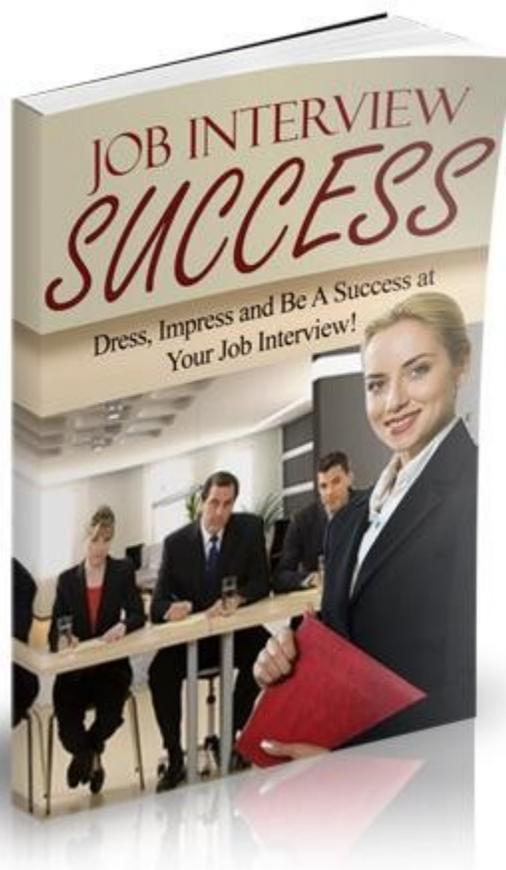


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Dress, Impress and Be A Success at Your Job Interview!



# Job Interview Success



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## INTRODUCTION

It's a situation that most of us find ourselves in at some point in our lives. We need or want a new job and in order to get it, we must go through the dreaded interview process.

For many, an interview represents a terrifying experience and it's not too hard to understand why. Landing the interview in the first place can be nerve wracking and then there is the interview ordeal itself, a „grilling“ unlike anything that we are forced to suffer under any other circumstances.

For most, a job interview is definitely not an experience that we'd voluntarily put ourselves through. And yet at the very same time, it's also a situation that we know we'll have to tolerate at some point.

The problem for an interviewee is that there is always so much riding on achieving the desired outcome. If you've been interviewed before, I'm sure that you understand this already.

Perhaps you're out of work at the moment? If so, the very thought of bills piling up

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probably brings you out in a cold sweat at night.

Or maybe you're lucky enough to have a half decent job already but you want to improve yourself and your lifestyle by moving up the ladder? Still a tricky situation of knowing what to say and do, right?

It doesn't matter what your reason is, you know as well as I do that it's the interview process that stands between you and the job you want or need. And given how important that job is, it's easy to appreciate why so many are petrified of job interviews.

But here's the thing to understand.

Job interviews do not have to be terrifying, nor does the thought of attending an interview have to keep you awake at night.

Instead, cruising through an interview is a skill that you can learn and subsequently master, no more difficult than learning to ride a bike or becoming a swimmer for the very first time.

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And just as with these acquired skills, once you've learned how to ace an interview, it's something that you'll never forget.

This guide is going to walk you through the whole job interview process, from A-Z. After reading it, you'll have all the knowledge you need to be able to stay on top of any interview scenario you're ever likely to encounter, no matter how stressful it might otherwise be.

It probably doesn't take a genius to realize that if you are calm, collected and relaxed when you are interviewing, then your performance is likely to be immeasurably enhanced.

It's also no secret that it's usually the little things that trip most interviewees up. As a result, it follows that a critical element of „training“ yourself to avoid these pitfalls is equally vital if you truly expect to land your dream job.



All of these things you are just about to learn.

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So, without any further preamble, let's get the show on the road.

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## GETTING YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR...

If you are chasing a job down, the first (and most obvious) hurdle that has to be overcome is actually landing the interview. Sometimes this is very easy, whereas at other times it's going to be considerably less so.

To begin with, the way you go about things depends on whether you are responding to a job advert in the newspapers or on the net, or not.

### If You've Seen An Advert, Follow Instructions...

If there is a post advertized that you want to apply for, the job listing should specify a procedure that you must follow to initiate the application process and hopefully land a subsequent interview.



For instance, many employers insist that you complete an application form to get the process moving.

In this case, it's common for only those that are considered suitable for the post to

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be called for interview. If this is the way it is, then it's the way it is and there is nothing you can do to shortcut due process.

On the other hand, you may find some employers are happy to chat with you about the opportunity over the phone and they may even offer you an interview based on how well you present yourself.

This is less common nowadays, but it still happens. In this case, you've got a great opportunity to impress them straight out of the box.

No matter what the specified procedure is, you must follow it even if it does not seem ideal to you.

You might be ultra-keen to get things moving as quickly as possible and the thought that you can impress them with how keen you are by taking decisive action – calling them out of the blue for instance – may well cross your mind.

Unfortunately however, this approach might work on the TV and in movies, but real life very rarely mirrors Hollywood fantasy.

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On the contrary, trying to show initiative and enthusiasm may well be commendable but the fact is that there is a required application procedure for a reason.

One potential employer in a thousand or maybe even a million *might* be impressed by a „Lone Ranger“ but they might also be getting a Jeffery Dahmer . Not too shockingly, the latter is perhaps not so desirable.

On the other hand, the majority will take it as a clear sign that you cannot follow instructions and – more damagingly – they will assume that this is how you always behave.

In other words, in your sincere effort to make a great first impression, you’re likely to achieve exactly the opposite. And as the old cliché has it, you never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

If you see a job advertized and you’re told to submit an application, do it right.

You may have to call them for the form in which case, again, you must do it. Alternatively, you may be dealing with an employment agency or you might be

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able to download the application from a website.

One way or the other, it doesn't matter.

The crucial thing is, you must start off on the right foot because a wrong move at this juncture will kill your prospects stone dead.

If a job is advertized, it will feature instructions about how you apply and these instructions must always be followed. If it asks you to complete an application or to submit your resume, do it.

Now, this does not entirely preclude you from attempting to impress a potential employer from the off, especially if you are invited to contact them directly by telephone as an example. If you are, you have a great opportunity to impress the company with your character, your enthusiasm and your keenness to get on with things.

The problem however is that the person who you are impressing here is unlikely to be the ultimate decision maker. They're more likely to be a relatively anonymous

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clerk than the head of personnel or the boss.

So, be aware who you’re talking to before you pour a huge chunk of time and effort into impressing someone who ultimately has little or no authority.

In other words, ask them who they are before you go any further...

## **If It’s A ‘Cold Call’...**

The other alternative is that you have decided that you really want to work for a specific employer and have decided to take the proverbial bull by the horns by approaching them out of the blue.

In this scenario, the first sensible step would be to call them to inquire whether they have any vacancies or not. There’s no sense in wasting your time if there is no chance that you are going to get any further.

This success of this approach is always predicated on whether they have anything

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available.

For this reason, it can be a very „hit and miss“ job hunting tactic.

On the other hand, it also has a couple of marked advantages when compared to applying for an advertized job.

To begin with, there“s no competition.

Whereas 50 or 100 or even 500 applicants might apply for an advertized vacancy, you“re up against no -one if you call on the off-chance that there might be something for you.

It“s more likely that you“ll be able to speak to someone in a position of authority too.

The main personnel person or people are going to be buried by applications when there“s a good vacancy in the papers or on the net but far less so when they“re not

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actively recruiting.

Thus, there is more chance that they'll have time on their hands to listen to what you have to say. You might therefore have a golden opportunity to impress them.

No matter how well you impress them on the phone, they are still very unlikely to offer you an interview straight away because in this day and age, they simply cannot afford to.

Taking on a new employee is a very expensive business and it can be extremely difficult for an employer to extricate themselves from the mess should they get their hiring wrong.

For this reason, they have to cover themselves. It is therefore likely that even if you do make a great first impression, they are going to ask for more information in the form of a resume.

You must therefore know how to put yours together in the most effective way. This is an aspect of acing the whole job application process that we'll consider a little

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later.

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## YOU MUST DO YOUR RESEARCH THOROUGHLY...

Whether you are interested in a specific position or have targeted a particular company that you are considering approaching, there is one thing that you must always do.



Researching to find out as much as you can before getting the application process rolling is absolutely, crucially essential.

Furthermore, the background information that you collect must cover several different areas.

The bottom line is that if you are going to apply to a company for a job, you must know everything you can possibly find about them before you do anything else.

For example, you must know what they do as accurately and in as much detail as possible.

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Having done so, you can make it clear to a prospective employer at the interview stage that you are interested enough in working for them to have done your homework.

This is sure to impress as it is not something that every applicant will do. It's also true that there is no excuse for neglecting your research nowadays either (and employers know this).

With the amount of information freely and instantly available on the net, they know that you can find pretty much whatever you want to about their business without leaving the comfort of home.

Not doing your research therefore smacks of negligence, a lack of interest or basic laziness, none of which are qualities that employers would put high on their list of those most desirable in prospective employees!

So, you need to know exactly what the company does, and if after reading about them, you still don't have a crystal clear picture, continue your research until you understand what they do well enough to discuss it intelligently and knowledgeably.

You've got to be as specific as you can too. It isn't enough to know that they are

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engineers or that they are something to do with finance. You need to dig much deeper than this.

For instance, they might be engineers but what exactly does this mean in their case? Are they a manufacturer and if so, what do they make? Are they civil engineers or marine engineers or construction engineers or some other type of engineer that you've never even heard of?

It's necessary to know the answers in as much detail as you can ascertain. It is therefore vital to „keep digging“ until you have collected all the information that is available in the public domain about the organization.

In addition, you must know who the main people in the company are as well, paying particular attention to those most likely to be involved in the interview process.

And if you don't know who is going to interview you, ask them when they call you to attend. It's a perfectly logical question, but one that few are likely to ask. Doing so however enables you to greet your interviewer by name which is another highly effective way of ensuring that you make a favorable first impression.

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If you know what section of the company you are going to work in, you can also use the net (and resources at the local library such as industrial directories) to find out more about potential future colleagues and the work of that department.

There is no harm in indulging in a little „name dropping“ when you are interviewed . It’s going to impress upon your interviewer just how genuinely interested you are in the post on offer.

You could for example mention future colleagues and how much you are looking forward to helping them to continue their work on green widgets or whatever it might be.

The only way you can do this is by knowing who the people are and what they are currently involved in. Alternatively, mention past achievements (this may be all you can find from your research) and how impressed you are that the team led by Ms. A managed to discover the meaning of life...

All this research may take some time and effort, but it’s a price worth paying if you want the job badly enough, right?

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See, what you're doing here is giving yourself a competitive advantage, an „edge“ that puts you ahead in any race to land your ideal job.

In fact, even if it isn't a race – you've called the company out of the blue or a friend has tipped you off about a job that is not even advertized yet – doing your research is still vitally important.

Remember, this is all about blowing a prospective employer away from the off. If knowing everything there is to know about the company and the people behind it doesn't guarantee that this happens, it certainly makes it a lot more likely and puts you in an extremely strong position.

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## GETTING THE PAPERWORK RIGHT...

### Creating An Effective Resume

The first thing to understand about the resume that you submit to a potential employer is that it has only one purpose. The job of any resume is to secure an interview, meaning that everything you include in your resume stands or falls on this basis.

If it helps to land the interview, it's in. If it doesn't, it's not.

I mentioned earlier that you must have a resume that you can submit to the company and in the previous chapter, we considered the importance of finding out as much as you can about the company and it's people with in-depth research.

Okay, this is where you tie these two separate elements together by creating a resume that is slanted towards what the company does, what they appear to want and the scope of the job that you are applying for.

In other words, every resume that you submit to a prospective employer should be a „bespoke“ version that is tailored to what you know about them and the job on

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offer.

I'll give you an example in a moment to ensure that this is 100% clear, but before I do so, let me highlight one very important point.

This does not mean that you need to create a brand new resume from scratch for every position you apply for.

Instead, I would recommend creating an „outline“ resume on your computer that can be modified, added to and „massaged“ to make it as appropriate to any job that you are going for as you can.

For instance, say you have many years experience in different areas of the automotive industry and now you're going after a job with a major tire manufacturer.

You've always worked with tires and you've learnt a lot about what tires can and can't do from experience, but you've never been on the manufacturing side before.

Okay, so you've done your research and as a result, you know how the company

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works. You've also got a good idea what they're looking for based on what you've discovered and the job description.

What you do now is „adapt“ what you've done with tires and what you've learned about them from years of „hands on“ experience to what you know about the company and the position on offer.

For example, if they're looking for a truck tire specialist, highlight, emphasize and expand upon (in any way you can) the relevant experience you have in this field.

Don't lie but focus this particular „version“ of your resume on what they want and the benefits you bring with you when (not if) they employ you.

You should never be so lazy as to submit a „template“ resume. Instead, always tailor the resume to make sure it makes you sound as good a „fit“ for the job on offer as possible.

There are a few other things you can do to make your resume stand out too.

Attach a professional quality image to the resume document that you are

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submitting. This looks so much better (implying a far higher degree of care and attention to detail) than some grainy holiday snap or a picture that you took with your mobile phone.

Include the most senior and influential referees you have access to. A reference from a previous CEO or a magistrate is likely to be much more influential than one from the owner of the local grocery store!

Make the resume document look as attractive as you possibly can. The more it pleases the eye, the more likely it is to be read. Try a Google search for „free resume templates“ because there are plenty of them out there.

As I'll stress many times in this guide, the questions that you are most likely to be asked should be obvious from your research plus what you know about the job on offer and your own track record.

Hence, you can attempt to address some of these questions within your resume details too.

For instance, interviewers are always going to ask about any long periods between

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jobs that you mention in your resume.

You could therefore curtail their curiosity to some extent by mentioning that you are returning to work „after having and bringing up a family“ or „following two years in hospital“ when introducing the job that got you back into employment.

You“ll still get asked about it (have whatever evidence you have – hospital receipts for example – with you at the interview), but it should take some of the sting out of the questions that get fired at you.

One thing that you cannot do when compiling a resume is to „forget“ pertinent information that any reasonable person would consider to be highly relevant. Don“t do it because if you do, you“ll be found out soon enough.

When compiling your resume, make sure that what you write is grammatically correct and that the narrative is as „tight“ as it can be . In this respect, it“s often a sound plan to write it before editing it a few days later to remove extraneous words and sentences.

For similar reasons, write in short, „straight -to-the-point“ paragraphs. Those that ramble here and there for 10, 15 or even 20 lines will instantly kill any enthusiasm

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the personnel people might have had for reading what you've written!

They do not really care what you do outside work either as long as it does not have an adverse effect on your ability to do the job. For this reason, don't waste your time with extensive details about your hobbies or outside interests.

It's the same with adding a list of objectives and a lengthy introduction at the start of the document. They know what you want to achieve and 99% of introductions add nothing. They waste time and should therefore be one or two lines long at most or ideally, not there at all!

It's also important to list your work history in the right order too.

Your present or most recent position is of the greatest relevance to what you can do now. It should therefore appear at the top of the list, with your previous track record in descending order listed thereafter.

Finally, although it might be tempting to go into the minutest details about your previous employment history in the interests of being honest and thorough, it's

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more than likely a waste of time doing so.

The information is only scanned by most potential employers – they’ve got dozens of resumes to go through, remember – so keep everything concise and to the point, focused on only those aspects that really matter.

## Your Covering Letter...



This one is simple.

Keep it short and to the point. Do so and you have created the perfect cover letter.

Most importantly, make sure that it is addressed to the right person or department and that everything is correctly spelt.

Add a title along the lines of „Re: Vacancy Reference VRE/1986/TH“ and below this, all that’s needed is something to the effect of:

“With reference to the vacancy shown above, I am delighted to enclose my

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resume for your consideration. As you will see, I have more than 10 years of work experience that is relevant to this position.

I am available for interview at your convenience.

Please advise when you would like me to attend by calling 010.9870.1546 or by e-mail at [erictthered325@gmail.com](mailto:erictthered325@gmail.com). Similarly, please use the same contact details if you have any further queries.

I look forward to hearing from you”

And that”s basically it, your covering letter written.

## Following Up

If after receiving your resume, they call you in for an interview, that”s great, job very well done.

But what happens if they don”t? Should you chase the m to see what is going on if you don”t hear anything?

The answer to this is that there is no hard and fast answer that covers every scenario. Sometimes there is a clear indication as to whether a follow up is

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merited – the advert may say that „only those that we wish to interview will be contacted“, in which the silence tells you everything you need to know – but it’s not always so clear cut.

Following up can sometimes be effective, as long as it’s done correctly. By this I mean that you should not call the day after submitting your papers. Instead, leave it a few days or if the advert states a final application date, don’t start chasing until after then.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with calling to check that they got your documents irrespective of whether you sent them by post, courier, fax or e-mail. Checking in this way is a „gentle“ chase but it’s well disguised and therefore unlikely to upset or antagonize anyone.

It is however a tactic that you can use only once, meaning that any chase-ups after this will be far more transparent.

The secret here is to stay the right side of annoying or bugging them so much that your application goes to the bottom of the pile.

So, should you chase them?

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Yes, you can, but be very careful about how you do so.

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## BE PREPARED

### No-One Can Sell You Except You...



Whilst it may not be the most despised or openly mocked occupation known to mankind – I can think of a handful of „professions“ that are arguably less well respected – it’s still a fact that most people look down on „salesmen“ and the „sales“ industry in general.

There’s still something of the old -fashioned „snake oil“ or „door -to-door brush“ salesman image attached to the idea of being employed in sales. As a consequence, you’ll find very few people happy to see themselves as a salesperson.

And yet, quite apart from the fact that there are many fantastically successful sales people who are incredibly well respected (think Richard Branson, Donald Trump etc.), we are all salespeople in one way or another.

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If you're married or have a fiancé or have ever landed a new job, then you've done a great job at „selling you“ to someone at some point in your life.

Going through the interview process is exactly the same.

You must sell yourself to every potential new employer because you're the only one that really knows what you have to offer. And if you don't tell them, well, they'll never know, will they?

The truth is that apart from researching the company, the other thing that you have to prepare in advance is you.

In particular, you have to get your „story“ right so that when you are selling yourself to a prospective employer – either over the telephone or at the interview itself – you can do so sincerely and convincingly.

Now, when I'm talking about getting your story right, I am most decidedly *not* talking about a made-up tale, a fantasy version of what you have done or can do that bears little or no relationship to reality.

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You do not tell lies on your resume and you do not say things that are an untrue representation of who you are or what you can do.

Not only would such behavior be unethical (at best), it also forms substantive grounds for dismissal and is illegal in many parts of the world. Simply put, it can only end in tears, and it's just not worth it.

There is however nothing at all wrong about making the best of what you have got by accentuating the positive whilst not dwelling on anything that is less positive for too long. Doing this makes perfect sense and you'd be a fool not to.

In particular, taking what you know about the company, the people behind it and the specification of any post on offer, give careful thought to how you might „position“ your story to make it a match for their requirements.

Your task is to make it crystal clear that you are the best person for the job and for their organization. To do this, you must identify what they need or want from an employee and (most importantly), how your past experience and knowledge can be tempered to best answer their „how do we benefit if we employ you?“ question.

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Employers big and small are just like the rest of us. When they „buy“ you and your story by offering you a job, they do so because you provided a better answer to their „what“s in it for us?“question than anyone else.

The only way you can do this is by knowing what they want or need in advance before molding what you offer to these requirements as closely as possible.

Remember, lying is never an option that you should even consider. Don“t however be shy about shaping whatever you genuinely do offer to their requirements.

## **Practice Really Does Make Perfect...**

It“s a fact that no matter how thoroughly you prepare for your interview, you“re going to be nervous. There is after all a lot riding on it, so you wouldn“t be normal if you weren“t a little apprehensive.

When you“re nervous or tense, it can make you appear uneasy and it increases the chance of making mistakes. This is especially true if remembering what you are supposed to say and do is difficult.

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To avoid this happening, the simple answer is practice.

Based on your research, the information that is included in your resume and the covering letter, prepare a broad-outline interview script for yourself.

Of course, it's not possible to anticipate every single question that is going to be thrown at you during the interview so there is going to be some „thinking on your feet“ necessary.

However, if you've mastered 80% or 90% of what is likely to go down in advance of your meeting, you're going to be more relaxed and clear-headed under pressure than you might otherwise be. As a result, even the „left field“ questions will be far easier to deal with.

Having prepared your script, sit down and learn what you are going to say and do during the interview.

Go through it as many times as you need to be able to remember your „performance“ without having to think about it.

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Next, it's time to practice the „event“ itself

Begin by reciting what you are going to say until you know it by heart, until you can go through it pretty much without thinking about what you're saying.

Finally, practice the way you produce your „performance“, preferably in front of a mirror if possible, because it's not only what you are saying that leaves an impression on interviewers.

On the contrary, no matter how professional and detached they are, an interviewer wouldn't be human if your style of delivery, facial expressions and mannerisms didn't make an impression.

For this reason, concentrate on „producing“ in an easy, relaxed manner, remembering to smile whenever appropriate whilst avoiding the temptation to keep talking for the sake of it.

Practice keeping your planned responses as short as possible whilst imparting the maximum amount of relevant information at the same time. Also practice pacing your presentation to avoid the possibility that nerves might unconsciously make

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you talk at one million miles an hour.

If you have a friend who is willing to act as a „surrogate“ interviewer, ask them to practice with you.

Try to keep over-exaggerated physical gestures and reactions to a minimum – don’t wave your hands about like a bird flapping its wings when talking for example.

When you are practicing, make sure that your friend understands that you really do want an *honest* opinion, and that you won’t take offence irrespective of what they might say.

Stressing this point may be crucial because not all friends will be comfortable about telling the truth no matter how uncomplimentary it might be.

Yes, the truth sometimes hurts but in this particular scenario, it can only help you sharpen up your act. By being honest, they are therefore doing you a big favor!

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Whatever they say, you must take it the way it is meant. You must be willing to accept their suggestions and incorporate them into your presentation too.

## **The Importance Of Body Language**

Although it is rarely talked about in terms of job interviews, body language is an extremely important element of making an immediate favorable impression.

In fact, body language and what it subconsciously tells others about how you react to them (and vice versa) is crucial in every relationship in life.

Most importantly, many expert interviewers are very adept at „reading“ what your mannerisms, posture and the way that you carry yourself really „says“ about you.

They may have undergone specialized training or it may be a natural gift, but interviewers are usually expert in this crucial aspect of their work.

Most interviewees are anything but experts however.

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Some may have a natural „gift“ for getting it right but most do not. Heck, they„ve never even thought about body language before. As a result, the physical „signals“ they give off are all wrong.

For example, I“ve already highlighted that you must refrain from waving your hands around like a whirling dervish.

Using hand gestures to add emphasis to your most important points is a valid and powerful tactic, but never staying still is exactly the opposite. Not only this, it also dilutes the power of gestures designed to emphasize an important point to zero.

You must be in control of your body language if you are to use it most effectively. Once again, think about the competitive advantage to be gained here.

For this reason, having at least some basic understanding of body language is essential. Fortunately, learning the basics is as simple as running a Google search for „understand“ or „learn“ body language. There are nearly 40 million results for the first search whilst the latter returns 205 million results:

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learn body language

About 205,000,000 results (0.14 seconds)

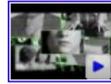
[Go to Google.com](#)

[Videos for learn body language](#) - Report videos



[Learn to Speak Body: Tape 5](#)

6 min - 13 Jun 2006  
Uploaded by Mitchla  
[youtube.com](#)



[Body Language: Learn How to](#)

[Spot a Liar...](#)  
5 min - 13 May 2009  
Uploaded by consumerwarningnet  
[youtube.com](#)

[How to Read Body Language](#) - wikiHow

24 May 2011 ... Fortunately, with a little extra attentiveness, you can **learn** to read **body language**, and with enough practice it'll become second nature. ...  
[www.wikihow.com](#) > ... > Social Interactions > Language Nuances - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

As you can see from the top of this results page shot, the most popular results are YouTube videos. This makes a lot of sense as it obviously easier to learn and understand the meaning of gestures and body movements by watching them rather than reading about them.

For this reason, videos that demonstrate and explain the meaning of body language are extremely popular. This is confirmed by the fact that a search of YouTube using the exact same search term returns 6,660 videos that will help you „learn body language“:

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## Search results for learn body language

About 6,660 results

Filter ▾



### Learn to Speak Body: Tape 5

MitchellRose.com & http present a **language** instructional video. But instead of Bosnian or Burmese, this teaches the grammatical intricacies of ...

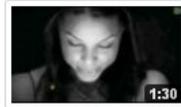
by Mitchla | 5 years ago | 2,560,623 views



### Learn to Read Body Language - UniversalClass

Learn how to read **body language** in this online course offered by UniversalClass.

by universalclass | 1 year ago | 122,944 views



### Learn How To Read Body Language

Signs that let you know if someone likes you

by webinarman | 2 years ago | 19,976 views



### Body Language: Learn How to Spot a Liar & Avoid Getting Scammed

www.consumerwarningnetwork.com Sometimes words don't matter. You can **learn** more about what someone is up to by the way they move and the look on ...

by consumerwarningnet | 2 years ago | 59,288 views

The majority of these videos focus on spotting that someone likes you, primarily from the perspective of finding a potential partner.

Even so, remember how I highlighted how important it is to „sell“ your character and personality to a prospective employer?

Part of doing so most effectively is to make them like you. The information from these videos is therefore highly relevant.

It is also true however that it is not *absolutely* essential for them to like you at all.

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As long as they recognize that you are the best person for the job, liking you may not be important.

But let me remind you that we're talking about doing everything possible to give yourself an imperceptible but essential edge. If a potential employer likes and warms to you, it's hardly likely to do your chances of landing the job any harm, is it?

There's another reason why getting them to like you may have an influence on the outcome of the interview.

Apart from assessing your suitability for the job, they are also considering how well you'll fit in with immediate colleagues and the others that you'll have to work with.

If the interviewer considers you to be a naturally likeable person, it makes this decision less contentious and therefore more comfortable.

This in turn makes it easier for them to offer you the job, secure in the knowledge that they are not putting their head on the block with other staff members by doing so.

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Of course, being able and willing to smile during the interview is a crucial element of being likeable.

This means that being able to smile effectively is definitely a „skill“ that you should work on if necessary.

For instance, if you do not do so already, learn to smile genuinely and naturally or at least, make it look as natural as you can.

Practice your timing too because there is nothing as unnerving as talking to someone who smiles at a completely inappropriate moment.

Remember too that during the interview, you must be very careful about how you respond to what the interviewer has said.

Do not for example burst into peals of laughter in response to something that they’ve said which was never meant to be funny.

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Read their body language because by doing so, you avoid an embarrassing faux pas that kills your job prospects stone dead in an instant.

At all times, try to „mirror and match“ what the interviewer is doing because it is a well established psychological principle that by doing so, you make it much easier for them to like you a lot more quickly.

In this respect, start by trying to match the speech patterns, style of delivery, posture and eye contact of your interviewer as closely as you can.

In this way, you sub-consciously suggest to them that you are like them and interviewers are only human – they tend to like people like themselves.

The globally acclaimed business and lifestyle trainer [Tony Robbins](#) goes as far as suggesting that you should match and mirror the breathing patterns of someone if you really want them on your side in a fraction of the normal time.

This might be taking it a little far in terms of the average interview scenario, but it

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does demonstrate how important the „mirror and match“ principle really is when it comes to getting what you want.

## **The Right Look And The Right Image...**

When you attend an interview, it's a crucial part of making a favorable initial impression that you look like you are a shoo-in for the job.

If you're a male attending an interview for an office job, long, unkempt hair, an unshaven appearance plus jeans and a t-shirt is not going to cut it whereas females should dress conservatively as opposed to being „glammed up“ and ready for a party or a club.

Maybe you are already used to dressing in the manner that is best suited to the position that you are after? Perhaps you are trying to improve your position and salary with an improved position in your current industry, for example?

In this case, fine, you know the ropes already and there's not much you need to learn.

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If however you are changing direction completely, it may be a different story. For instance, if you've just left college, you're used to jeans and t-shirts and yet you're now chasing a job in a legal or CPA practice.

In this case, a significant change is on the horizon and you're going to have to get used to it asap. Absurd as it may sound, getting used to a completely different style of dress is something that can be practiced too.

You can wear a suit, collar and tie or a pant-suit behind closed doors, in the comfort of home, to get used to the feeling so that you feel far less self-conscious when it comes to the „real thing“.

It's a fact that if you haven't worn a collar and tie for years (if ever), doing so for the first time is going to feel uncomfortable. This will be visible to the trained eye of a professional interviewer.

Of course, they'll cut you some slack as they know from your resume that you've just graduated or that you're moving up from a job where casual dress was far more acceptable.

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Even so, it always comes back to the fact that nowadays, it's not always easy to find a job, especially a „plum“ posting.

For this reason, every little thing that you can do to give yourself an advantage over the competition is something that must be done.

If this entails practicing dressing the part to ensure that you appear relaxed, comfortable and self-assured on the all-important „big day“, so be it.

Also on the matter of clothes, plan your interview outfit well in advance and make sure that it is ready to go in plenty of time.

There is nothing *less* likely to make a good impression than walking through the interview room door in a stained, creased suit accompanied by a frayed shirt collar and a badly knotted tie or a pant suit or jacket and skirt combination that looks like you slept in it!

Give yourself at least three days before an interview to make sure that the clothes that you have are up to the job in terms of being clean and well pressed or ironed.

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And if something that you are thinking of wearing is clearly on its last legs, be ready to replace it. If you can see that your shirt or blouse is obviously „tired“ beyond redemption, how difficult is it going to be for your interviewer to jump to exactly the same conclusion?

Remember, their first impression – the one that is unlikely to change – is going to be formed in the first 20-30 seconds, all of which is going to be taken up with you walking in and sitting down.

You“re not going to land the job within these few vital seconds, it“s true, but you could certainly lose it. Your appearance is a significant factor in this, so don“t risk letting yourself down by being shoddy and/or unprepared.

## Things To Bring...



Aside from making sure that you have your interview outfit fully ready well in advance, there are few additional „extras“ that you might want to have with you. Get these ready at least a day or two before as well.

To begin with, it helps to have a notebook and a pen (plus a spare one) with you. This enables you to take

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notes about the most important aspects of the interview, plus, it allows you to write down questions as and when they occur to you.

If you don't write them down, the chances are that in the „heat“ of the moment, you'll forget.

Doing so would be a crying shame because one thing that always impresses an interviewer is a candidate who has intelligent questions to ask.

Being able to ask such questions obviously displays intelligence, but it does a great deal more besides.

To begin with, it demonstrates that you have been paying attention and that you've understood exactly what's going on. On top of this, it indicates how keen you are because if you weren't, you wouldn't be asking questions about it, would you?

All of these are major plus points that interviewers see all too rarely in candidates. In other words, it's yet more brownie points to you!

Next, bring a spare copy of our resume for our own use. If asked specific

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questions about the details on the form, it's so much easier to provide an appropriate answer if you can refer to the point in question and to the context in which that snippet of information was used.

It might be old-fashioned, but keep a handkerchief or a pocket-sized packet of tissues handy, especially if it's the flu season.

Sniffing noisily throughout the interview would drive most interviewers to distraction, perhaps leading them to cut it short just to get you out of the room!

Having tissues or a hankie handy is a Godsend but please try not to sound like an over-amplified fog horn if you must blow your nose!

Ask to be excused to leave the room if it really is necessary to clear your nose rather than risking (mutual) embarrassment by clearing your nasal passages indoors.

Make sure that your watch is working properly and keeping good time. If it needs a new battery, replace it or make sure that it is wound as necessary. Being late is going to do you no favors at all (try to arrive 10 minutes early is possible), so make sure that it doesn't happen.

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Finally, if you have a business card, don't be afraid of using it, even if it is from your previous or present employer.

The interviewer already knows where you were working previously, so there is no reason to be shy about using an „old“ card.

On the contrary, passing over a business card at the beginning of the interview demonstrates professionalism and confidence.

It provides an instant point of contact and as the interviewer is likely to give you their card, it prevents you finding yourself in an inferior position from the beginning.

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## ‘DO’S AND DON’TS’ DURING THE INTERVIEW...

### Don’ts

When attending an interview, there are many things that you should avoid doing, some of which have been suggested earlier.

You should not for example talk incessantly, sticking instead to polite, friendly and brief answers to the questions that the interviewer poses.

He or she is asking these specific questions for many reasons, one of which relates to their need to see how well you deal with them in comparison to other candidates. Hence, you should be confident, friendly, informative but above all succinct when answering.

You should avoid negative body language too. You’ve already had a chance to learn what looks good and what doesn’t, so making sure that your body gives off as many positive signs and signals as possible shouldn’t be too difficult.

Beyond these, there are a few more „no-no’s” that you might need to be aware of. I hope not – most of these should be obvious – but it’s still worth mentioning them

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nevertheless.

Do not chew gum or have anything else in your mouth when you are being interviewed, even if it is for the most menial of posts. It can never make a favorable impression talking to someone whose jaw is forever going up and down, so why risk it?

Think about personal cleanliness and hygiene before setting off from home too. Be certain that your nails are well trimmed and clean, that your hair is freshly washed and tidy and (for guys), be certain that that any facial hair is well kept too.

And please, use an effective deodorant, especially if you live in a hot and sweaty environment. Interviewing someone who has noticeable body odor is not a pleasant experience, and it certainly won't endear the interviewer to you if you put them through it.

Choose your words carefully, avoiding slang and street patois – it's unprofessional and could appear rude. Only use challenging vocabulary (i.e. big words that you wouldn't usually use) if you are certain that you fully understand the correct meaning and usage as well.

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Similarly, avoid industry jargon unless you can use it in a way that is 100% relevant and appropriate.

Finally, it should go without saying that you can never allow yourself to become agitated or angry during an interview.

Yes, your interlocutor may pose some challenging or difficult questions, but they are not doing so to be difficult or to make you uncomfortable.

Instead, they're asking, firstly, because they genuinely want or need an intelligent, well thought through response to their query and secondly, they are probably trying to see how you react under pressure, how you cope and deal with awkward questions that you may not have thought of.

This latter point is very important because there is stress in every job and there are new challenges that come along on a daily basis.

Discovering how you are likely to react in these situations is therefore a very important element of the interviewers role.

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If an interviewer says something with which you disagree with or are unsure of, resist the temptation to dive in with an immediate question or challenge. Don't frown or give any other bodily sign that you're not happy either.

Instead, keep smiling, stay quiet and note it down so that you can return to the point later when it is more appropriate. This has the added benefit of giving you time to calm down and to think about it a little more before opening your mouth!

Getting agitated, irritated or angry is always the least desirable reaction to a challenging poser, the one that says you've just failed the test!

On the flipside of the coin, you have to be extremely careful about how and when you use humor too.

Used correctly, humor can be a very powerful conversational „prop“ in any situation. It lightens the mood and it makes you appear more likeable and relaxed but humor used at the wrong time or in an inappropriate way can go very badly wrong, very quickly.

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For a start off, you dare not assume that your interviewer has the same sense of humor as you, or indeed, any sense of humor at all.

Just because they smile at you when you walk in the door may mean nothing – it's their job, after all – so don't take it as a sign that humor works with them.

Instead, trying to be funny could destroy your chances straight out of the box as they perceive what you think is funny as being stupid and inappropriately frivolous.

If you are going to use humor, only does so by following them. Let them lighten the atmosphere with a degree of humor first.

Once again, use the „mirror and match“ principle that we looked at earlier. Only be as humorous as they are and do so in the same manner as they do. In this way, you ensure that you never put a foot wrong whilst silently extending tacit approval of their humor at the same time.

Never be tempted to be the leading clown. Instead, let them take the lead and if they choose not to, take it as read that humor should be left for another day and a

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different situation!

## **Do's**

Knowing what to avoid saying (as highlighted above) is one thing but you also need to know the right way of conversing with the interviewer too.

In this respect, concentrate on speaking clearly, slowly and with as much confidence as you can muster.

Don't be frightened of expressing opinions or outlining your view as long as you have evidence or reasonable grounds to support your stance.

Expressing an opinion is a clear sign of a confident person who thinks for themselves. It is even acceptable to disagree in the right circumstances, as long as you do so only when appropriate and in a non-confrontational, conversational way.

It's not only in your speech and conversation that you should be confident of course.

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On the contrary, it's important that you appear personally confident and self-assured throughout the whole interview process.

You need to be able to back your confidence up with factual reasons for being so self-assured and you must strike a balance of being confident without appearing arrogant, particularly as the latter easily leads to errors.

Be ready to detail what you've achieved in the past without embellishment or exaggeration. Focus on the facts only and make sure that when you present them, your whole body image screams of your sincerity and the truth of what you're saying.

For example, keep your body „open“ to them (i.e. face them „square on“) and maintain full eye contact as long as doing so is appropriate.

Don't fidget, jump about or scratch any part of your head, leaving your ears, eyes

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and nose well alone. These are all recognized as signs that you may not be telling the truth.

Similarly, sit up straight with your shoulders back. Don't slouch in your chair or allow your shoulders to sag as either might imply a lack of confidence or just plain laziness!

Think about the position of your arms and legs as well . There are „rights“ and „wrongs“ here too.

For instance, I would recommend keeping your elbows on the arms of your chair with your fingers in front of you, with those of each hand gently touching one another in a sort of „forward facing steeple“ effect.

This is a nice relaxed position that makes it easy to keep your shoulders back with your body open to your interviewer.

Do not on the other hand cross your arms, especially if you've just been asked a question. It makes you look defensive, as if you're protecting yourself, which is not

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a positive image at all.

Keep you legs straight out in front of you, closed together and relaxed.

And as with your arms, only change leg position every now and then, being especially careful about how you cross your legs.

If you do so, only cross them in the direction of the interviewer, never away from them. The first position appears open and friendly but the second is closed and defensive.

If you're asked a question that you're not sure about, resist the temptation to shrug your shoulders if you are a person who commonly uses this gesture. Don't nod or shake your head either.

All responses that you give should be spoken, especially as many interviews are recorded nowadays.

And on the same subject, don't attempt an immediate answer to a question that you are unprepared for because if you do, there is a good chance that you'll put

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your foot in your mouth.

Instead, take your time coming up with an intelligent answer or failing this, ask for some time to think about it, jot it down and come back with an answer later.

No reasonable interviewer expects you to know everything and whilst it is likely that they'll stick to questions that most interviewees can answer – there'd be no sense in asking them otherwise – they don't always get it right.

If the question is one that you want to take some time with, ask for the time but limit this response to no more than one or two questions at the outside because otherwise, the interview could last forever!

The final thing is make sure that you have plenty of rest beforehand.

In a perfect scenario, you'll get a great sleep the night before but given that there could be so much riding on the upcoming „big day“, it'd be understandable if nerves keep you awake.

Incidentally, if they do, please do not resort to using tablets or alcohol to get you to

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sleep. This only guarantees that you will be groggy and unable to concentrate on what is being said, so it's no solution at all.

Instead, try to make sure that you have a full 8 hours sleep (or even more if possible) for two or three preceding nights because in this way, you are „stocking up“ extra rest in case you don't sleep well on the night before.

You've got to be rested to be your best, and you must be at your best if you are to be as impressive as you should be.

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## HOW TO BEHAVE ON ARRIVAL

### **Before You Enter The Interview Room...**

When you arrive at the interview venue, remind yourself once again just how important creating a positive first impression is.



Realize however that this is not only applicable to the interviewer or the panel who are going to assess your suitability for the job.

On the contrary, the same applies to everyone you meet on your arrival, not least

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because not everyone will be readily identifiable.

For instance, it's usually not difficult to recognize that the lady sitting behind the desk when you arrive is *almost* certainly the receptionist.

But it's only an „almost“ because she could be your interviewers assistant or P .A filling in while the regular receptionist is in the washroom or on a break.

See, you cannot make assumptions about who the people you meet are unless you genuinely know, and background research and even staff photos published on the net are not always foolproof in this respect.

For instance, I know of many folks who regularly use older photos simply because they were younger and better looking in the day. This happens in everyday life (is every Facebook picture bang-up-to-date?) and in business too.

Hence, it's not impossible that the prospective interviewer whose online photo you studied so intently is actually 10 or 20 ears older than the image suggests.

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The bottom line here is, you probably don't really know who anyone is, so don't fall into the trap of pigeonholing them. Instead, treat everyone as if they are the interviewer that you are just about to come face-to-face with because of course, they could be!

So, be as polite as you possibly can from the moment you first walk through the front door. Make sure that you use „please“ and „thank you“ with everyone you meet and go out of your way to create a good first impression from the off.

Small pleasantries always work wonders in this situation.

Asking someone how things are going or whether they are busy makes them notice you whilst impressing on them that you are diplomatic, amenable and confident.

A comment about the weather often starts a conversation – everyone has an opinion about the weather irrespective of where you are or what's happening outside – which serves two purposes.

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Firstly, you're no longer an anonymous interviewee, a number or name on a list but a friendly, chatty person. And secondly, having a chat takes your mind off what might otherwise be a high-pressure situation.

After all, what could be more natural or non-challenging than talking about the rain or how hot it is today?

If there is no one to talk to, it's important that you shouldn't look bored or impatient, especially if you are kept waiting longer than expected. This can happen if earlier interviews overrun or it might be that your interviewer keeps you waiting deliberately to see how you react.

The simple answer is, don't react at all.

Instead, remain calm, relaxed and thoroughly pleasant to anyone you meet.

Maybe it'll help to take your mind off things if you take a book along?

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If so, try to choose something that is reasonably intelligent and try to be at least part way through it. A trashy novel could give the wrong impression and being part way through suggests that you are a regular reader which implies intelligence and a desire to learn.

On the other hand, I wouldn't recommend playing with an electronic gadget or your mobile phone, although there is no doubt that doing so is rapidly becoming more prevalent and (arguably) more acceptable.

The problem is that in many cases, you don't know the views of your interviewer on this in advance.

If he or she is a relative youngster or you're going for a job in a high tech industry, they're unlikely to bat an eyelid but with an older, more staid individual, who knows?

It could be „something and nothing“ to them if electronic devices are an accepted part of their daily life but if they are not, you've got a potential „worst case scenario“ on your hands.

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They might immediately jump to the conclusion that you are an irredeemable „geek“, which would not be a good thing.

For this reason, I would leave your favorite electronic toy in your bag unless you are very sure that you are on solid ground if you use it.

Don't chat on your mobile phone either. It makes it look like the interview is not important to you and whilst looking cool and calm is good, appearing distracted, as if events elsewhere are more important, is not.

In fact, I'd turn the phone off because you do not want an incoming call disturbing the „flow“ of your meeting or interrupting the interviewer.

And please, never, ever be tempted to take an incoming call during the interview if for some unknown reason you decide not to switch it off.

This would represent the height of bad manners. It wastes the precious time of your interviewer (they've got more than one person to see) and it implies that whoever is calling you is more worthy of your attention than is the lady or gent

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sitting opposite you.

I know business people who have immediately ended an interview because some thoughtless (and ill-mannered) fool has decided to take an „important“ call in the middle of an interview.

It’s an „important“ call? What could be more important than landing your dream job, I ask you?

There is one final caution to consider.

If you are offered a cup of tea or coffee or a glass of water whilst waiting, it’s fine to accept. Staff members have most likely been briefed about how to behave when interviewees arrive, so you’re on safe ground here.

Do not however take this as a sign that you can tuck into your sandwiches or the contents of your lunchbox as a way of passing the time.

Offering a guest a drink is hospitable whereas starting to eat your lunch is

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disrespectful and ill-mannered.

Apart from the fact that you're dropping crumbs or bits of chips on the floor, what kind of perception will the interviewer have if you spray morsels of peanut butter sandwich all over them the first time you attempt to open your mouth?

That'd be a great first impression...(I don't think ☺).

As road safety experts used to say on TV when I was child, „just don't do it!“

## **On Entering The Room...**

When you first enter the interview room, make sure that you are standing straight with your shoulders back. Good posture is all-important and standing straight brings you up to your full height.

After entering, the interviewer is likely to invite or show you to where he or she wants you to sit. Thank them for the instructions and proceed in the indicated direction but before sitting, greet them with a firm, dry handshake.

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Alternatively, if you're in front of an interview panel, start by shaking hands with the panel chairperson (usually seated in the middle) and then proceed to do the same with the other panel members thereafter.

Distribute your business cards at this juncture if you are going to do so.

Make sure that you bring a reasonable supply because even if it is not slated to be a panel interview, you may find that there are one or two observers or trainees sitting in. It is accepted business etiquette to give a card to everyone on the other side of the desk, so be certain that you have enough to do so.

Either way, panel or individual interviewer, don't forget to offer brief thanks for them seeing you. This acknowledges that you understand that they are busy people, and it's no more than good manners to thank them for their time.

You should not however sit down until invited to, and remember to thank them for the courtesy of inviting you to do so. A simple „thank you“ is enough – there's no need for a speech!

Take a moment or two to get organized and settled, bearing in mind the

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importance of posture and seating position. If you've got a notebook with you, put it on your knee, smile when you are ready and you're good to go.

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## THE INTERVIEW PATTERN AND PROCESS

### The Pattern...

Most interviews follow a fairly set pattern. If you are familiar with this pattern, it is far easier to be relaxed about what is going to happen.

Here is a broad step-by-step outline of what is likely to happen:

- You are called in. We've already dealt with the protocol for this stage of the process;
- There's likely to be an initial non-challenging exchange of pleasantries. You'll be thanked for coming, asked how the journey was and so on;
- These are nothing but initial formalities and they do not expect or want detailed responses. Therefore, short and to the point does the job;
- Next, they'll probably go through your resume, asking questions based on what you've written.
- As you wrote it and have a copy with you, these are questions that you should anticipate and answer in advance;
- Be prepared for additional questions that follow your responses to the initial

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questioning;

- Once again, these should be relatively obvious in advance, so you can be prepared. By way of illustration, your initial answer to „why didn’t you finish your college degree” might be „I didn’t like the course”. They’re inevitably going to ask „why?”, so have your answer ready;
- The interviewer is likely to invite questions from you;
- Given that you’ve done extensive research already, you should be able to put a short list of intelligent question together in advance, but don’t forget to jot down additional questions as you go along;
- After your questions have been dealt with, they’ll ask you if there is anything else;
- Assuming that there isn’t, thank them for taking the time and trouble to see you and remind them that you’d be more than happy to answer any queries they may have or to come back if necessary.

That’s it, the interview is done!

Whether it has gone well or really badly, keep smiling and willing to exchange niceties until you are well away from the premises and anyone to do with the



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company.

Then and only then can you allow the mask to slip, whether it be in exultation or in abject misery.

## **The Process**

It may be that the company makes their decision after just one interview but it doesn't always work this way. In fact, it's very common for employers to use first interviews to whittle a long list of applicants down to a very small shortlist, usually no more than 3 or 4 candidates at the most.

If you're on this shortlist, you'll be called back.

This is good news as it means that you're one of the last few standing.

The bad news is that second interviews are often far more structured and therefore tougher than the first meeting.

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Whereas in the first „episode“, the interview was fairly „free flowing“, the second is likely to be based on a far more rigid structure.

Oftentimes, a second interview tends to be company driven or oriented and may include such things as practical or aptitude tests.

Thus, there is not a lot more that you can do to prepare for this second examination than what you have already done for the first.

Nevertheless, the research and the effort that you put into acing the first interview places you in a very strong position for the second one, which is as much as you can reasonably expect.

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## SOME COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS...

As stressed many times, a lot of the questions you'll be asked will be based on the information that you've included on your resume.

Detailed below however are some of the more common „general“ questions that you are almost certain to face at some point:

- „Tell me about yourself“ – make the answer something positive – focus on a major achievement for example;
- „How would you deal with criticism/stress?“;
- „How would you define success?“;
- „Where do you see yourself in 5/10 years?“;
- „What are your strengths and weaknesses?“;
- „Do you prefer working on your own or as a team member?“;
- „Why should I hire you?“;
- „Why would you be a good match for us?“ – use your research to formulate

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a suitable response;

- „Why do you want to work for us?“ –likewise;
- „How high would you like to go in this company?“;
- „How would deal with a disagreement with colleagues/a superior?“;
- „What does your wife/husband/partner think about you joining us?“.

And so on.

The list of potential questions is literally endless but this selection of the most common gives you an extra „flavor“ of the sort of grilling that you should prepare for in advance.

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## CONCLUSION

The advice in this guide has been accumulated from many years of being both an interviewee and an interviewer.

The information has therefore been gathered from both sides of the table, meaning that this is arguably the most comprehensive and practical guide to acing interviews there is.

In truth, a large part of acing an interview comes down to using your common sense, always staying relaxed and calm whilst being confident but not overly so.

It's about thinking about the process and most importantly, trying to understand what a potential employer *really* wants.

If you try to see things from their side of the fence, you will find that understanding the interview process and what they want from you becomes far easier.

This is what this guide is all about, reminding you from beginning to end how

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important it is to make a great first impression, how crucial it is to have intelligent answers (and questions) prepared in advance, and so on.

Follow the advice here and I'm confident that you never again need to be overly nervous or apprehensive about an interview situation.