

# How to Nail the Job Interview

You've been successfully shortlisted – congratulations!

The first step to a great interview is answering the request to interview. Sounds silly but the way you respond to 'When can you come in for an interview?' is another first impression you want to make positive.

## 1. When can you come in to interview?

If you have been applying for a lot of jobs and an unknown phone number is calling in, make sure you are in a good position to answer, otherwise let it go to message bank. You can always call back once you listen to the message and it is better to speak in a prepared, collected way than a flustered and unexpected way. Also, it will give you time to think about times you are available to interview in the next week or so and answer that conveniently with them.

## 2. You've set the date, now do the prep!

Before the interview you want to become a cyber-stalker and find out everything you can about the company. A good start is their website and/or Facebook About Page. Pay particular note to all the services they deliver, how long the company has been in existence, their achievements etc. This information can be handy in your interview question time.

Aside from gaining information, you also get a general feel for the organizational culture. You can most likely find out who your direct manager will be, if you don't know already, and look them up on LinkedIn. Generally, you can find some great information on LinkedIn about their passions, skills and work history. This will help strike a conversation and show interest in your manager.

## 3. Go back to the Position Description and your Key Selection Criteria

Study these intensely, especially your answers to Key Selection Criteria. It may have been weeks or even months ago that you wrote these so you want to make sure you are on the ball with any questions they may have about the answers you have given. This will also give you key points to focus on when in the interview as it describes the requirements for the role.

## 4.

Write down potential interview questions and have your responses ready. Practice these responses as many times as you can. You don't have to rote-learn them, you want to sound natural. Here are our [common interview questions and tips on how to respond](#).

## 5. Practice your answers like a STAR

Once you have studied the PD and KSC, write some scenario questions down and your potential answers and practice these. You don't have to rehearse them (or you will sound unnatural and it is likely to just make you nervous). Just memorise the key points you need to bring up in your answers, so that your language remains natural.

A good method of answering interview questions is the STAR method.

The STAR method uses behavioural interviewing techniques and requires you to answer in a particular way that starts with a situation and ends with your successful result. For example, say you were asked how you overcame a challenge in the workplace, (or a similar question):

- Situation. As Assistant Manager, I was made aware of regular customer feedback that they were not happy with the waiting times at the front counter'. That is the situation.
- Task. 'It was clear something had to be done to reduce waiting times'
- Action. 'I did a data study on our busy times and increased staff assistance in these times. As well, we put interesting facts signage up and had some best-selling merchandise near the counter to capture their interest while waiting'.
- Result. 'In a period of just three months, this increased our repeat customer visits by 50% as well as increased sales profits by 15% due to increased impulse sales on merchandise near the counters'.

Have around two-three STAR examples ready to use for appropriate questions.

## 6. Have at least 2-3 questions for the interviewer ready

This could be questions about the company (after doing your research), the structure of the team you will be a part of etc. Make it related to the role and the company. Do not ask about pay, there is plenty of time for that if you are offered the role. They may however ask what your expected salary is so research average pays for that role beforehand, unless the pay rate was stated in the advertisement.

If you can bring yourself to do so, this is a good opportunity to ask the hiring manager something like this:

'Do you see any reason why you wouldn't hire me for this role?' This gives them an opportunity to verbally express any hidden doubts and for you to then respond and reassure them. This could heighten your chances and if anything else, shows you have guts!

## 7. Prepare for the day

If you have to drive somewhere you have never been before, get your Google Maps ready the day before or, if you can, do a trial drive the day before so you know where you are going and how long it will take.

Dress appropriately and have your outfit ready the night before so you don't have any last minute hiccups that can stress you out, like an iron burn in your shirt. For a corporate position, a tailored look is best, a suit jacket and/or shirt and trousers/skirt. If it is a less corporate environment, make sure your clothes are neat, ironed and it is always best to wear closed toe shoes.

Rehearse your answers two or three times before going to bed and again in the morning.

On the morning of the interview, if you can, do some heart-pumping exercise like a jog, swim or a workout. This will keep you upbeat and your mind sharp.

## 8. At the interview

Just before, on the drive there and while waiting, take lots of deep breaths. This is actually proven to increase your memory and brain power, providing oxygen to the brain. It will also help to calm your nerves.

Preparation is key to being calm. As well, smile on greeting your manager and give a solid handshake (not too firm and definitely don't do the limp fish). Take in your surroundings and picture yourself working in the environment, after all, you are assessing suitability as well.

Listen carefully to every question and take a short pause to gather yourself and think before answering. This is expected in any case and shows consideration and thoughtfulness.

Remember, everyone is human and nervousness is natural and shows you really care. Don't try to smother your real self by acting too cool for school, your hiring managers want to see the real you and your passion for the job.

## 9. After the interview

Follow up with a thank you for your time email. Also take this opportunity to further clarify any answers you feel you may not have answered well, but keep it short.

Now it is the waiting game. How long should you wait though before following up? Read more about that here.