

Quick Guide Interview Do's & Don'ts

Do

✓ Research the organisation, their key principles, and the people involved

- Look at their website, annual report, newsletters and media releases
- Find out what their key products or services are and where they stand in the market place
- Understand the challenges of the sector
- Make sure you have a solid understanding of what the role entails
- Look up the person that is interviewing you and their role within the organisation
- Review your CV to remind yourself of your experience and best achievements, remembering dates and highlights
- Match your key selling points against the job description – and have them ready to call on in your interview
- Prepare for potentially tricky questions – probably the hardest part!

✓ Practice

Rehearse your responses with a friend or colleague to gain feedback on whether you are matching your skills, experience and personal attributes to the requirements of the job in a coherent and succinct way.

✓ Plan your arrival

Punctuality is a strong indicator of your professionalism and enthusiasm for the role. Confirm the time and address of the interview, research directions, and parking, and aim to arrive at least 10 minutes early. Bring any required documentation and the phone number of the person you will be meeting with you in case of an emergency.

✓ Dress the part

It's been said that most employers decide whether or not to hire you within the first 5-15 minutes of an interview and the very first impression you make is visual. Your appearance conveys how serious you are about the role and how you would represent the company in the future. Be sure to dress appropriately: neat, professional, and relatively conservative. Pay attention to details such as clean shoes, nonwrinkled clothing, and limit the amount of jewellery you wear.

✓ Keep your composure

It is important to remain as relaxed as possible. Even the most seasoned professional can get interview nerves. Prepare thoroughly to help you maintain your composure. Remember that both you and the interviewer want a successful outcome.

✓ Greet with confidence

First impressions count. Greet your interviewer standing, with a firm handshake, good eye contact, and a smile.

✓ Watch your delivery

Positive body language is vital. Be aware of your tone, eye contact, and how you are positioned in the chair. Try to convey genuine enthusiasm, warmth, and professionalism. Speak with clarity and confidence. Remember that your motivation and attitude are often as critical as your skills and experience.

✓ Positive last impression

Close the interview with a handshake, a smile, and a genuine thank you. A brief, friendly email thanking the interviewer for their time and consideration is often viewed positively. Restating your enthusiasm for the role could be a deciding factor as to whether you are offered the job.

Don't

✗ Arrive late

This should be a no-brainer. Even if you were held up in a 30-car pile up on the motorway, no one is interested in hearing it. This might sound harsh, but think of how often the "traffic" excuse is used. If you are afraid that traffic might be an issue, you need to consider that in your commute and plan in case it should happen.

✗ Forget to prepare

You would not arrive for an exam without revising and preparing (hopefully), so why would you show up for an interview without preparing? The success of an interview depends primarily on how well you understand the company and its needs, and how effectively you are able to translate your strengths and skills into assets the company desires.

✗ Appear desperate or pushy

Sometimes you want the job so badly that it's hard to keep calm and maintain perspective. But being too desperate or eager will only lessen your chances. People like to work with others who are confident and easy-going, not pushy and inconsiderate.

✗ Appear self-absorbed

While it's good to be able to comfortably list your strengths and talk about why you want the job and love the company, remember that an interview is a dialogue, not a one-person-show. Don't become so absorbed with saying the right things that you don't hear what the other person is saying. Answer the question they asked, not the one you wished they had asked.

✗ Overshare

You want to create a rapport with your interviewers and to put everyone at ease, but you also want to stay professional at all times. Keep private or compromising details of your life to yourself.

✗ Leave your phone on

It's not enough to ignore your phone if it beeps or rings, you need to turn it off. It is distracting and inconsiderate.

✗ Badmouth former employers

Everybody knows that you are not going to like everyone you have ever worked for. But choosing to badmouth former employers to a complete stranger says a lot about you. It is generally considered indiscreet and unprofessional. Neither quality is attractive in a potential candidate.

✗ Ask 'smart' questions

An interviewer is not simply being polite when they ask if you have any questions. They are keen to gauge if you have been listening carefully, you have done your homework and for you to show you are thoughtful, creative and thorough. It's great to ask them to clarify something from the interview or describe how a typical day unfolds. It's not so great to ask about working from home, possible promotions or bringing your dog to work before you have even got the job.

✗ Be ungracious

Nobody wants to hire somebody who seems entitled. Remember to thank the interviewer(s) for taking the time to interview you, both at the end of an interview and with a quick thank you email the day after. A little gratitude goes a very long way.