

# THE INTERVIEW

Excitement, nervousness and even a little insecurity may be some of the feelings you experience when you go for your first job interview. In fact it doesn't matter how many interviews you have, these feelings are very 'normal'. However, if you **do your homework and preparation** then you have much more control over the situation.

## How do I prepare?

### = **Get all the interview information.**

Time and date for the interview.

Where is the interview to be conducted?

What format will it take? One-on-one; Panel; will there be any testing?

Who will interview you and what is their position?

How long should you allow?

### = **Research the company/business**

Telephone the human resource section and the manager of the section where you would like to work. Find out and record their name and job titles. (Telephone both people, as you will probably get a different perspective from each).

Ask them some direct questions about the company

- What is its structure and range of activities?
- What are their products or services?
- Who are their customers or clients?
- Where are their main offices or locations?
- Is there any information that they can send to you?
- What is their standard interview format/practice?

Look up the company on the Internet.

- ◆ Find out as much as you can about the company/business.

Look up the business/company in the *Yellow Pages*.

- ◆ Find out what they say they do.

Visit the Business/Company. This could be to walk in and have a coffee, look in the reception area, or drive past the work place. You can learn a lot this way.

- ◆ Where they are in relation to getting to and from work eg public transport, parking, walking etc.?
- ◆ How do the staff dress?
- ◆ What is the layout of the workplace?
- ◆ Do the staff look happy?
- ◆ Is it a formal or informal environment?
- ◆ What are their hours/days of business?
- ◆ Is there any printed material about the company that you can have?

### = **Research the position**

Find out why the position is vacant? New position, resignation, dismissal?

What are the duties and responsibilities of the position?

Speak to someone in the company who has been in the position.

Speak to people who have held similar positions in other companies.

What is the 'normal' rate of pay for this position?

= **Prepare a script and rehearse!**

If you have done your 'homework' most of the content of an interview can be worked out in advance. The old saying "prior preparation prevents poor performance" is so true and this could be the performance of a lifetime.

**How will you greet them?** " Nice to meet you..." or "Mr Jones, I appreciate the opportunity..."

**What questions will you be asked?** Anticipate these questions by putting yourself in the employer's shoes. See Interview Questions you may be asked.

**What are your answers to those questions?** Make sure that you develop good answers, which use examples of your skills and experience to demonstrate your point. Make sure that you develop good answers to difficult questions eg -

**Question:** Why have you had so many jobs in such a short period of time?

**Answer:** I hadn't really decided what it was that I wanted to do and I was floating a bit until I did my Food and Beverage course at TAFE. I love the hospitality industry particularly café work.

**What questions do you want to have answered?** Make a list. See Interview Questions you may Ask.

**Rehearse!** Practice with another person who role-plays the interviewer. If possible get someone else to watch you and to take notes. After a few practices get your rehearsal partner to mix up the questions and include some new ones.

**Do's**

- Arrive on time or a few minutes early
- Introduce yourself
- Shake hands confidently. *Smile!*
- Wait until you are offered a chair before sitting, sit upright and look alert and interested
- Avoid nervous habits such as tapping, fidgeting, wringing your hand, etc.
- Listen carefully to what the interviewer asks
- Make sure you fully understand the question asked and query any point that you are not sure about
- Maintain eye contact
- Speak clearly and enthusiastically
- Use examples to demonstrate points you wish to make.
- Have a **can do** attitude ie. Question - *Have you typed annual reports incorporating figures, tables and graphs?*  
**Can't Do** - *No, I haven't had this experience.*  
**Can Do** - *I have not prepared annual reports as such; however I have had experience with high-level report preparation. I provided a typing service to university students and I have recently typed a thesis for an economics student. This involved many charts, graphs and tables of figures.*
- Take your application, pen, paper and diary to the interview, refer to or use these if you need to

**Don'ts**

- Don't be late
- Don't introduce negatives - this is where having a good answer to a difficult question will help
- Don't apologise for yourself
- Don't lie or exaggerate your skills or experience
- Don't criticise a former employer
- Don't over emphasise money
- Don't just use Yes or No as your answer. Elaborate!
- Don't say the first thing that come into your head, think about your answer.