

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF A JOB INTERVIEW

You have submitted your CV to apply for an opening and now your prospective employers want to meet you. How should you conduct yourself? What questions are they going to ask? According to the Professional Assignments Group (PAG), many people struggle with interviews even though they are the most experienced and best qualified for the job.

PAG puts it down to stage fright. People choke when they are under the spotlight, especially when their skills and qualifications come under scrutiny. You should always remember that when you are invited to an interview, it means that the recruiting manager was impressed by your CV and believes you are a good match for the job. He or she just needs to be sure. You should take this in your stride.

PAG says while interviews differ from job to job, there are always the same basic qualities to a candidate that interviews well. A good interviewee is someone who can answer questions intelligently. Someone who knows enough about their potential employers' business and the post they hope to fill."

So while you won't be able to anticipate the questions they will ask, at least you can prepare yourself sufficiently to go into an interview with confidence. We've constructed a short list of the things you should do and the things you mustn't do before and during an interview.

THE DOs:

1. Be on time

Nothing creates a worst first impression than being late. Make sure you know where the venue is and how long it will take you to get there.

2. Research the company

Find out all you can about your prospective employers' business. Visit their website, watch for them in the news and speak to people who understand their industry so that when you are being interviewed you can ask intelligent questions and understand what they are talking about.

3. Create a good first impression

Power dress, maintain eye contact, and give your interviewers a firm handshake.

4. Focus on the key requirements of the position

When asked questions about your ability to perform a duty, only offer those skills and strengths of yours that are relevant to the task. By offering irrelevant information, you'll only give the impression that you didn't understand the question.

5. Blow your trumpet

If you don't blow your own trumpet, who will? Always make as much as possible of your achievements but, again, only insofar as they relate to the position you are applying for. You should remember that you are competing for this position and any edge you can offer will give you a higher chance of getting the job.

6. Minimise your weaknesses

Before the interview, think about the kinds of duties you will be performing. If you feel that you are not too strong on some of these, think of how you can put a positive spin on these weaknesses like "you are considering going for training."

THE DON'Ts:

1. Don't talk too much or too little

Remember that the interview is also an opportunity for you to see whether you can fit into the company's culture and value system. By asking questions about the position and the company you will give the impression that you are serious about working for the company. As a rule of thumb, the ratio of conversation between you and the interviewer should be 50/50.

2. Don't discuss your rights under the Basic Conditions of Employment Act

Your first interview should be about discussing the general duties you will be performing and whether or not you will fit into the organisation's environment. By putting the focus on your lunch hours, working hours and leave you'll give the impression that you want to do the bare minimum and will add no value to the job.

3. Don't slate your previous employers

Your interviewer will only think that you have a problem with authority and don't work well with others.

4. Don't lie

Don't lie about your skills, qualifications, past positions and achievements. These things come back to haunt you. Remember that you are hired to perform certain duties based on your abilities, and if you cannot do them it will only be a frustration to you and your new employers.

The most important thing, however, is to show confidence, If you don't have confidence in yourself, then there is no reason for anybody else to.