

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

For some, the most intimidating part of the whole job seeking scenario is the actual interview itself. This is where the rubber hits the road so to speak, where you're putting yourself out there to be scrutinised by your potential next employer. It's not unusual for people to break out in a cold sweat just thinking about it.

Let's face it, you're going to meet some strangers in an unknown environment in an abnormal situation. Then you have to convince them that you're the most amazing candidate they're going to see!

Well it need not be quite the ordeal it seems at first. Like most things in life a little prior knowledge, preparation and practice can go a long way.

In this Fact Sheet we'll start you thinking about how to put your best foot forward to leave a favourable first impression.

I'VE GOT AN INTERVIEW!

Well done. That's cause for a little celebration, but not long after a little panic may set in.

What will I say? What do I wear? Do I really need to consider my appearance? What knowledge do I need to have? What tough questions will they ask?

How can I be confident and engaging when right now I feel anything but?!

Let's start by thinking about those generally asked questions that seem to inevitably crop up.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS

- What do you believe are your strengths?
- What do you see are your weaknesses, and how would you overcome them?
- What qualities will you bring to our organisation?

- Why are you the best applicant for this job?
- Can you give me an example of how you've dealt with a particular problem to come up with a solution?

Make sure you've got all the answers ready and well-rehearsed!

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Have a friend or family member role play with you. They can ask these questions (and others) so that you can be comfortable with how you handle yourself in an interview situation and give appropriate answers. They can help by giving you constructive feedback and get you think about what you say and how you say it. Your Workskills Consultant can help as well.

Consider this to be a training exercise just like a football or hockey team might practice and train for particular scenarios that are likely to come up in their next match.

WHAT TO WEAR?!

This is important. Many people underestimate the value of dressing appropriately for the position they're after. This is a chance to make a great first impression and enables your prospective employer a chance to see how you'll fit into the work situation.

Even if the job is one where you'll get quite dirty you need to present in a clean, fresh way. Show the interviewer you care about getting this job.

It may seem obvious but it's important to be fresh, clean and tidy. Put yourself on the other side of the desk. What will the interviewer see?

(More info overleaf)



DO'S AND DON'TS

- **Do** come in ahead of time. Ten minutes is a good indicator, not only to make a good impression but to also calm your nerves. Look around the room you're in. Is there anything there that could prove useful in your interview (annual reports, brochures, newsletters etc?)
- **Do** ask for a question to be repeated or clarified if you're not sure exactly what they're asking. You need to give your best considered answers. Being clear about what they want is essential
- **Do** make an effort to be relaxed, open and friendly. You may be incredibly nervous but try to calm yourself. Even smiling can be an inward indicator for your body to say 'it's all OK' and you can feel more relaxed as a result. Your facial expressions are just as important as the answers you give in showing what you're really thinking
- **Do** explain your strengths. Good communication skills are always seen as a positive. Make sure you have them!
- **Do** explain your weaknesses. We all have them and it's OK to admit that. Just make sure you follow up with any 'positives' that might help to counteract them
- **Do** ask questions. Prospective employers like to know you've been thinking about them, the job or the company, so don't hesitate to ask
- **Don't** criticise a previous job or employer. This isn't a good idea. The interviewer may feel you'd just as easily do that to them one day. Keep those feelings to yourself
- **Don't** come to an interview eating or chewing gum. It's not a good look.
- **Don't** wear a cap or beanie.
- **Don't** look away when in conversation and don't look at the ceiling or floor. Look at

interviewer/s as you discuss and respond to their questions.

- Show them you're keen and up for the job. They'll see it in your eyes.

There are many other things to consider, but if you continue to practice and get interviews under your belt, you'll get better at it and know what to look for.

Your Workskills Consultant would be happy to discuss job interviews with you and perhaps even arrange interview practice or coaching.

THE SALES PITCH

You're there to leave the interviewer or panel in no two minds that you are perfect for the position on offer. It's your chance to shine.

If you've had recent interviews you should be getting better at them and refining your approach where necessary.

If you haven't had an interview for a long time... practice, practice, practice. The benefits are obvious.

Do all the hard work prior and it'll be much easier when the real thing comes about.

Your skills, past history and qualifications will speak for themselves. They are probably what got you the interview in the first place. Now it's up to you to 'sell the sizzle' and show yourself as energetic, keen, enthusiastic, up-to-date and ready go.

Good luck. Now let's get that job!

