

Preparing For A Job Interview

By Cosimina Nesci



*Life is not a dress rehearsal....
always put the best YOU forward*



Changing nappies, feeding babies and not having an adult conversation until 6pm when you partner arrives home is about to change. It is time to re-enter the workforce and associate with the outside world.

The thought of attending an interview where there may be hundreds of applicants is scary for anyone. So it is essential you be organised and prepared.

No matter what always put the best YOU forward, as over 90% of the decision on who to select for the position or the second interview is made in the first two minutes.

You want your personality and commitment to stand out not your clothes. You need to show the interviewer that you have made an effort and can adapt to any situation.

You don't get a second chance to make a good impression so it is vital to dress sharp and be well groomed. Depending on the position there may not be a need to wear a suit but you do need to dress appropriately. As a basic rule you should dress one level above the expected position you are being interviewed for.

If you are a mother chances are you will need to organise the house, feed the kids and get them settled with the baby sitter before you think of what to wear to the interview.

Getting ready for interview

1. **Hair**
 - A washed, neat, trim hairstyle is important.
 - Hair past the shoulders should be clipped/tied back.
 - Your fringe should be away from your eyes. Hair covering the eyes indicates you have something to hide.
2. **Make-up**
 - Always wear make-up but avoid excessive make-up. You don't know what the opinion of the interviewer is with makeup.
 - Make sure their lips are moisturised.
 - Wear lip-gloss or a neutral lipstick.
 - No red lips.
3. **Teeth**
 - Well-brushed teeth and fresh breath.
4. **Hands/
Nails**
 - Wash your hand and moisturise them.
 - Cut and shape your nails to a reasonable working length.
 - If you tend to get sweaty hands before an interview dry your hands then spray on some antiperspirant.
 - If you chose to wear nail polish chose a neutral tone that will not make your nails stand out.
 - Do not wear red or black nail polish.
 - Do not have chipped nail polish.




Who's hand would you shake?

5. **Perfume**
 - Avoid the use of perfume. If the interviewer does not care for the smell, you will be starting off the interview on the wrong foot. If he or she is allergic to your fragrance, you can rest assured you won't be getting the job.
6. **Clothes**
 - Dress appropriately and avoid anything that shows its label.
 - Make sure all clothing is clean and ironed.
 - The best colours are grey, blues, camel, dark brown, beige, deep maroon or black.
 - Avoid pastels such as pink yellow or green and any exotic colours such as red, salmon or mustard.
 - Avoid materials that are clingy, shiny or make noise.
7. **Jewellery**
 - Jewellery should not be the centre of attention.
 - No more than one ring on each hand.
 - One set of earrings.
 - NO other visible body rings (eyebrow, tongue, etc.).

During the Interview

1. **Be on time**

If potential employers have a pet peeve, it's the applicant who arrives late for the job interview. Allow an extra fifteen to twenty minutes to get to any interview especially if your interview is in a location with heavy traffic or in an area you don't know well. If you're relying on public transportation, know the routes and schedules and expect delays. Arriving about 10 minutes prior to the interview lets the employer know you want the job!


2. **Don't chew gum**

Gum chewing is a major turnoff for employers.
3. **"Um" & "Like"**

Avoid muttering "um" and "like." They are an indication of how nervous you are.
4. **Handshake**

A confident handshake at the beginning of the interview and then as you leave shows confidence.
5. **Eye contact**

Make eye contact. It's extremely important for connecting with your interviewer. When asked a question, don't look up at the ceiling as if searching for answers. Don't cast your eyes downward in shame. If you find it difficult to look directly at them try looking just above their shoulders.
6. **Ask questions**

It's not only the employer who gets to ask questions during the interview, you can also be ready with four or five questions. Asking questions shows the potential employer that you really want *this* job and have been giving thought to your decision to work there.

Here are some appropriate suggestions:

 - What do you think is the most important thing I need to know about this job?
 - What kinds of opportunities might there be for me to learn new skills here?
 - Is there anything else you need to know about me?
 - Will I be trained on the job, by you or someone else?
7. **Say Thank-You**

It is important that you show your appreciation for the time the interviewer has given you. When you first step in the door, with a positive handshake you can say, "Thank you for taking the time to meet with me." Again when you leave, you can repeat the thanks by saying: "Thank you for the chance to learn more about the job. I hope to hear from you soon."

8. Write a thank you note

If your interview was number ten out of fifty interviews writing a thank you note afterwards ensures that the interviewer remembers who you are.

What do you say in a post-interview thank you note? You only need express three main ideas:

- Thank you for meeting with me.
- I am interested in working with your company.
- I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you notes are best if handwritten but even an email note will help you keep your name in front of an employer.

An interview is a two way process. The interviewer is evaluating you while at the same time you are assessing them and the organisation they represent. You may decide you don't want the position and that's okay. The interview has allowed you to perfect your interviewing skills just that little bit more.

So go into every interview as if you want the job. If you look the part, sound the part and have the knowledge then chances are the job is yours.

Cosimina Nesci is a corporate image specialist. For more information contact

Email: cnesci@bigpond.com Telephone: 61 2 9484 7976