

**Have you got an interview coming up?  
Read on to serve up a stellar interview!**

**How to Prepare for an Interview**

**Research the company or organisation:**

- do a Google search
- visit the company website and social media accounts
- check for recent press releases and media articles
- check out case studies and marketing materials
- see if you know any of their current employees.

**What to look for when you're researching the company or organisation:**

- their culture, mission and values
- projects and initiatives
- industry information including key market competitors
- what skills and experience the company values
- news and recent events
- client or customer base
- the hiring process.

**Know interview location:** Travel to the location the day before your interview if possible to minimise your stress on the day. This includes checking the parking situation, public transport routes or availability of car-sharing services.

Google the **interviewers** (LinkedIn, Twitter are a good place to start).

Familiarise yourself with the **format of the interview** and the **job description**. Practice interview questions and answers.

Review your **CV and your online presence**.

Prepare 3 - 5 questions to ask the interviewer.

**Print out** a copy of your CV (just in case) and print your references (separate sheet) in case these are asked for. You can also email these when asked.

Prepare what you are going to wear and pack your bag the day before -make sure you include your CV, cover letter, references, pen and paper (just in case), portfolio (if required), business cards (if you have them).

Plan your **breakfast**.

Get a **good nights sleep** and set your alarm!

## During the interview - how to respond to certain questions

### 'Tell me about yourself' questions

- Step 1: who you are (your professional persona). This is the big picture of how you want them to see you and your relevant experience.
- Step 2: why you're qualified (most relevant achievements). Outline 2-5 main points that are most interesting to interviewer, e.g. overview of last few positions or most impressive relevant accomplishments
- Step 3: why you're here (why you're going to be a great fit for this job). Note 2 brief sentences – tell them you want the position and why.

### Competency-based questions

Review the job ad/job description carefully and look for required competencies.

Break down the general competencies into more specific behaviours expected in the role. For example, a customer service role, communication skills would be essential.

- Think of examples from your experience when you demonstrated those competencies.
- Try to come up with 2 examples for main competencies.

The **STAR method** is also a great way to respond to these types of questions:

#### **S – SITUATION:**

*What was the challenge or situation you found yourself in? What was the context?*

#### **T – TASK:**

*What were you trying to achieve? What was your role? (concise and informative)*

#### **A – ACTION:**

*What steps did you take to achieve your task? Why did you do it?*

- Be personal – use “I”
- Steer clear of technical info, unless crucial
- Explain WHAT you did, HOW you did it, and WHY you did it

#### **R – RESULT:**

*What was the outcome? How did it end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?*

## **During the interview - which questions should you ask?**

It is good to ask the employer questions of your own to show you're serious about the job and that you're genuinely interested, as well as being informed and engaged. Some ideas of questions you could ask are:

- What does a typical day look like?
- What type of training is involved in this role?
- What are the biggest challenges of this job?
- How would you describe this company's values?

## **After your Interview**

Depending on the position, it can be appropriate to thank the interviewer for their time via a follow up email. In the email you should:

- Address them by their name.
- If interviewed by more than one person, write individual notes.
- Reiterate your interest in the position, referencing specific aspects of the role and/or company that genuinely resonate with you.
- Mention something you liked about the interview.
- Highlight your main qualifications for the position – without reciting your entire resume – and your confidence in your ability to do the job well. Focus on the qualifications that most interested the interviewer.
- Address any concerns the person expressed about your candidacy (if they did so).
- Incorporate little details you learned about the interviewer during small talk to personalise your message and remind the person of the rapport you built with one another.
- Remind them who you are.
- Keep it short!!
- Sample email subject lines:
  - “Thank you for your time”
  - “Great speaking with you”
  - “Following up”

## **What if I don't get the job?**

Everyone hates rejection - being turned down for a role you really want is never fun, and can hit your confidence. However, don't beat yourself up. If you dwell too long it holds you back from any future chance at success! Use the experience as a learning - get back out there and continue to apply: you won't land every job you apply for but you will land one!