

INTERVIEW SKILLS & PREPARATION

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BEFORE INTERVIEW

Compiled by Saravanan Thangavel

BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW

These steps
are important!

- ❑ Research the Company
- ❑ Plan for the Interview
- ❑ Plan your journey
- ❑ Make list of questions you want to ask
- ❑ Decide and prepare what your are going to wear
- ❑ Gather together the information you'll need at the interview

RESEARCH THE COMPANY

- If you are invited to an interview you should spend some time researching the company as this will give you confidence should you be asked any question on what the company does.
- It will also allow you to ask the employer questions. You could contact the company to ask for an information pack or you could look at their website.

RESEARCH THE COMPANY

The company website may help a lot!

- It's helpful to find out the following things about the employer:
 - What they do, make or sell?
 - Who are their customers?
 - What sort of organization are they?
 - What is the job likely to involve?
 - How can you best fit your skills to match the job?

PLANNING FOR THE INTERVIEW

- ❑ Find out what the interview will involve to make sure you're prepared
- ❑ Contact the employer if you need them to make particular arrangements for you – for example, to help you get into the building, if you have a disability.
- ❑ Find out how long the interview is likely to last
- ❑ Find out if you will have to take a test or make a presentation
- ❑ Find out the dress code (if possible) but if you are not sure just make sure you look professional and presentable with fresh, ironed clothes and clean, smart shoes

PLAN YOUR JOURNEY

- ❑ Find out the distance to your interview
- ❑ Consider travelling to the company the day before to check how long the journey will take
- ❑ Find out the bus routes or details of where you can park your car
- ❑ Plan another way of getting there in case something unexpected happens

CREATE THE RIGHT IMAGE

- First impressions is one of the most important things! How you look and what you wear will be vital, so it is important to look professional, even if you are applying for a casual job.
 - ▣ Your clothes should be neat and clean
 - ▣ Keep your shoes in good condition
 - ▣ Your hair should be neatly styled
 - ▣ For women: makeup should be subtle
 - ▣ Nails should be clean, neat and of reasonable length

BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW

□ Male

- **Suit** - Navy or Black. Belt
- **Shirt** - Long sleeve, White shirt or coordinated with suit, with black tie. Keep it simple Shoe Smart, comfortable,
- **Shoe** - preferably black. The shoe should match the color of your suit. Dark socks.
- **Jewellery** - Watch or wedding band. Earrings should not be worn and chain should not be on show.
- **Hair** - Clean and neat professional look, low cut.
- **Nails** - Clean and neatly trimmed.

BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW

- Female
 - ▣ **Suit** - Navy, Black or dark grey
 - ▣ **Skirt** - Good length so that you are able to sit comfortably
 - ▣ **Shirt** - White shirt or colour co-ordinated blouse
 - ▣ **Shoe** - Smart, comfortable, conservative shoe, no extra high heels or high platform, no trainers or snow boots.
 - ▣ **Jewellery** - Not excessive. Hair Clean, neat and not brightly coloured.
 - ▣ **Make-up** - Light makeup, no heavy eye shadow or lip liner.
 - ▣ **Nails** - Neutral nail colour, good manicure and clean.

GET WHAT YOU NEED

- Gather together the information you'll need at the interview
 - ▣ Remember to take a copy of your CV or application form to refer to and prepare notes or cue cards to help, if you think it might need a prompt during the interview.
 - ▣ Take items the employer has asked you to bring along - for example: references, certificates or your driving license.
 - ▣ Re-read the job advert to refresh your memory and to make sure you haven't missed anything.

BODY LANGUAGE

“Having the best CV and all the right answers to testing interview questions won’t get you anywhere if your body language gives an entirely different message.”

- ▣ Research has shown that tone of voice and body language accounts for 65% of what’s communicated, words 35%.
- ▣ Body language can give away our feelings, regardless of whether we keep our mouths shut or not.

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DURING INTERVIEW

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BEFORE STARTING INTERVIEW

- ❑ Firm handshake - A good handshake should be vertically palm to palm, with a firm grip, while maintaining eye contact
- ❑ Keep your body language open and relaxed - Closed hand movements and crossed arms give the impression of being defensive. By sitting comfortably with your back against the chair you will appear confident
- ❑ Good eye contact is essential during an interview

BODY LANGUAGE

- Positive Body Language:
 - ▣ Responsive/Eager: Leaning forward, open arms, nodding
 - ▣ Listening: Head tilted, constant eye contact, nodding
 - ▣ Attentive: Smiling
- Negative Body Language:
 - ▣ Bored: Slumped posture, foot tapping
 - ▣ Rejection: Arms folded, head down
 - ▣ Aggression: Leaning too far forward, finger pointing
 - ▣ Lying: Touching face, hands over mouth, eyes averted, shifting position,
 - ▣ Ignoring/Not Interested: Glancing around

VOICE

- It is important to project yourself confidently and clearly. Practice and try to be aware of the following:
 - ▣ Use a range of tones, avoid monotone
 - ▣ Pause before speaking
 - ▣ Speak slightly slower than normal
 - ▣ Don't mumble or gabble excitedly
 - ▣ Keep your hands away from your mouth as you speak
 - ▣ Watch your pitch and dynamics (high-pitched voices are tough on the ears)
 - ▣ Let your voice show your enthusiasm and keenness

WHO TO ADDRESS

- ❑ Always look at the person questioning you
- ❑ Direct your answer to the questioner
- ❑ Glance around to engage the whole panel Hints and Tips :
 - ▣ Listen to and understand what the interviewer is asking or saying to you
 - ▣ Don't hurry to speak (usually out of nervousness, sometimes out of overconfidence) they won't be able to fully hear what has been said if you rush

HOW TO ADDRESS

- ❑ There is also the danger that you hear what you want to hear rather than what is actually being said
- ❑ Avoid preconceptions; give the other person your full attention
- ❑ Wait for them to finish what they are saying, be open-minded, not prejudiced
- ❑ If you're not sure what the interviewer means, ask for clarification; it doesn't mean you are stupid! In fact just the opposite

HOW TO ADDRESS

- You want to present yourself in the best possible light throughout the interview process:
 - ▣ Keep to the point
 - ▣ Be clear
 - ▣ Know the appropriate jargon
 - ▣ Speak with confidence
 - ▣ Keep your answers positive
 - ▣ Be honest and open with replies
 - ▣ Give plenty of work related examples
 - ▣ Be enthusiastic

HOW TO EXIT

- Leave as smoothly and politely as possible:
 - ▣ Do not add any afterthoughts
 - ▣ Thank the Interviewer or panel for their time through the Chair
 - ▣ Don't let the success of your future depend on trying to find out how you interview on the day
 - ▣ Take time to practice
 - ▣ Practice develops performance in all things; interviews are no exception

AFTER INTERVIEW

Follow up

ANALYZE THE INTERVIEW

- ❑ It is one of the most important exercises to do post an interview.
- ❑ Sit down for a few minutes and write down the questions that you were asked during the interview.
- ❑ Furthermore, assess your responses to these questions and make points of things that you forgot to mention or would have said in a better way.
- ❑ This will help you prepare better for future interviews.

INFORM YOUR REFERENCES

- Inform your references beforehand that they might receive a call from the company you interviewed for.
- Speak to them about the position and emphasize the points that you would like to be recommended for.

WRITE A THANK YOU NOTE

- After your job interview, the first follow-up should be a thank you note; preferably a handwritten letter sent through the mail, which is more likely to be read, but an email on time is better than nothing. You should always send a note to every person you interviewed with, no later than 24 hours after the interview. Keep these things in mind in your note:
 - **Be brief, friendly, and conversational.** You've already had the job interview, so let your gratitude and personality show a little bit.
 - **Restate your interest in the job** and any relevant details on why you're qualified.
 - **Thank the potential employer for their time** as job interviews can require employers to set aside a lot of time, often forcing them to push off work.
 - The thank you note is also an excellent opportunity to **add any significant information you may have forgotten to say in the interview.**

GET FEEDBACK

- ❑ Once the process is complete, try to get feedback from your interviewers on how you performed, and how well your skills matched the position on offer.
- ❑ If you didn't get the job or contract, learn whatever lessons you can to increase your chances of success in the future.
- ❑ And if you were successful, you'll know which areas you can improve on when you start your new role.

IF YOU'RE OFFERED THE JOB

- You now need to gather all the information you can about your role.
- This is the time to get details about your start date, the terms and conditions of employment, and what kind of **onboarding** or training you'll receive.

IF YOU'RE NOT OFFERED THE JOB

- ❑ A rejection can be tough to process, especially if it was a role you really wanted or thought you could easily secure.
- ❑ Keep in mind that sometimes things simply don't go our way. There will be many factors behind the decision of who gets a job offer. If it wasn't you this time, **try not to take it personally.**
- ❑ **But still, thank them for the opportunity!**



THANK YOU!

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