



Interview Hints & Tips



Congratulations on your interview! An interview is your chance to show your new potential employer how good you are and to secure the position you have applied for.

Getting in the right frame of mind

Being selected for interview means you are nearly there, so go into the interview with a positive frame of mind. The employer has obviously read your CV and feels you are a strong contender for the position, so you should be feeling confident.

Think about the reasons you applied and what you have to offer the organisation and be ready to discuss any aspects of your CV to date. It is a good idea to re-read your CV before the interview and think about questions which you may be asked.

It will also help you to get into a professional, positive frame of mind if you make sure you are dressed to impress and take the necessary paperwork with you or have it prepared for reference if it is a telephone interview. You should be smart and well groomed and have the job description, any information on the organisation and a pad and paper with you to make notes if necessary.

To make the right impression, you also need to think about how you behave during the interview. Fidgeting is a number one no-no. It certainly helps to practise your interview techniques with a friend. Don't worry if you're a bit shy – this shows humility and is far more appealing than someone who comes across as arrogant. Take deep breaths, relax your shoulders and visualise the interview going well. And if all else fails, smile – you'll be amazed at just how far that will get you!

Looking for more advice?

Our website is full of articles containing tips for improving your CV, interview advice, career support and the latest industry news and press releases straight from NRL.

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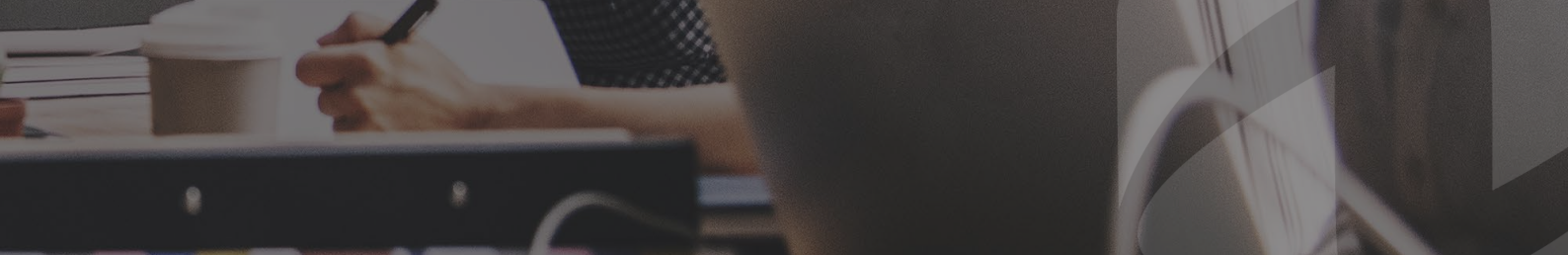
Gaps in your CV

You will also need to explain gaps in your CV. If you worked in a temporary capacity but didn't put it on your CV, know the details of which companies you worked with, what you did for them and the length of the assignments. If you did not work but did search for a job give some examples of the research you did regarding job opportunities and the process you went through to find the position.

Reasons for leaving

Prepare to discuss the reasons you left your previous jobs. If it was for a better opportunity, explain how it was an opportunity. If you left involuntarily, present the reason in the most positive light you can. Make sure your responses are honest and be positive.





Research the job and organisation

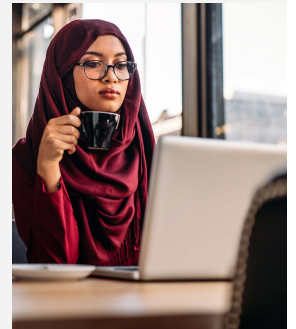
Before attending any interview it is important to do your research and familiarise yourself with the organisation and the job role. Visit the organisation's website, read the job description and ensure you have information to hand on:

- The size of the organisation, its number of employees in each department, etc.
- The company's history, how long have they been operating - do they have any affiliated organisations or belong to an umbrella group?
- General information about their services/products/aims, etc.
- Major competitors or other organisations operating in the same field.
- Job description - understand the skills required for the position.
- Relationship between the open position and other members of staff - have a sense for the department.
- Have some well thought-out questions that would help further your understanding of the organisation e.g. how will the organisation be affected by the new legislation on xyz...



Preparing yourself for the interview

- Find out where your interview will be taking place and ensure you know your way there in advance - researching the location beforehand and giving yourself a comfortable travel time to get there will help you avoid unnecessary stress on the day.
- For virtual interviews, pick as quiet a place as possible and log in 5 - 10 minutes early to ensure the link and your setup work correctly.
- For virtual international interviews, triple check the time to ensure that both parties will be logging in at the same time (carefully adding the invite / interview with the link enclosed to you as soon as it is received will aid in resolving this).



Asking questions

The interview is not only a chance for the interviewer to assess if you are the right person for the job, but it is also an opportunity for you to see if the job's right for you.

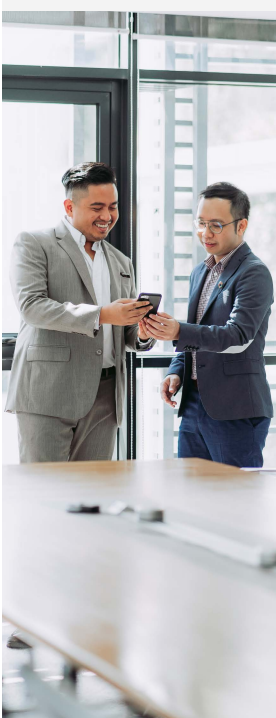
By asking questions and giving the interviewer your full attention, you will be able to establish if it really is the right organisation, role and culture for you. Asking questions also demonstrates your enthusiasm and shows your interest.

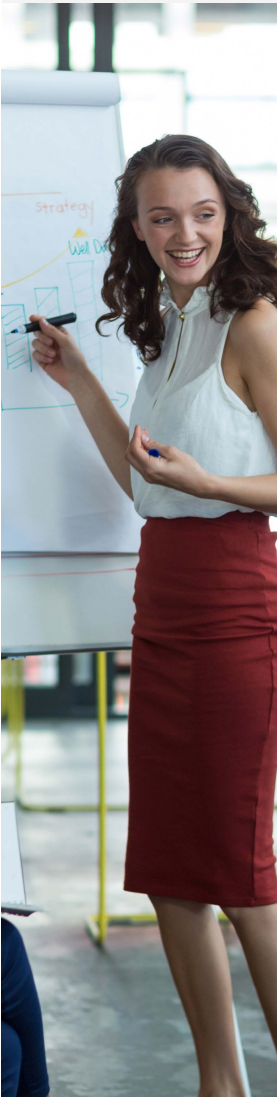
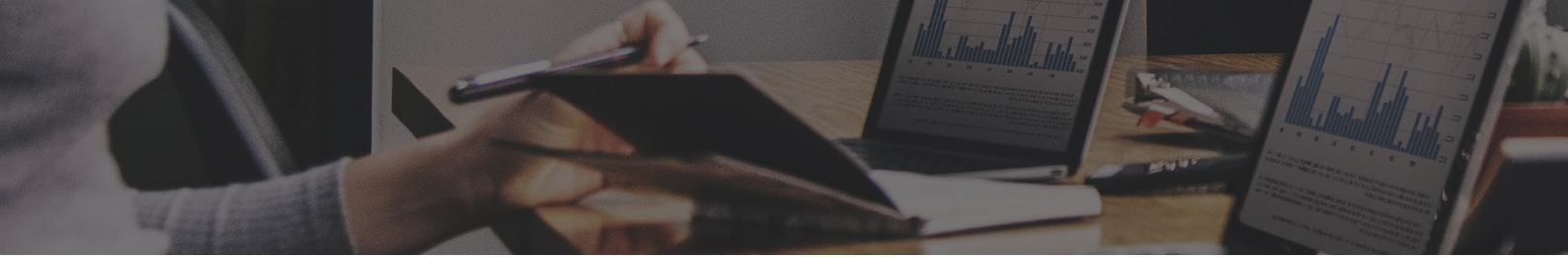
Try to use 'open questions', which need full answers rather than a yes/no answer as this will give you much more detail.

Some questions you may like to ask are:

- More specific detail on the key tasks and responsibilities of the job
- What are the current and future projects?
- Where do you see this role evolving?

Keep your concentration levels up during the interview and make sure you listen to the responses the interviewer gives you, so that you don't ask questions about topics that have already been covered, or don't hear or understand what the interviewer has said.





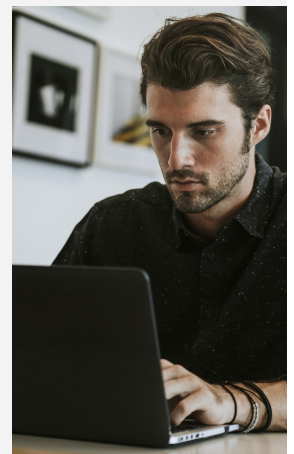
Answering questions and selling yourself

Of course, the interviewer will also be asking you questions. Do ensure you use this as an opportunity to 'sell' yourself. A good interviewer will often throw all sorts of challenging questions at you, in order to see if you are suitable for the job and you need to be careful that you are not defensive in your responses. Some examples of questions might be:

- What relevant experience do you have for this job?
- How do you perform under pressure?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What interests you most about this job?
- Why should I hire you?
- Do you consider yourself to be a natural leader?
- Tell me about yourself. This is an open question, and is a good opportunity for you to reveal the strengths that you mentioned in your personal profile. This is also your chance to reveal your personality, so just be yourself.
- What are your biggest accomplishments? This should be job related, and is a chance to show your competency.
- How do you handle criticism? Try to portray the attitude that all criticism has a benefit, providing an opportunity for improvement. Also elaborate by giving an example of a poor idea that has been criticised rather than a substandard piece of work.
- How will you cope with a change in environment? Talk about how you can adapt and learn quickly.

Turning negatives into positives

- **“What can you do for us that someone else can’t?”**
If you have understood the details of the job then try to answer this with a combination of your skills/experience which others are unlikely to have.
- **“Describe a difficult problem you’ve had to deal with.”**
Clearly explain how you have approached a problem, the result and how the difficult outcome was averted. This will show that you have a positive attitude to all challenges, and you were not discouraged or intimidated by the situation.
- **“What is your greatest weakness?”**
This is your chance to show that you have identified and are working on reducing your weaknesses. Turn your weaknesses into strengths.



- **“How do you handle tension/stress?”**

Explain how you avoid stressful situations, and if not how you deal with it, for example: exercising and going to the gym.

- **How do you take direction?**

Show by giving examples of how you can be briefed and finish the task without unnecessary disagreements/complications.

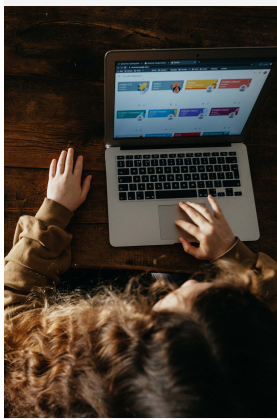
- **How do you handle rejection?**

Much of today's business is commercially orientated; therefore a good answer would tend to be that you move on but take on board what has happened and use it to benefit you in the future.



Points to remember during the interview

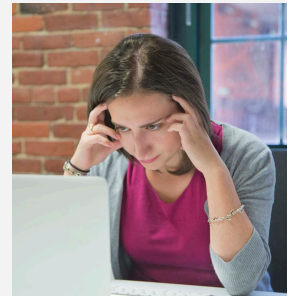
- First impressions are important, so greet the interviewer with a firm handshake and a smile. Smiling is a good positive signal, as it reaffirms your good nature.
- Ensure your manner is professional and business-like throughout the interview process.
- Maintain eye contact when you are talking to people. Always speak clearly in a controlled range of tones. Do not speak in monotone and always pause before speaking, this avoids instinctively reacting and saying the wrong thing. Use positive language.
- Do your homework: research, research and research some more. Learn about the company, its culture, its products, etc. The more you know about the company, the more able you will be to answer questions intelligently about it.
- Dress professionally, your appearance and how you behave can tell people a lot about you as a person. Make sure you get it right by finding out the dress code beforehand.
- Get there early, this always makes a good impression and shows your appreciation of the employer's time. It also means you will not be flustered and stressed if you arrive late.
- Develop a good rapport with the interviewer - speak clearly, sit up straight in your chair and show that you are interested. Relax and do not rush or fidget. And keep smiling!
- Explain your experience – tell the interviewer just how your past experience will help in this job. Give specific examples of things you have achieved for your company and how you can relate this to the new role.
- Ask meaningful questions - interviewers especially like it when candidates ask specific questions about the nature of the role, what the job entails, what the goals of the company are, etc.



- Ask for the job if you want it – at the end of the interview, don't be afraid to ask the interviewers what they thought of you as a candidate. If the response is positive, then you can ask what the next step is. If the response is more negative, use it as an opportunity to put right any of their concerns.
- Say thank you – thank the interviewers in person for taking the time to talk to you about the position. But also say thank you in writing – an email will do – thanking them again and reiterating why you would be an asset to the company.
- Be friendly to everyone – always be courteous and polite to anyone you meet at the interview site. The interviewer may seek the opinion of others when making their final decision.

Things to avoid during the interview

- Don't get into discussions about your personal life, and decline any bait to mention secrets of your present employer, the interviewer should respect your trustworthiness and integrity.
- Ensure that you don't smell of any strong odours, e.g. alcohol, garlic or even perfume.
- Don't fidget or play with your hair, clothing, items in your pockets, etc.
- Avoid negative phrases such as: 'I don't know'. 'I'm not sure', etc.



After interview

Remember that as soon as your interview is over, your consultant will be eager to know how you got on and give your feedback to the client. They will also have feedback for you from the interviewer, so ensure you call as soon as possible and let us know how you got on and whether you would be interested in the job if it were to be offered to you.

Good luck with your interview!

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