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Recruitment



I've Got The Job! –
Expert Advice for
Interviews

Preface to the answers

Many of us have found ourselves in the situation; you have secured yourself an interview for your dream job, but the dreaded nerves have set in.

Interviews can be terrifying experiences, especially when you really want the job! However, when you get past those jitters and prepare yourself, a great interview is within your grasp.

To help you get to the stage where you can shout “I’ve got the job!” we have put together our top tips for getting through an interview and coming out the other side a newly employed member of staff!

So join us on the journey to your dream job and take in the best ways you can make your interview a success.

Preparing for the interview.

Dress the part - making sure that you are well dressed for an interview is key. Men should wear a suit or at the very least a shirt and tie. Women can opt for dresses, skirts or trouser suits but it is important not to wear something that is too short.

Be clean - sounds silly, but it is important to always wear clean clothes, have clean hair and of course polish up your shoes ready for the interview. This prepares you and makes you feel that you are not only focused but also looking your best. When you enter the interview room, remember first impressions are very important.

Think positive - it can be hard but it is important to think positively about the interview process and your panel. Of course, they may seem that they are there to judge you but ultimately they want to find the right person for their role. Good interviewers are there to listen, encourage you to answer and garner information about why you should be given the job. It is not their intention to make you feel uneasy or trick you.

Research the company on the

internet - there is a very good chance that you will be asked at the beginning of your interview to summarise what it is that you know about the company. Rather than stumble over this question and make it seem that you are un-interested in what they do; make sure you take the time prior to the interview to check them out.

Great points to research include:

- The service or product they sell.
- Number of staff.
- History behind the company.
- Particular areas of interest, initiatives that they have in place or recent news on acquisitions they have made.

If you are so inclined, then you can delve more in depth into the company. However, this may not be necessary if the role you are going for is more top level. These additional points include:

- Profit after tax for the last few years.
- Assets sold.
- Training and diversity policies.

Getting to the interview.

Plan your route - when it comes to heading to an interview you should always be aware of the route you need to take. Practice it before the day of the interview, especially if you are going to drive or walk it. You should always ensure that you leave yourself enough time to get there too. Always plan for worst case scenario; if you are travelling by train or bus then catch one half an hour earlier than you need to and if you are driving, act as if there will be traffic on the way!

Be early - it is a good idea to arrive at your interview around 15 minutes before the allocated time. This means that you have enough time to not only settle in, but also prepare yourself mentally too. Sit and go through the questions that you are going to be asked and perhaps re-read your CV or application too.

“It is always a
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The anxious wait.

Sit facing the door and in view of the receptionist - there are two reasons for doing this. By being in view of the receptionist they will not forget that you are here to attend an interview and by facing the door you will not be caught off guard when someone comes to collect you.

Make a good impression from the start - it pays to be pleasant and courteous with the people you meet before your interview. There is always the chance that the interviewer will ask the receptionist, or the person who took you up to the room their thoughts, so making a good impression on them can really help your cause. It will also help you to relax too.

Display your pass with pride - many companies will give you a temporary pass when attending an interview. The temptation is often to pop this in a pocket or perhaps clip it to your coat, however make sure that you show you can adhere to procedures by popping it on your shirt, jacket or dress instead.

Be ready to go - there is a good chance that you will have a bag, coat or other belongings with you at the interview. If you do, then make sure these are close at hand when you are waiting to be called in. If they take more than a second to gather up then there is a good chance that you may start to feel flustered and this will not help with your nerves.

Accept a drink, but perhaps stay away from tea and coffee - drinks are routinely offered at interviews and it is always a good idea to accept them. These usually come in the form of water, tea or coffee. All of them are fine to accept, however if you are feeling a little shaky then it might be a good idea to opt for water rather than a hot drink. Not only is water easier to handle but much more refreshing too.

Those first moments.

The handshake - one of the first things you are likely to do when you are welcomed into the interview room is shake hands with the interview panel. It may seem like just a formality, but often first impressions are made by your handshake so approach it with firmness (although not bone crushing levels).

Eye contact - never underestimate the power of eye contact. It is important to meet the eye of each interviewer and smile when introduced. This will help build a rapport and ensure that they think of you as confident individual.

Sitting down - just like when you are out on a dinner date. Do not sit until the panel are seated or when you are offered a place to sit. It's just good manners.

The interview.

Remember you can refer - many people are worried that they cannot take in their list of achievements or CV into the interview. However, this is perfectly acceptable and will give you a good basis to remember your answers. Of course, it is important to make sure that you do not spend your entire time reading from your notes but they are a handy reference when you need them.

Think of the panel as a whole - many interviews will have more than one person conducting it and it is often the case that there will be a mixture of quiet ones, encouraging ones and those that are harder to read. Despite there being one person asking you a question, make sure that you address them all and maintain frequent eye contact with the whole panel whilst you answer.

Sit up - it may seem strange, but when it comes to interviews, the way you sit can make an impression, it reflects your confidence levels and done right can also hide your nerves too. The best way to sit is to be straight with the back of the chair supporting your back. Feet should be placed on the floor.

Embrace your nerves - don't worry if you are nervous, these feelings are your mind and body telling you that you want this job and that it is important to you. The best thing to do is to embrace and work with the nervous feelings.

They will subside as you go through the interviews, especially if you tell yourself that it is a great chance to showcase your skills and show them that you have all the right attributes for the role.

Break the ice - if you feel that it is appropriate then you can break the ice in the interview by commenting on how lovely the office seems, or perhaps how helpful the receptionist is. Not only is this a wonderfully positive way to begin the interview but is likely to have you all smiling.

Be human - during an interview the temptation is often to become almost robot like in your demeanour, however at times it is okay to let this guard slip. Often you will find that an interviewer may say something pleasant, complimentary or funny; it is okay to react to this and even better, if you feel it is appropriate you could make a funny comment in return.

The questions (and your answers).

Listen carefully - there is likely to be a number of questions being asked during your interview and some can be multi-layered or complicated. It is important to listen carefully to what is being asked of you and make sure that if there is something you don't understand then you clarify that with the panel.

Answer to the point - when it comes to answering there is a tendency for someone to waffle when they are nervous. It is important to remember that sometimes your answers will be short and to the point, so if you feel that you have said enough and answered their question fully then stop talking!

Allow them time to make notes - there is a good chance that the interview panel will take notes of your answers, this can also lead to the temptation to fill silences with talking. This filler can not only take away from your already concise answer but can even put you in a negative light.

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Show that you can think about problems - if you are asked how you would solve an issue then make sure you pause to give it some thought. This shows that you are able to take a step back from a problem and consider it rather than just diving in without thinking first.

Provide examples - it is one thing to say “I can” when it comes to situations but within an interview setting it is even better to say “I did”. Showing that you have experience that transfers into the role you applied for is important. Provide details on what you did to solve the issue or why the project was successful rather than just saying it was.

Be honest - when it comes to answering their questions one thing is vital, honesty. Whilst you might want to embellish on things you have done or can do, this can turn around and cause issues in the long run.

Know your weaknesses - following on from the previous point about honesty, if you have weaknesses then don't be afraid to bring these up if asked. Knowing what your weaknesses are and how you want to change them can really impress an interview panel so make sure that you know the best ways to improve any issues you face in day to day working.

Talk about out of work activities too - whilst many of your answers will be directed to work based experience, it is also great to mention out of work or social activities you enjoy too.

Even better if these are arranged by work colleagues or make part of your current, or previous employers social interactions. Examples of this includes; company choirs, social club events and charitable fundraisers.

“Showing that you
have **experience**
in the job you
have applied
for is **important**”

At the end of the interview.

Have some questions to ask -

at the end of the interview you should be given the opportunity to ask any questions that you have about the role, the company or anything else that you may want to know. Many people overlook this part of interview prep, however it is important to set out some questions that you plan to ask at the end. This could be as simple as when they expect to make a decision or perhaps something more complicated such as aspects of the role.

Thank them - when you are leaving the interview it is important to shake the hand of the interview panel and thank them for their time. Try to keep smiling, walk straight and tall and head out of that interview room; you have done the best you can.

Once you are out of the interview and on your way home it is time to breathe a huge sigh of relief. You have finished the hardest part of the recruitment process and put to the panel all your strengths and relevant skills.

Now comes the wait, try to be patient with them, it takes time to make a decision and who to employ and remember, they still have their own jobs to do.

You can always keep yourself on their radar by thanking them for the interview via email the next day and let them know that you are open to any further questions that they may have.

We hope that these tips will help you through the sometimes difficult journey of making that impression during an interview. All you need to remember is that they clearly believe you have the right skills and knowledge for the role after looking through your application and there is a reason why they want to see you.

Take that confidence into the room with you and you could be amazed by the results.

“We hope this guide
has **helped** you to
understand some
of the finer details
of **getting the job!**”



A FINE POSITION TO BE IN



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