

## How to ACE the interview – let's get down to the nitty gritty.

### **Congratulations – you have been successful in gaining an interview.**

When applying for your first job, next job, a higher level job in the same organisation, or even a scholarship, it can be an intimidating process.

These tips will help you prepare and participate in the interview process with the aim of presenting your best self.

### **It's a two-way process**

The interview is for the employer to determine if you are the right candidate for the job and will fit with the organisation; and for you, the interview is to find out more about the job and decide if that's a place you would like to work.

The employer will send you advice of date, time and place in an email, or text; Ensure you reply to confirm that you have received the details and will be attending.

### **Interview questions**

Some employers will also provide you with the interview questions in advance.

### **USE THEM TO PREPARE YOUR RESPONSES**

Make written notes under the questions (usually you will be able to take these with you to the interview). Use bullet points to make your notes. Practice responding – speak it aloud with a trusted friend or family member – you will need to 'talk' it as though it's conversation – do not read it.

(It doesn't look good for you if you have been provided with the interview questions and you haven't bothered to prepare). It signals you are not genuinely interested in the position.

If you do not receive questions in advance, review the job requirements and your application so you are best positioned to respond.

### **1. Do your research!**

Check out the organisation and do your research on the employer – at a minimum online – check out the employer's website. Make some notes.

- Find out what business they are in
- Goals and achievements
- What are their values?

This should give you some information on what type of worker they are looking for. What can you offer?

In summary – **why do you want to work for this organisation?**

## 2. How are you going to travel to the interview?

- Check the specific location and details of the interview
- Will someone drive you? Are you driving yourself? If you are driving, drive there a couple of days before so you know where to go, how long it takes and where you are going to park.
- Check out bus or train timetables if applicable
- Follow any instructions with regard to access requirements to the building or site.

Ensure you have contact details of the employer representative in your phone so that if you are unavoidably delayed – stuck in traffic – you can contact them to advise.

You don't want to be rushed heading into an interview so plan plenty of time to reach the destination.

**PLAN TO ARRIVE AT LEAST 15 minutes before your interview time.**

**And know what to say when you arrive e.g. Hello, I'm Wendy Wagstaff and I am here for the Apprentice interviews. My interview is at 4pm.**

## 3. What to say?

**When you are welcomed to the interview, you will be introduced to the panel – listen carefully to the names.**

**They will know your name however if you do need to introduce yourself say your full name. It's something you know so a great way to settle yourself.**

**If the interviewers extend their hand to shake – then shake firmly (not a vice-grip)**

Be prepared to talk about YOU in the interview – your qualities and characteristics as the potential employer wants to find out more about you. (TIP: Use the appropriate version of your Elevator Pitch / Introduction that you have prepared and practiced.)

Interviewer: Tell us about yourself ....

YOU: I am reliable, honest, get on well with people ...  
I like to learn new things

Interviewer: Why are you interested in this position as a customer service officer?

YOU: I like working with people. I am courteous, like working in a team and problem-solving.

This is where your preparation based on the interview questions will help you out.

To answer the questions, you can restate points in your application and expand on them.

Take your application and any notes in a folder – not as loose pages (and a pen).

**Ensure your mobile phone is turned off and out of sight for the interview.**

- It's OK to be nervous.
- It's OK to ask for a question to be repeated.
- It's OK to ask if your response has answered the question.
- Speak at an even pace (sometimes when nervous we tend to speak too quickly)
- It's NOT OK to swear or use inappropriate language.

Always have at least one question you are prepared to ask - usually you will get the opportunity near close of the interview – it can be simple

e.g. Can I just check what the work hours (or the roster) are please? Is there an opportunity to work overtime?

What is the timeframe for making a decision on the successful applicant?

What are the opportunities for advancement with – name the organisation

On close of interview, thank the panel for the opportunity.

**PLEASE and THANK YOU are key words.**

## 4. What to wear?

You have done your research on the organisation and the workers. Think about the type of position for which you are applying.

Better to be a little over dressed than under dressed. It signals respect.

Prepare what you are wearing well in advance and ensure it is clean and ironed. Shoes are clean. Ensure you are comfortable in the clothes. If you feel awkward, it will come across as awkward in the interview.

Example guide -

Job at a supermarket – long pants (jeans with no rips and tears are OK), smart shirt/blouse (collar preferred – no t-shirts), clean shoes (closed in, joggers if you do not have dress shoes) socks.

Note: Visit the supermarket and observe what the employees wear.

This is the minimum dress standard – you should present for more than the job you are applying for. If employees are wearing a short sleeve shirt with collar or a uniform polo shirt, then it would be OK to wear similar.

For some interviews, you may be advised what to wear so follow the instructions; you also can ask if any specific requirements re clothing. Some organisations have very specific site requirements e.g. long sleeved shirt, closed in shoes and similar. Ensure you present at the interview as requested so you are giving yourself the best opportunity to be successful.

At the risk of stating the obvious - from a personal hygiene perspective, ensure you are clean, hair is washed and off your face; finger nails are clean and trimmed. Avoid strong perfumes or deodorants.

**Remember – you are going to a job interview, not a party!**

## 5. Your best self

**Follow the 5P Principle - Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance.**

If you are not prepared to invest in yourself, then you can't expect others to. The preparation and practice you do prior to the interview will help you present your best self even if you are a little nervous.

Present yourself in a positive manner, however do not state any untruths.

**Follow these tips and you are well prepared to ACE THE INTERVIEW!**