



Interview Preparation

Presenting Yourself at Interview

Preparation is vital and so is worth investing time in. This checklist is not exhaustive but should help you avoid unnecessary pitfalls

Preparation Checklist

- Where and when the interview is to be held.
- Parking and/or security arrangements.
- What do you have to take with you.
- Travelling time with allowance for contingencies.
- What you plan to wear and is it appropriate as well as comfortable
- Research the company, their products, their customers, their financial position, their plans
- Research the job – ask for a job description and try to speak to someone in a similar job;
- Print copies of your CV and application form and ensure you are familiar with the content
- Anticipate questions you may be asked and try plan your answers
- Think about some sensible and relevant questions to ask at the interview:
- Ensure they have not already been answered in any advert or pre-interview information

On arrival

- Advise reception of your arrival
- Be prepared for your interview not to start on time and use the delay wisely
- If you meet other interviewees ensure you act professionally

Making a positive first impression

It is a well known cliché that “You never get a second chance to make a first impression” and nowhere is this more important than at an important interview. Be aware that the assessment of your suitability may start as soon as you set foot on the premises. In turn, you should be assessing the interviewer and the organisation.

Good interviewers will base decisions on factual evidence presented but ‘gut instinct’ is also likely to count as we are all human and there will be times when an interviewer just doesn’t warm to a candidate.

- Be punctual but if you are delayed, ring to apologise in advance, explaining the reason
- Be smartly and appropriately dressed
- Smile
- Make eye contact – hold the person’s gaze, but don’t stare
- Shake hands warmly but avoid the bone crush or limp lettuce handshakes.
Be aware of cultural or religious issues for greetings and if you prefer not to shake hands, you need to decide how you intend to deal with this widely accepted business practise
- If you are unsure how to pronounce the interviewer’s name, ask
- Use social pleasantries to build rapport.

Interview introduction

Those first few minutes normally follow a fairly standard format with the interviewer trying to put you at your ease and this may be by offering you coffee or refreshments but you may find it better to decline politely as it can be difficult to drink and talk.

The interviewer should explain the interview process and may give additional information about the job. Listen carefully at this stage and show that you are paying attention by nodding and smiling. Don’t be afraid to write anything down that triggers a question for you to ask later. It’s not etiquette for you to start asking your questions at this stage as you will be invited to do so later.