

# EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW GUIDELINES



**PRESENTED BY:**

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# PERSONAL APPEARANCE IS IMPORTANT

When you appear for the actual interview, think of it as your first day on the job. The interviewer has seen your resume and feels that you have the skills for the position. However, skills are not everything. How you present yourself to an employer is just as important as your resume. One of the first things you will be judged on will be your appearance. The way you dress for the interview is of primary importance and can determine whether or not you are successful.

## ***Here are some tips:***

- Be professionally presented

### **Female:**

- suit (pants or skirt)
- Hair neatly tied back if long
- Stockings if wearing a skirt
- No open toed shoes, clean shoes
- Wear minimum jewellery
- No midriff skin shown

### **Male:**

- Business suit and tie (or sports coat/slacks and tie)
  - Shoes polished
  - Freshly shaved
  - No jewellery, ie earrings, eyebrow stud, tongue stud etc
- By making a good impression you are halfway to getting that job

# PERSONAL CONDUCT IS IMPORTANT

When you appear for the actual interview, think of yourself as a guest in someone's home. Remember, the interviewer may know little or nothing about your accomplishments, no matter how impressive they are, unless he or she has been briefed in advance by a competent personnel placement service such as Quadrant Recruitment. One of the first things you will be judged on is manners – how you react to the stressful situation of an interview. In close contest for a position, the final decision may be made on “personal chemistry”, which is why it is so important to gain a rapport with the interviewer. You are demonstrating the product in action – yourself. Make the most of it. You want the job.

*Here are some tips:*

- Be prompt, or even a little early, for the interview (no more than 10 minutes)
- Watch the handshake. Avoid the “bone crusher” or the “limp fish” – just be firm and sincere.
- Stand until you are invited to sit.
- Sit or stand without slumping or slouching.
- Turn off a mobile phone if you have one with you.
- Be open, honest, be relaxed, and put your best foot forward.
- Answer all questions directly, without evasions or hedging.
- While some nervousness is understandable, beware of these body-language giveaways that could indicate excessive uncertainty:
  - Slouching in your chair
  - playing with glasses or handbag
  - tapping feet or drumming your fingers
  - nervous giggles
  - failure to look the interviewer in the eye
  - wandering away from the subject
  - telling unrelated stories
  - skipping from the point
  - and worst of all – talking too much

# PREPARE YOURSELF

The secret of a successful interview is anticipating what the interviewer is likely to ask, and having the facts ready as needed. If you don't have confidence with your memory, jot down the pertinent points on a piece of paper and take it along for unobtrusive reference.

***Your prospective employer will probably be interested in:***

- Job record stability
- Level of education achieved
- Social interests and activities including hobbies
- Ability to communicate well
- Specific attained skills that apply to the job being discussed
- Both direct experience and indirect relevant accomplishments
- Success patterns you have attained
- Your enthusiasm
- Relevant test results
- Your future career plans and long term goals
- Outstanding achievements in work, school and other activities
- Your personal values
- Which previous positions you enjoyed most, and why?
- Which previous positions you enjoyed least, and why?
- The greatest contribution you think you can make to your prospective employer
- Areas of competence which add to your overall potential
- Personality strengths
- Why have you chosen to apply for this particular job?

You should be prepared to discuss the above points with the interviewer, even if you're not asked specific questions on the points. Raise them yourself if necessary. In any interview however, there are a number of questions that are *sure* to be asked. Be prepared for the following:

**If you have little or no job experience:**

- What were your marks in school/university? (have copies of Transcripts available)
- In what subjects did you excel?
- Which subjects did you like best/least?
- Tell me about your extra-curricular activities.
- Which positions of leadership did you hold?
- How did you finance your education?
- Tell me about your holiday jobs.

**If you have work experience:**

- What did the company do?
- What was the nature of your previous job?
- Tell me about a typical day at your job.
- To whom did you report?
- What was your supervisor like to work for?
- What special skills did you acquire?
- What accomplishments did you achieve?
- What did you especially like about the job?
- What did you especially dislike about the job?
- Why did you leave (or want to leave) that job?
- How do you think one of your former colleagues would describe you?

You may also be asked some personal questions about finances, hobbies, family and any special situations that may be appropriate to the new position.

## INTERVIEW FINE POINTS

To get the “right” job, here is a list of “right” things to do, which will help you present yourself in the best light:

- Take along originals of documents supporting your application such as qualifications, resume, references, awards and examples of your work in a folder. If you are on a Visa to work in Australia, have it with you to show the interviewer. Do not leave originals behind – have photocopies with you for the interviewer to keep.
- If you are presented with an application form on arrival, fill it out neatly.
- The standard interview has a number of segments, the order of which is up to the interviewer. These include questions about the applicant’s education, experience and hobbies, and explanation of the position, information about the organisation and conditions of employment.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Look the interviewer in the eye – *do not look around the room.*
- Show pride in past performance.
- Keep in mind throughout the interview – *I want to work here.*
- Be sure to make clear (elaborate if necessary) the actual duties you have performed and accomplishments you have made.
- Don’t exaggerate. Be honest in your assessment of what you have done.
- Let the interviewer know your career is important to you.
- If you are asked a question you haven’t prepared for in advance, take a moment to think through and organise your facts before giving your answer.
- If the interviewer answers the phone during the interview, put the conversation back on track by saying, “when the phone rang, we were discussing ....”
- If there is more than one interviewer, try to respond to each individually.
- Let the interviewer bring up the question of salary. More job offers are never made because the applicant priced himself/herself out of the market than for any other reason.
- Listen, express interest, ask questions. Finally, if you can *do* the job, and *want* the job – say so, and ask for the opportunity.