



## Standing out at Interview

First and foremost congratulations on being successful in obtaining an interview. This is an exciting part of your journey to secure the position of your dreams. At this point, it is important to inform you that contrary to popular belief just because you have been successful in being invited to an interview, does not automatically mean that you will be successful in securing your dream position.

On average anywhere from three to five candidates will be successful in being invited to attend an interview. Although, this may sound imposing it is worth noting that only 5% - 10% of the total applicant pool; that is the people who applied for the position, are invited to attend an interview. Consequently, the odds are more in your favour now, than ever before. The question posed should not be will I be successful in securing my dream role, but rather how can I **stand out** at interview to ensure that I will secure the position of my dreams.

An interview is a time for a potential employer to get to know more about you and how you would fit in with the organisation's culture, values and work type. It is also an opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have with reference to the organisation, role, culture, career development and management style.

The first and arguably most important stop on your journey of interview discovery is addressing the question of how to prepare for an interview.

### **Preparation**

Prior to an interview, it is imperative that you conduct your research. Look on the firm's website and make sure you know exactly what they do. Read through any recent news about the firm and familiarise yourself with the structure of the organisation and what their future plans for growth are. Also, read through the position description and make sure you have a clear understanding of the duties and the skills needed to be successful.

It is also key to remember that interviewing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not a one sided affair. You as the potential employee also have the right to explore the merits of the opportunity. You should be asking yourself if the position in question will help you achieve your goals in life and if the firm and associated culture is one that you wish to work in. You should ask yourself the question – would I be proud to tell my friends and family about my new role with this new firm?

### **The Interview**

Prior to entering the building where your interview is to take place, ensure that you switch your mobile phone off.

#### Presentation

For the first meeting with the potential employer it is best to dress in attire that is reflective of the organisation that you are interviewing with. That is, attire will differ depending on the working environment. For instance, if your dream position is working with an investment bank, your attire will be reflective of a corporate environment, as opposed to an advertising agency where funky attire is more reflective. Whichever the scenario make sure you look polished and have well groomed hair, nails and shoes. There is no place for looking untidy. Remember, your dress is an important part of your personal brand.

#### Arriving on Time

Punctuality is key! Arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the interview. Make sure you research where parking is and exactly how to get there. If you are late it may leave your potential employer asking themselves the question - if they are late for an interview, arguably a situation where they are trying their hardest to impress, will they be late to see one of the firm's valuable clients? If an



employer is left asking this question, there is a distinct possibility that you will not be successful. If you are running late, a courtesy call is the best course of action.

### Introduction and Body Language

Your body language can tell a thousand words. Whether positive or negative in its effect, the first few minutes can make or break a potential interview. Consequently, it is important to ensure that your first interaction, is a confident interaction. Introduce yourself with a confident handshake. Remember you are interviewing your potential employer as much as they are interviewing you.

During the interview maintain positive body language, smile, and act interested in the opportunity at hand. If you act like you don't want the role, talk negatively regarding your previous employer, or display an arrogant disposition, chances are you won't be successful. Ask yourself the question. Would you employ yourself?

### Answering Questions During The Interview

Behavioural questions are a critical component of all interviews. In short, behavioural questions are questions that are asked to assess how you dealt with situations in the past. The reason these questions are asked is simple. Research suggests that past behaviours are an excellent predictor of future behaviour. As such, how you dealt with a previous work related situation may be reflective of how you would deal with the same situation in the future. To prepare, try to anticipate the questions that may be asked, and reflect on previous work related situations when you were confronted with a situation reflective of the question asked. Questions are usually based on the core competencies of the role. For instance, if there is a customer service element to the role, chances are questions revolving around how you have dealt with a difficult customer will be posed. Remember a solid interviewing technique will assist you in securing your dream role. As such, take the opportunity to practice with a friend, colleague or partner ahead of time. Remember practice makes perfect.

Always be honest during the interview and remain positive. Do not talk negatively about previous experiences you have had and make sure you stay alert and interested throughout the whole interview.

### **This Is Your Time To Shine**

This is your time to impress so make sure your passion and enthusiasm comes across. Be confident and believe in your own abilities. Make sure you highlight the relevant experience you have along with the benefits you can bring to the firm. If you don't believe in your own qualities and skills, why would you expect someone else to believe in you? To be successful you need to believe in yourself first.

### Ask Questions

Questions are an important part of all successful interview processes. Asking considered, well thought through questions, shows your potential employer that you have considered the opportunity at hand, conducted your research, and most importantly are interested in the role. As such, when presented with the opportunity to ask questions grab it with both hands. The opportunity may not come again.

Questions come in all shapes and sizes. You may wish to ask questions about the future direction of the firm, the role, and it's challenges, career opportunities, training and development offered by the organisation, or the management style of the hiring manager. This is your career and you have the right to be comfortable with the decision that you make.



### Concluding the Interview

Concluding an interview is an important step and lays the foundation for further interaction with your potential employer. Whether you are successful in obtaining your dream role or not, how you conduct yourself is key. You never know when you will meet this individual again. We live in a small world and the bridge you potentially burn today could be needed in the future.

On conclusion take the opportunity to ask about timeframes and what the next steps of the recruitment process are. Make sure you thank the interviewer for their time and shake their hand. Make sure that you leave the interviewer with a lingering memory. People are irrational beings and sometimes employ people for irrational reasons. For instance, forging a connection may be the difference between being successful in securing your dream role, or watching it pass.