

Tips & tricks



Sometimes, you need more than the right qualifications. In today's hotly contested business world, knowing some inside tips on how to impress your potential employers can be invaluable.

Think of unique experiences that have had an impact on your life and don't be afraid to talk about your achievements or areas where there is room for improvement.

Try to avoid the good old school or university project examples – recruiters hear them all the time!

Companies don't expect you to know everything about them. However, they do expect you to know enough to show that you're interested in the role.

Avoid criticising previous employers or colleagues, focusing on bad feelings or giving excuses about negative experiences – try to focus on the positives you have taken away from these experiences.

Be poised. A firm handshake, good eye contact, sitting up straight helps you a lot. Avoid nervous habits.

Stick to the facts.

If needed, refer back to your resume or some notes you have prepared.

Remember – most people who are interviewing you have been in your seat at some stage recently, and understand your nerves. Relax, speak clearly and enthusiastically.

Put questions as to have a better view on the company.

An interview is an opportunity to confirm whether this is an organisation you can see yourself working with.

First Impressions Count!

When we think of first impressions, this can often be your personal email address that we use to contact you. When you apply, expect to get a call, and prepare for this accordingly. When an interview is secured, make sure that you have confirmed the right place and the right time – and while you know to allow enough time to get there, don't announce yourself too early. If you do arrive early, take the time to go for a walk, get some fresh air and run through any questions you may want to ask at the end of your interview.

Have you done your homework?

What form will the interview take? Will there be a test to assess your skills? Who is interviewing you? You won't always necessarily find out prior to an interview who you will be interviewed by, but think big picture: What does the organisation do? Talk to your family and friends about the company you are applying to and research the company's website. Having a solid understanding of what the firm does and its value propositions helps prepare you for the good old question, "Why are you interested in this job?" Brainstorm the competencies that you think are required to perform in that role and think about examples of when you have demonstrated these competencies.

Now STOP preparing!

Preparation is the key to success – but too much preparation can be just as bad as no preparation at all. Anticipating questions, preparing answers, and even rehearsing an interview are great ways to ensure that you are ready for a successful interview, but always be prepared to adapt your responses to the question you have been asked. The best way to prepare is to have lots of examples up your sleeve, and be prepared to adapt them to the question appropriately.

Too much or too little?

Before going into the interview, understand what time restrictions there are and try to keep your answers concise. If you are asked to give an example of when you have demonstrated leadership, for instance, give them a '**STAR**' response: i.e. a specific **S**ituation or **T**ask, the **A**ction that you took which demonstrated leadership, and the **R**esult of your action. Remember that it doesn't matter if the result wasn't positive – often what you learnt can be equally beneficial. By using the 'STAR' technique, you will get straight to the point and allow enough time for the interviewer to probe for more information where it is needed.