

Interview Skills

‘First impressions count’

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Introduction to Interviews

Congratulations!

You've successfully made it through to the next stage.

Remember, your resume and application will get you an interview, and it is the **interview that will get you the job!**

You need to start preparing for the interview as early as possible.

Interview Purposes

Essentially the purpose of an interview is to find out more information about you as a person and see if you are a match to the role and the organisation.

Your interview may be one of a series of interviews short-listing the applicant pool.

Introduction to Interviews

Confirm:

- Date and time of interview
- Location
- If you are required to bring anything, undertake any tests
- Who the interview will be with (ideally get a name and position)
- The interview may be with an external recruiter

Introduction to Interviews

Interview formats

- One on one (in person)
- Phone interview
- Panel interview
- Group interview

One on one (face to face)

- Traditionally very formal (traditional style of interview)
- May meet with:
 - Supervisor
 - HR representative
 - Manager
 - External recruiter
- Able to establish conversation/ rapport about the position
- Important to be extremely prepared

Phone Interview

- Question and Answer style (similar to face to face)
- Often undervalued, however just as important as face to face.
- May be used as a short-listing tool for a large applicant pool.
- Also used to interviews when location is a barrier

Panel Interviews

- Extremely formal in nature (therefore, very intimidating!)
- Interviewed by a group of people (generally 3-4) from varying levels of authority (may include an external representative)
- Answer questions from each member and address each member

Group Interviews

- Able to demonstrate your interpersonal skills, problem solving ability, teamwork skills and communication skills.
- Designed to pick the best out of a selection
- Often incorporates group exercises, activities, and role-play scenarios.
- May be a number of facilitators watching the applicants.

Interviews: Doing Your Research

It is extremely important to do your research prior to an interview. If you are unprepared, you will appear unprofessional.

Remember to research both the role and the company.

Interviews: Know the Company

Research the company:

- Goals
- Values
- Missions
- History
- Organisational structure



A lot of this information will be available on the company's website and publications, so there is no need to become a super sleuth!

Interviews: Know the Job

Research the role:

- Position description
- Job advertisement
- Website information
- View similar positions that may be advertised

Consider – role requirements and functions, reporting structures, career progression, training and P.D opportunities etc.

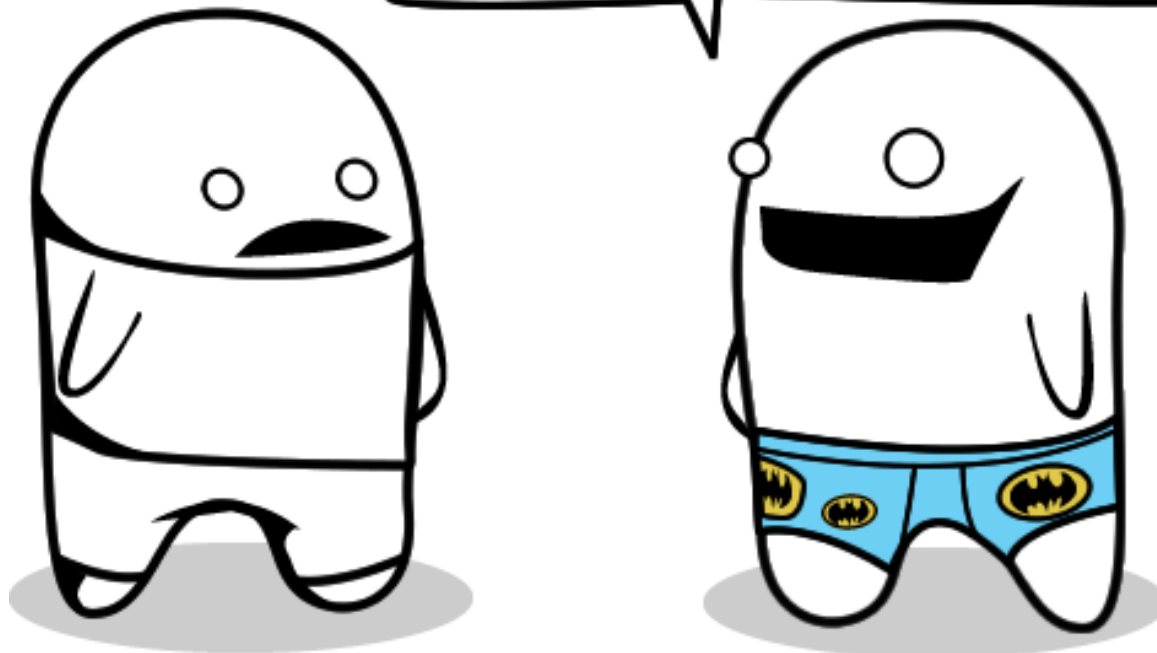
Prepare – What to wear

What am I going to wear??!!

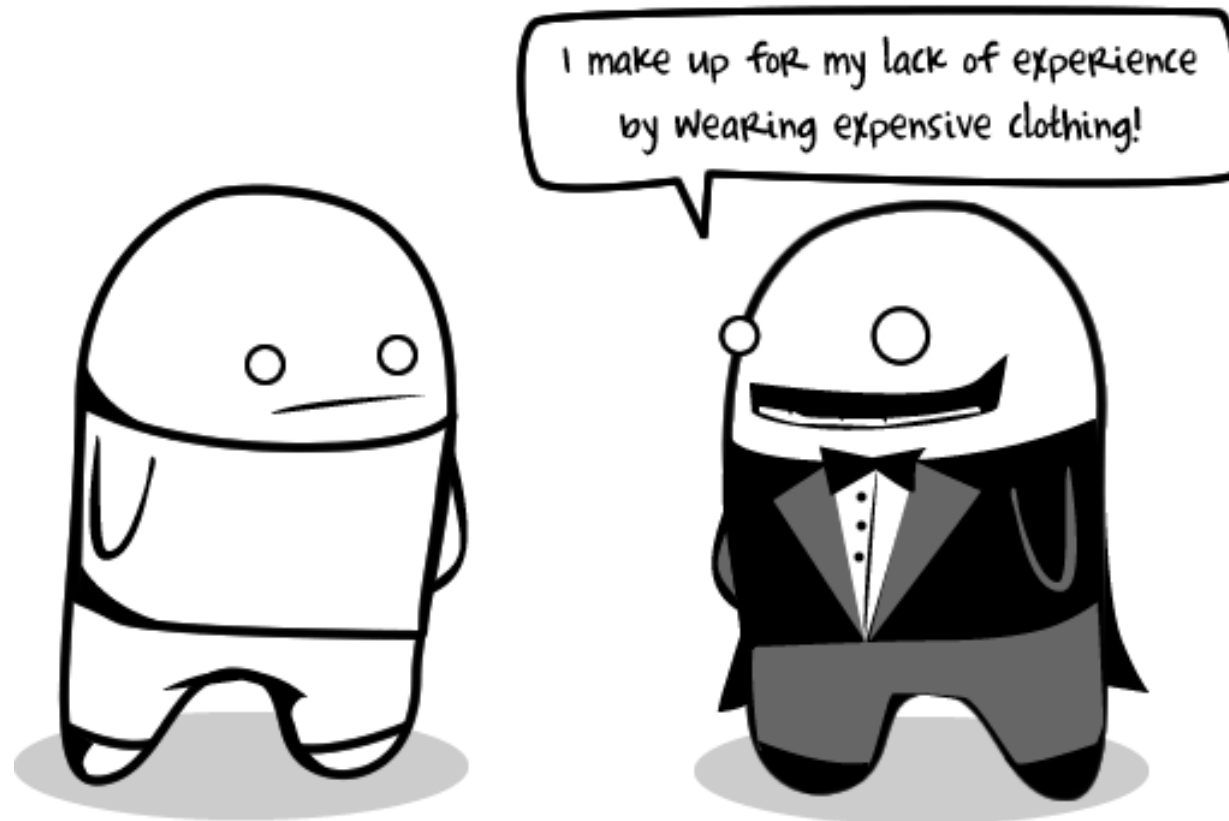
- Males:
 - Normal: Dress pants, shirt and tie
 - Management/ High profile: Suit
 - Clean dress shoes!!!
- Females:
 - Corporate suit (pant, skirt or dress)

The Under-dresser

I'm cocky and make up for being over-qualified by wearing just my underpants to this interview!



The over-dresser



Preparation – Appearance (cont)

Be aware of:

- Your odour– do not over compensate with perfume/cologne
- Smoke smell – DO NOT SMOKE JUST PRIOR TO AN INTERVIEW!! Body spray and mints do not completely mask the smell
- Your teeth and hair (do a final check before going in)

The Stench



Preparation – What to take

Besides your dazzling personality, there are a few things that you should take.

- A current resume (you should take a few copies in case there are a number of people in the interview)
- A copy of your certificates (qualifications), academic transcript and other achievements
- Awards and other relevant information
- A copy of the position description

Preparation – Calm your nerves

Ensure you get to the interview with plenty of time to spare. Being late will not help your first impression!!

Allow yourself some time to calm before going into the building.

Above all...

**TURN OFF YOUR MOBILE
PHONE!!**

Silent doesn't count.

First Impressions Count

Make sure you know how to shake a hand.

Simple... But important

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjdjIUBjbUQ>

First Impressions Count

First impressions count right from the moment you walk through the door.

- Introduce yourself clearly and confidently
- State who you are meeting
- While you are waiting – be aware that the receptionist will generally be watching your behaviour
- Don't play with your phone, fidget nervously etc..

Interview Behaviours

The purpose of an interview is to make a good impression. Therefore, in addition to what you are saying, you need to be aware of your behaviour during the interview as well as your body language.

Nervous behaviours that you didn't know existed may rise to the surface during an interview.

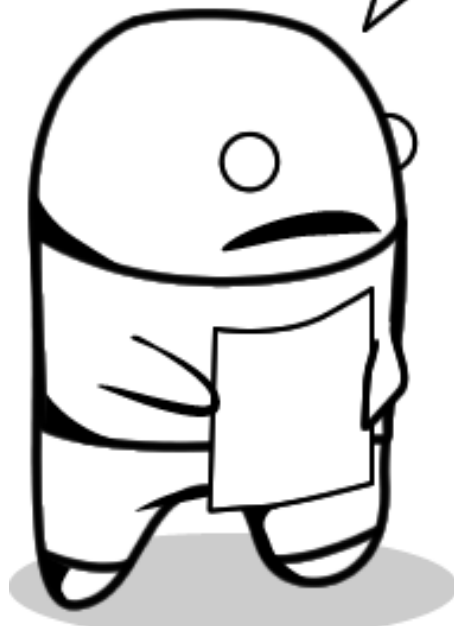
Interview Behaviour

Common nervous behaviours that can detract from your performance:

- Shaking your foot
- Talking really fast
- Saying 'um' or 'ah' (or similar) excessively
- Tapping something in your hand/ fidgeting
- Overuse of hand gestures

The Nervous Twitcher

So here at Boyd's Toast we're looking for a designer who can really make things pop. Ideally someone with an eye for...



clickety click click click click
clickety click click clickety click
click clickety click click click
clickety click click clickety click
click click click click clickety
click click click click
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Interview Behaviour

Also be aware of:

- Eye contact – don't stare them down, however keep your focus.
- Your posture – sit up straight and don't slouch in your chair.
 - Females – can cross legs/ankles etc
 - Males – don't cross your legs and lean back

Interview Behaviour

Be aware of your speech

- Take a breath before answering. Don't rush into an answer without first thinking it through.
- If you naturally talk fast – make a conscious effort to slow down.
- If you have a strong accent, be very aware of how fast you are speaking

Interview Questions

There are three common types of interview questions and you will find that you will get asked a mixture in most interviews. They are:

- Behavioural questions
- Situational questions
- Open ended questions

Interview Questions - Behavioural

Behavioural questions ask about specific behaviours.

You need to provide an example of where you have demonstrated that desired behaviour or skills or attribute.

The use of a STAR model answer can be very helpful

Interview Questions - Behavioural

Example behavioural questions:

Tell us about a time that you demonstrated initiative in the workplace.

Where have you shown leadership abilities?

When has your problem solving ability positively contributed to the work environment?

Interview Questions - Situational

Much like behavioural, situational interview questions ask about how you responded in a particular situation.

Again, the STAR method can be highly effective and can assist if you get lost when answering.

Situational interview is looking for a clear conclusion as a result of your efforts.

Interview Questions – Situational

Example situational questions:

Tell us about a time you have faced conflict in the workplace, what were the circumstances and how did you handle it.

When have you manage to balance contradicting priorities from stakeholders? How did you achieve a positive result?

How would you respond to an upset customer

Interview Questions – Open Ended

Can be used as ‘ice breaker’, get to know you questions.

Very common and many people can go very wrong if not prepared.

Opportunity to tell the interviewer more about yourself

Interview Questions – Open Ended

Example open ended interview questions:

Tell us about yourself.

Tell us about your previous experience in relation to this role?

What is your understanding of the company?

What are your future career goals?

Tell us about yourself

Good rule of thumb – two personal, three professional.

Sample response (very short):

I have recently relocated here from Brisbane with my family. After completing my B. Commerce this year, I am looking to start my accounting career focusing on taxation. I have a background in customer service focused roles and really enjoy the interaction with customers.

Why are you interested in this position/company?

This is an opportunity to demonstrate your research. Use some of the information that you have found out to impress.

Sample response:

I am really excited about the level of growth that the company has undergone over the past few years and after reading about some of the plans for future projects, I believe my skills would be of great value to the company. It would be to establish myself with...

What are your weaknesses/strengths?

Be honest!! This is a chance to talk about some of the challenges you have faced and how you have/will overcome them.

Sample response:

Like many people, I have found that I get quite nervous at the thought of public speaking, however I have recently starting attending the local chapter of Toast Masters and have found that my confidence is growing in this area.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Again, remain positive about your future with the company, while it may be your lifelong passion to run a surf and skate shop... it won't help your career if you have a mechanical engineering degree.

Sample answer:

I would like to have established myself as a professional engineer with Engineers Australia and starting to move into a leadership role. Ideally I would have a strong portfolio of projects I have contributed towards.

Interview Questions

Any other interview questions that you have struggled with in the past??

Concluding the Interview

Have some suitable questions prepared for the interviewer. This shows interest in the company and that you have done your research.

Thank the interviewer/s for their time and that you look forward to hearing from them.

Shake everyone's hand again!

For further information

If you have any other specific concerns about job interviews or would like to arrange a mock interview, feel free to contact a member of the Careers and Employment team on careers@usq.edu.au or visit us in the Workshop (G229)