focus on the task at hand. Try the gym if a walk's not practical.

Get your head in the right space by not only visualizing things going well but also give yourself positive affirmations and read encouraging quotes.

If we are what we eat then we're also what we think.

Long distance marathon runners can't leave any room for doubt when they're at that difficult halfway point. Even the slightest inkling of negativity can cost them the race.

Don't allow negative thoughts to creep into your mind. Quickly replace them with uplifting and encouraging thoughts, you can't afford to let doubt even dip it's little toe into your thoughts. You control what you think so fill your mind with great stuff.

You'll be amazed how it works on your subconscious and how it makes you feel euphoric.

Believe me; this will permeate to the interviewer, giving them good vibes about you.

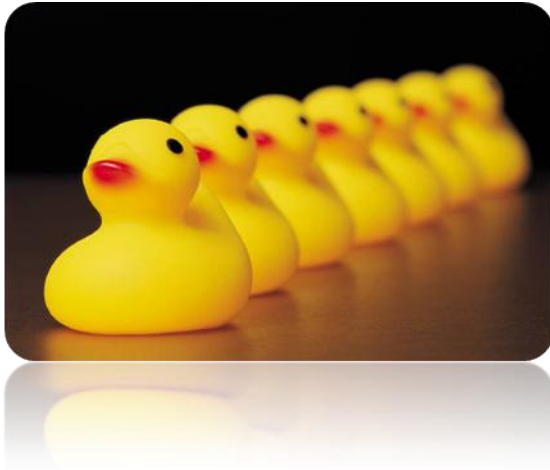
You can also listen to your iPod or your MP3 player with positive speakers like Anthony Robbins, Napoleon Hill, Zig Ziglar or the Secret which comes as an audio CD that you can listen to in your car.

Listen to calming music which also helps put you in a calm state of mind.

Most importantly, don't forget to breathe.

The jobs is yours, you've come this far, now you just have to get it.

## Getting All Your Ducks In A Row



It's important to make sure that you are aptly prepared for the interview.



### Pre-interview checklist:



Do you know where you'll be going?



What time is the interview?



Do you have all relevant documentation, and supporting

evidence, i.e. resume, degrees, achievements, certificates, work portfolio if required, references, performance assessments, listed work achievements, etc.



Have you practiced some interview questions and answers?



Have you come up with some intelligent questions of your own?

## The Interview Process

It's no fluke that you made it this far it's actually the result of well executed steps.

You applied for the job that best matches your current qualities and skill set and you beautifully crafted your cover letter, followed by your resume. Both got read and got you shortlisted for a pre-emptive phone interview. You made it past this hurdle and have moved on to the actual face to face job interview. Remember luck had nothing to do with it, you created your own luck here and do you know what this means?

You found a series of winning steps that work. Continue to repeat this and you'll be able to land practically any job you apply for.

So congratulations for making it this far, it had nothing to do with the stars aligning and everything to do with how you systematically when about the process as a whole which means repeating this process will bring similar results and outcomes for you each and every time.

Let's get to it.

## Making That Impression

## Be Early



For starters, before speaking to the employer, in fact before even meeting them, know where you're going. You need to be early!

What I do is drive to the location a day or two ahead, I time how long it takes me to get there and then I factor in an extra 45 minutes for traffic. That way I know that no matter what happens, even with congested traffic during rush hour, I won't be late. Factor in rush hour where you live, you may need more time than 45 minutes so allow yourself as much time as you need.

I usually check out parking. If they don't have onsite parking is there a car park nearby that I can go to instead? How far is it from the location?, how long will it take me to walk without working up a big sweat? The last thing I want to do is turn up 5 minutes before the interview with melted make up or sweat stains on my new shirt puffing away with exhaustion. Remember, first impressions are everything and you don't get a second chance to make them.

You'd be amazed how many people wing this and blame everything on traffic and the unexpected from happening when all they needed was a little planning and forethought. Don't let this happen to you.

## Attire and Appearance



Dressing for success is serious business. Always dress your best, employers are sizing you up to see if how you dress will reflect on the company's image in a positive or a negative light.

Seeing your choice in attire determines how you will dress and represent the company you work for and how you will fit in with their image. Even more so important if you are seen by customers and work on the company's front line, for example customer service, reception, sales, etc.

Cover up and dress professionally, once you're hired then dress to suit the conditions and the office environment but don't just assume you can show up in a

pair of camouflage pants and t-shirt if you're applying for the role of outdoors activity chairperson.

Best to be safe than sorry.

Wear the professional clothes in your wardrobe that gives you the most confidence. Wear clothing that suits your shape. Wearing darker colors are more empowering. The pin stripe look is timeless and never goes out of fashion.

Have an appearance checklist. This can be easy to take for granted while you're busy focusing on interview questions and answers and gathering the relevant credentials.

- **Is your hair clean and groomed?**
- **Are your nails clean and tidily presented?**
- **Have your clothes been ironed or dry cleaned where necessary?**
- **Have you ensured that any spots or stains have been removed from your interview attire?**
- **Are your shoes clean and polished?**
- **Does your briefcase contain all relevant certification, qualifications, portfolio's organized and ready for presentation?**
- **Minimal fragrances, stay away from strong, overpowering scents like perfumes and go light on the cologne. What may be appealing to you may be overwhelming and distracting to an interviewer in close proximity of you**
- **Breath fresheners**
- **Wear conservative colors and prints**
- **Natural makeup and a minimum amount of jewelry**

The last thing you want to be remembered for over your suitability for the job is the person who wore too much cologne or make up. Tone it down remember you're making a first impression.

### **A couple of things**

Be selective in what you choose to eat the day of your interview.

Avoid onions, garlic or spicy foods as these tend to linger on your breath and can overpower your interviewer especially within close proximity of them.

Make sure that you use deodorant if you tend to sweat with nerves.



Don't eat before an interview, especially saucy foods, don't drink too much either incase you have to dash off to the little girls or little boys room.

Eating before an interview you might experience an unfortunate wardrobe malfunction with a dab of sauce landing on your brand new suit jacket or white shirt. If you have to eat, eat sauce-less, clear foods or try an apple.

Lose weight and work on your body if you need to drop a few pounds. I know, we live in a world that is obsessed with physical perfection and we ourselves are also judged accordingly. No one is exempt, it's the unspoken law of the human jungle where we already form and base our opinions about a person long before they've even uttered a word.

Unfortunately, this is unfair yet a very real part of the working world. If you are larger you are deemed lazy, not as intelligent, not as motivated and a health risk.

If you are sloppy in appearance then subconsciously you are deemed to produce a similar quality of work. If you are sloppy then it is unfairly assumed that your work will be also, which couldn't be further from the truth.

The discrimination against weight is never uttered but rather rears its ugly head in the form of not getting additional interviews or securing the job. That's not to say that you may not have been the right candidate based upon your skills and experience but that physical appearance does play a role and anyone saying differently is lying.

I can speak from my own experience incase I may be offending anyone. I used to be 300 pounds and never got called back for a second interview or ever got the job.

I knew I was being judged and I could feel it. People had preconceived notions of me that I knew were wrong, but how could you deflate those perceptions when it was never openly expressed?

It wasn't until I was determined to take my fate into my own hands that with purpose and dogged determination that I lost the weight.

After I dropped 100 pounds I was getting my pick of the crop and the sad thing was that people treated me differently, with more respect, they made greater eye contact with me rather than treating me like an object.

I was now in their eyes treated as a person, an equal they suddenly valued my opinion more even though what I said 100 pounds earlier was no different. Isn't that interesting?

I won't lie, some of it had to do with my own perceptions of myself. I was feeling better, more attractive, more confident and it showed. The way I was responding also had an effect of the way I was treated in return.

I don't say this to depress you, only to express it as a reality, that whether we know it or not, we are being judged and more so for obese people.

If you are in that category and need to lose weight, do it for your health and your confidence and do it safely by eating good, healthy foods, getting plenty of low impact exercise and most importantly by losing it slowly. This ensures that it stays off for the life.

## **The Handshake**



Upon your 5 to 10 minute early arrival, give a good firm handshake when meeting the interviewer for the first time.

What your handshake says about you, in fact since just about everything has a degree of measurability these days, from your personality IQ to your emotional IQ, now comes, you guessed it, the "handshake" IQ.

Your handshake can make a difference to your prospective employers perception of you. Believe it or not, handshakes can speak volumes of you and leave a subconscious impression of you.

What your handshake reveals about you:

Strong, overpowering handshakes, the equivalent of the wrestling world's knuckle crushing grip of death – yes this probably will make you stand out but not in a positive way.

The weak, slippery fish handshake that leaves no lasting impression and can subconsciously make the interviewer think that you're a little distant and aloof. The best kind of handshake is a confident one, firm with a moderate amount of pressure with good eye contact.

## **Eye Contact**

We human beings are all about eye contact, however this is a fine line to balance, too little eye contact can give the indication that you lack confidence and may not be right for the job and too much staring can be a little overwhelming. The key is to strike up the right balance.

Make eye contact, but not too intense. You should break your eye contact every 20 to 30 seconds, you don't want to fix your stare for minutes on end, not only will you look deranged but the interviewer will think that you're trying to stare them down and feel perhaps a little uneasy.

## **Body Language**

Half of everything we say is nonverbal. Body language is an art within itself, how you carry yourself, how you sit can speak volumes of you even before you utter a word.

Notice how we haven't even gotten around the point of talking yet and the reason why is because this is so important, because this ultimately determines how you come across and will give what you say even greater meaning and impact.

Keep your body language open, don't fold your arms or cross your legs, this creates a barrier between yourself and the interviewer and can make you look uneasy and uncomfortable.

Use your hands to display energy and enthusiasm when answering questions, but within reason.

## **When In Rome**

Make eye contact and don't forget that you're a guest in their surroundings, don't escort yourself into the office without being guided to and don't sit down until instructed to or unless they do so. As they say "when in Rome", do as the Romans do. Follow their lead.

Avoid getting anything to drink when offered, unless completely parched this only hinders, distracts and gets in the way. This is not a social visit and they'll be plenty of time to grab something to drink after the interview.

If you have cottonmouth from a few pre-interview nerves then it's a good idea to grab something to drink beforehand to avoid running out of steam mid sentence as you do with a dry mouth. This makes you look even more nervous, so because you're brilliant and you've arrived a little early you have the time to do this. Grab a drink from the trusty drinking fountain or water cooler.

Prior to commencing an interview, most hiring managers and employers engage in small talk to break the ice, this also gives them an insight into your personality, your demeanor, attitude outside of the scope of the interview because once that interview begins, it's all business from there and you have to have your game face on.

Small talk is also of great way of getting you comfortable and settled in, it also is great way to gauge your responses and reactions to everyday questions.

For example, if they ask if were able to find the building without any problems, instead of saying that you struggled with the directions because they were so sketchy and it almost made you late, always opt for the positive. You don't want to insult the interviewer before you've even began.

Even though the interview hasn't officially started yet, they're using ever scrap of information about you to base their decision on, including how you reacted to directions, traffic, weather, etc. If you complain over little things they read it as translating through to the office. Be careful what you say. Make light of bad situations because this ultimately shows how you work under pressure.

## Scan the Room

Definitely an advantage you don't get over the phone, being at the interview is an advantage. You get to do things you never could over the phone.



Remember you're coming in from the cold, you have to be like a detective and find something about this person. You can do this by quickly scanning the room for awards, degrees, photos, trophies, pets, anything that will give you some common ground to share.

Find anything around the office that you can use to connect with the interviewer which can be part of your icebreaking pre-interview small talk.

### **Be Your Best Self**

Be the best version of yourself, bring your best to the interview.

Next to your skills, qualifications and experience, your personality ranks highly on the list of important factors when determining your success with the job.

Why is your personality so important if you possess all of the skills necessary for the position? Everyone relies on somebody, even if you work in a leadership role, your job is to govern, motivate, oversee and make sure the job gets done. If you don't have the appropriate people skills you won't be as successful.

Especially in jobs that require the input or the dependence upon others to get done where strong working relationships are integral to the success of the job completion.

How do you work with others? Do you treat others with the same respect you expect in return?

If you can't blend into an office dynamic, it won't be as effective as it could be.

### **How About A Little Change?**

Are you open to change, growth, progress, development, improvement?

The more you grow and change and delve further into your chosen field or branch out into others shows your flexibility to evolve.

It's good to think of yourself as someone who can adapt to suit the current marketplace, especially with the unpredictable times we live in. Those who are the most flexible will have the most longevity.

Rather than think of yourself as a fixed entity with a set amount of potential, your ability to grow and adapt is limitless opening you up to a world of new opportunities.

Don't limit yourself.

### **The Dance**

You could liken the interview process to a tango, lots of give and take. As one dancer advances forward, with anticipation and with poetic and rhythmic precision, the other, retreats back.

A great interview is an equal meeting of the minds, it's a lot like a dance of give and take, the questions asked must be balanced with answers, as are your questions for the employer. They want to know your questions; anyone who genuinely wants the job must have their own, unique questions pertinent to them.

If you don't have questions, you're trying too hard to make it look as though they've answered them all.

Asking questions makes you memorable and shows you're paying attention. They may have highlighted a point that you need more clarification on and they love this, it shows you're listening.

Remember if you're genuinely interested it has to be give and take, you're dancing the dance. They want interaction with you and to know they're not just talking to a brick wall.

Can't think of any questions? This is what the pre-interview process is all about, be armed with great questions so that you're prepared ahead of time and so that you can pull them out of a magician's hat should you need them.

The worst thing to do is to be caught like a deer in the headlights with nothing to say.

That's not to say that you should ask every question that pops into your head, just the relevant ones, there must be balance, asking too many questions can throw the interviewer off their game and disturb the rhythm and pace of the interview which can be distracting. It's good practice to save questions for the end of the interview to avoid this situation.

When asking questions, if you're unsure of a particular word, phrase, terminology ask for clarification before answering to make sure that your answers aren't way off base leaving the interviewer wondering if you even know what you're talking about.

### **What The Employer Is Looking For**

Upon first impressions the employer is looking for your energy and enthusiasm. Smile as you make eye contact, show that you're engaged and that you've shown up to the interview both physically and mentally and emotionally too. They want to know they have your full attention and that you're interested.



With your body language, be open, sit upright in your chair, don't slouch. Slouching conveys to the interviewer that you lack energy, perhaps you lack energy for the high pressure job you're applying for which could take you out of the running. Don't forget you're being sized up as a good candidate for the job and whether or not you'd make a good fit for the working environment.

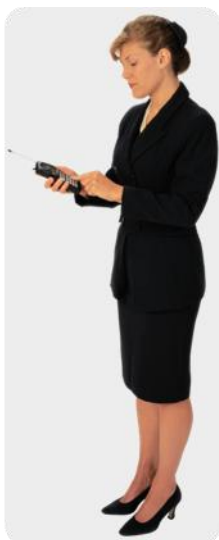
## **The Panel Interview**

Don't be intimidated by this. This is a time and cost effective way of interviewing. Rather than having several interviews with various people throughout the organization you only have one with 3 or 4 people present.

Always acknowledge and maintain eye contact with them all; devoting the same and equal amount to each person. Don't just favor one over the other, even if it is the product of nerves, this will alienate the others whose fate will lie in their hands, so don't leave anyone out.



Being interviewed by a panel can be a great experience and at this point those interviewing know that you've been shortlisted down to this point and all they really want to do is talk to you, assess if you're right for the environment and would melt into a team dynamic. So, don't be intimidated if you're faced with this type of scenario, be grateful that interviews conducted in this manner mean less interviews overall.



## **Communication**

Communication is the single most important factor when being interviewed. It's not enough to have all of the necessary skills, if you can't convey ideas and information with clarity, you could be at a disadvantage.

Being articulate is a major advantage because you're able to convey what's down on paper and further elaborate on things that aren't.

Communication skills are vital for working within any kind of environment, for example presenting and putting forward ideas and information, communicating and expressing concepts to team members, giving clear instructions where project completion and meeting deadlines depends upon your input, etc.

So if you lack in that department or you're not particularly comfortable with communicating with co-workers, practice. Take a course. You are being judged on this matter, it also instills confidence in you and shows that you know your stuff.

## **Be Honest**

In addition to being a good fit for the company and answering the questions in the best possible manner, don't be forced into a box just for the sake of getting the job.

Be honest, you may have a particular noteworthy skill in program applications but if you would prefer to spend your time involved in project management, then tell them.

It's no good painting a particular image if that's not the side of your skills you would primarily like to concentrate on. Not disclosing this information could mean that you're not happy within the job and could eventuate in you leaving 6 months down the track.

It's important for them to know this upfront to gauge your longevity within the firm.

They want you for the long term because to invest in training and development is expensive and they want to know it won't be wasted should you decide to leave on a whim.

## **The Interview**

Here are some more common types of interview questions to expect.

The types of questions they ask and what they hope to reveal about you.

Being honest the company knows where they stand with you and vice versa. They appreciate honesty as it helps them to make a fair judgment based upon what you've revealed about yourself.



- How about navigating through the tougher questions such as:
- past brushes with law be honest they're only going to find out anyway
- patchy work history
- frequent job exchanges and jobs of different varieties
- why you haven't progressed throughout the company
- Why your pay scale hasn't changes
- Why you left
- Why you were fired
- If you're returning to the workforce
- If you have children
- If you can only work part time
- How will you react in difficult situations
- Lack of education
- Lack of experience

### **Common Interview Questions In More Depth:**



The types of questions that will be asked are designed to draw out information from you. This allows the interviewer to get a good feel for the kind of person you are.

It demonstrates company knowledge and posing unusual questions tests to see how quickly you can think on your feet, especially the kind where you're asked what your co-workers and management team think of you. They want to know if you're confident enough to list your strengths while unveiling others perceptions of you.

### **1. Personality**

1. Do you have a happy and positive disposition?
2. Do you compliment and praise others?
3. Do you uplift others to do and be their best?
4. Do you give service without harboring resentment or anger?
5. Does your work stimulate and motivate you?
6. Do you have a positive attitude towards trials and problems that arise and do you tackle and resolve these issues quickly?
7. Do you have a positive attitude towards difficult tasks?
8. Are you the kind of person your co-workers and others enjoy being around?
9. Do you look for solutions rather than to focus on the problem?

10. Do you enjoy giving others the opportunity for growth, even if it means taking a back seat to an important project?

## **2. Teamwork**

1. Are you a co-operative within a team environment?
2. Do you set realistic and achievable deadlines?
3. Do you trust your teammates when delegating project tasks?
4. Do you value the suggestions of coworkers when working on specific tasks?
5. Do yourself and your coworkers collectively contribute to the decision making process?
6. Do you comfortably share the praise equally with your coworkers?
7. Are you respectful of your coworkers differences and values?
8. Do you see the strengths in your coworkers and delegate tasks accordingly?
9. Do you remain energetic about a project even when those around you aren't?
10. Do enjoy working collaboratively as opposed to individually?

## **3. Work Ethic**

1. Do you handle prioritizing well?
2. Do you remain completely focused on a project at all times until it's completed?
3. Do you experience a feeling of accomplishment when a project is completed?
4. Do you improve systems and processes on an ongoing basis?
5. Do you have a backup plan when your projects don't according to plan?
6. Can you anticipate potential problems before they occur?
7. Does your work excite and invigorate you?
8. Do you embrace new challenges?
9. Do you completely commit to the project at hand?
10. Are you available to others when they need your help?

## **4. Decision Making**

1. Do you respect the views and opinions of others?
2. Do you weigh up all points of view before making a decision?
3. Are you spontaneous or patient?
4. Do difficult decisions take you out of your comfort zone?
5. Do you handle change well or do you struggle to cope?
6. Do you ensure that you ask plenty of questions to get the overall picture?
7. Do you consider the project as a whole instead of segments?
8. How do you react when your suggestions are rejected?
9. Do you have a good vision for the project you're engaged in?
10. Do you have the ability to adapt to change?

## **5. Focus**

1. Are you an advocate of idea sharing from your peers?
2. Do you strive to get the best possible results?
3. Do you constantly strive to achieve your best?
4. Are you self motivated and disciplined?
5. Are you adaptable and trade your current methods for better, more efficient ones?
6. Do you focus on the task at hand and see it through to completion?
7. Do you encourage feedback and suggestions from other team players?
8. Do you constantly look for opportunities to learn and progress?
9. Are you able to focus on the task at hand even when distractions are taking place around you?
10. You can pinpoint your contribution to the project based on your skills and expertise?

## **6. Accountability**

1. Do you avoid pointing the finger and blaming others?
2. Are you able to claim responsibility should a task go wrong?
3. Are you a fair team player?
4. Do you refrain from labeling yourself as a victim?
5. Do you rise to the challenge and work hard to achieve the best results?
6. Are you able to share credit with others?
7. Do you aspire to achieve better if the outcome of your project was less than desired?
8. Do you win ethically but still welcome the spirit of competition?
9. Are you honest when a project fails?
10. Do you tell the truth but still respect the privacy and confidentiality of others?

## **7. Communication**

1. Do you listen to and respect everyone in your team from the janitor to the CEO?
2. Do you think before you speak?
3. Are you a confident communicator and enjoy one on one conversation?
4. Are you able to communicate simply complex processes?
5. Do you ask for clarification if you are unsure of a question or do you attempt to answer it anyway?
6. Are you able to filter through terminology and zero in on pertinent facts?
7. Do you avoid gossip and less than savory conversation?
8. Do you make eye contact when communicating?
9. Do you value the time of others by keeping dialogue brief?
10. Do you enjoy up-skilling and progressing in your current field?

## **8. Customer Service**

1. Do you give prompt service with a good attitude and a smile?
2. Do you put the customer first?
3. Do you pride yourself on giving the best customer service possible?
4. Are you aware that your job centers around customer satisfaction?
5. Do you promptly return all phone calls?
6. Do you have the ability to resolve matters quickly and efficiently before they escalate?
7. Is customer feedback and evaluation important to you?
8. Do you take customer feedback and use it to improve your performance?
9. Is your attitude positive even while resolving customer conflicts?
10. Do you relish challenges and enjoy improving and growing?

## **9. Quality**

1. Are you committed to excellence?
2. Do you reflect on your mistakes and use them to improve?
3. Do you engage in question asking to get the best out of your teammates?
4. Do you take pride in your work?
5. Do you give credit where it is due?
6. Does a challenge drain or invigorate you?
7. Do you respect and value differing opinions and viewpoints?
8. Do you welcome client or customer feedback for the purpose of improvement?
9. Do you look for ways to improve practices and processes?
10. Do you view mistakes as learning experiences?

## **10. Diplomacy**

1. Do you avoid criticizing your coworkers or looking for a scapegoat when a project fails?
2. Are you able to take into consideration all sides of an argument?
3. Do you consider yourself a mediator?
4. Are you gracious and patient?
5. Do you take into consideration all points of view?
6. Do you accept responsibility for problems rather than passing them off to others?
7. Are you calm when a project goes wrong?
8. Do you react or respond when a situation doesn't go according to plan?
9. Do you have a positive attitude and outlook when things go wrong?
10. Do you value your coworkers and give positive feedback for their achievements?

## The Post Interview Process

### Directly after the interview

- Time for reflection, how do you think you did?
- What you could have done better?
- What could you learn for next time incase things don't go according to plan?
- What insight did they share that would be of benefit to you in the future?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- What do you feel you need to change for the better?
- What kinds of things could you have done more of?, engage in more eye contact?, listen better, take more time to answer, not being shy to ask for clarification.

Follow up, jog their memory so that you're still fresh in their minds. This shows that you're keen and demonstrates your level of commitment.

Practice, plan and prepare and you'll pluck the jobs right out of your competitors hands.

Good luck to you (although you don't need it) and I wish you all the success.