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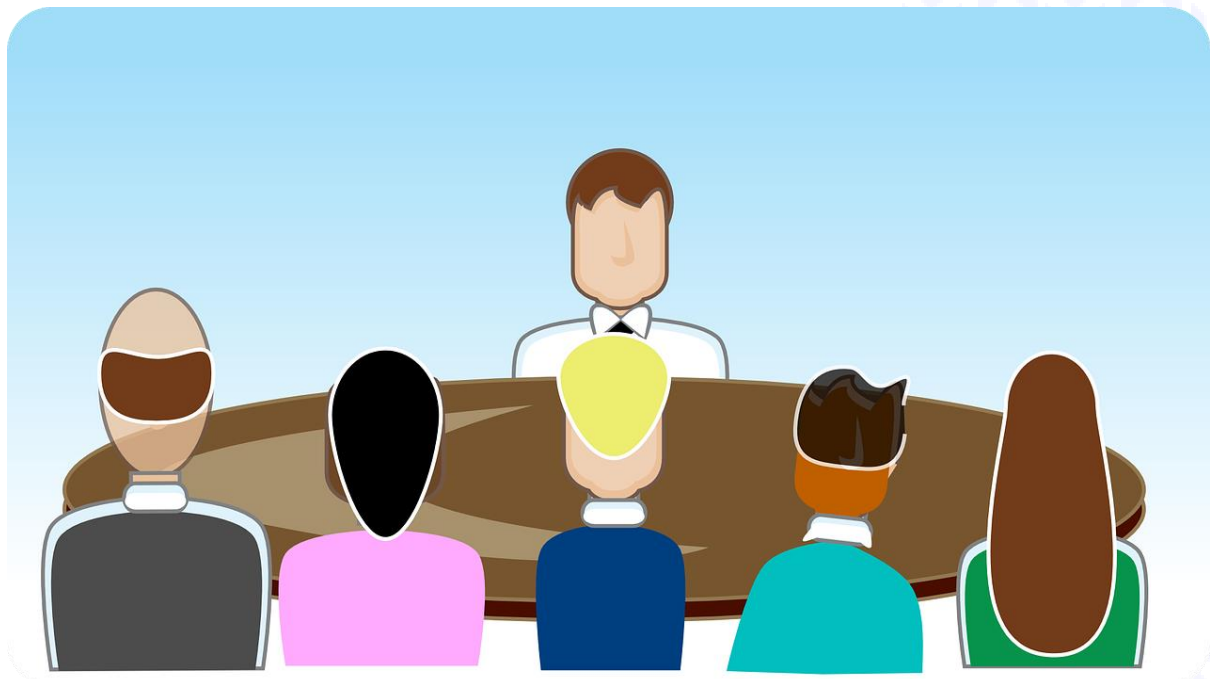


NEW ZEALAND
INSTITUTE OF SPORT



COURSE 2 – INTERVIEW TIPS

WORKSHOP RESOURCE



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COURSE: Interview Tips

LEARNING OUTCOME:

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- Cover some basic tips on how to prepare for an interview
- Outline common interview questions (and give tips on how to answer)
- Give you a greater understanding of how to make a good first impression
- Explain how to follow-up after an interview
- Give you the chance to practice a mock-interview and receive feedback

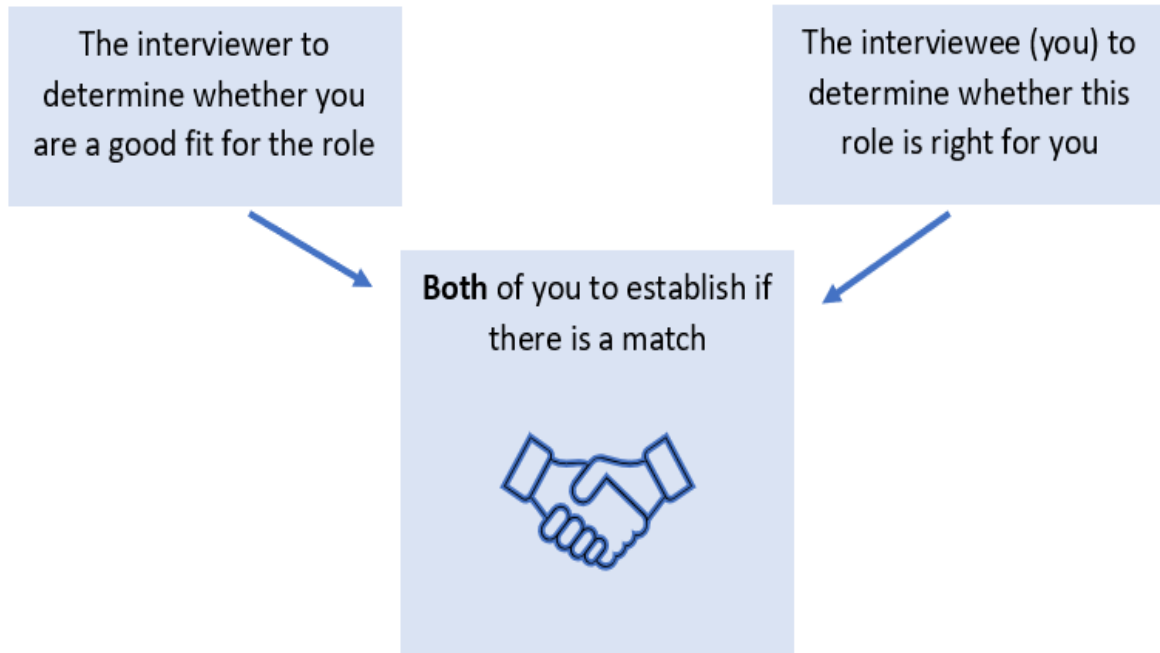
Remember an interview is not one way traffic. Recruitment costs are high, so employers want you as much as you want them.

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INTRODUCTION

If you have secured a job interview- well done! This is a good sign that the employer already thinks you could be a good fit for the role. The interview is a chance for:



There are different types of interviews, including face-to-face, phone, and video interviews.

Typically, employers will conduct interviews in person. Depending on the industry and role, job interviews can range from a casual chat to a more formal and lengthy process.

PREPARING-

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Remember that it is normal to feel nervous before a job interview, especially if you're new to job-hunting.

Nervousness simply shows that you care about the job and want to make a good impression. Luckily, there are things you can do beforehand which will help you feel more prepared:

1. Find out more about the job and organisation:

- Re-read the job advertisement/description. Note some key details about the job- what skills, strengths and experience are they looking for?
- Google the organisation to find out more about what they do. Have a look at their website/social media- what appeals to you about this company?

This information will help you answer questions in your interview.

2. Know your skills and strengths

- Review your CV/cover letter and familiarise yourself with your skills
- Think about how your skills and experience match the role requirements?
- Note down examples of times you have demonstrated your skills and strengths. You can use examples from previous jobs, studies, volunteering or even some hobbies (such as sports or groups).

3. Plan practical details

Plan your transport to the interview, ensuring that you'll have enough time to arrive 5-10 minutes early.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Self- Introduction

Usually at the start of a job interview, you'll be asked to tell the interviewer about yourself. This is a common first question, designed to break the ice and get the interview started. The employer is likely trying to get a sense of who you are, your communication style and an overview of what you're looking for.

To answer this question, stick to a basic formula:

Present

Talk about your current work and/or studies.

"I am currently a student at NZMA Hamilton, where I am completing my Level 3 qualification in Food and Beverage Services. So far, we have learned about...."

Past

Talk about previous experience or training

"During high school, I had a weekend job at McDonalds. I progressed through several different roles while there, but my favourite was working in the McCafe. This is why I decided to enrol in a hospitality programme..."

Future

What job are you looking to move into? Why?

"I have really enjoyed learning how to make coffees and would like to put my skills to use in a café job. I also enjoy the customer service side of hospitality, which is why your position caught my eye. I noticed that this job is on weekends, which suits me well as it fits in with my studies. Long term, I'd like to...."

It might help to practice your answer aloud with a friend or family member who can give you constructive feedback. You don't need to memorise a word-for-word answer, as that often sounds scripted and unnatural. Rather, focus on the key points that you want to get across- the skills, experience and personal qualities that would make you a great fit for this role.

Topics to avoid in a job interview



Avoid speaking negatively about your former workplaces, employers or colleagues

- Don't jump straight into pay related questions during the interview.
- These discussions usually happen after an offer has been made by the employer
- Steer clear of inappropriate language, even if the workplace is relaxed
- Avoid unnecessarily personal information and stories. Stay positive and keep it professional

It's also important to know that there are some questions which are illegal for employers to ask you. These include questions about your:

- age
- relationship situation
- sexual orientation or gender identity
- religion
- nationality or ethnic origin
- political views
- current or past employers' work practices
- home life

➤ health

These questions are illegal because they are unrelated to your ability to do the job and could lead to discrimination. You are not required to answer these questions.

Common interview questions

It's a good idea to prepare and practice some answers to common interview questions that you could be asked. These often include:

| |
|---|
| What's your biggest strength/weakness? |
| What interests you about this job? |
| How do you deal with stress? |
| How do you handle working to deadlines? |
| How would others describe you? |
| What work environment do you prefer? |
| What skills would you bring to this role? |

Employers may also ask for examples from your previous experience, often called 'Behavioural Questions'. These questions usually begin with "tell me about a time when..."

A helpful framework for answering behavioural questions is the STAR Method. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result:

S

Situation: Talk about the situation, event, or challenge you faced. Provide context and background information

I had a customer who complained that her meal was overcooked and took too long. They were quite angry, as they were now late for an appointment

T

Task: Explain the task that you had to complete. What were your responsibilities?

As a manager it was up to me to talk to the customer and try and solve the problem for them.

A

Action: Describe the specific actions you took to complete the task

The first step was to calmly listen to them and ask questions to clearly identify the issue and make sure I was not missing anything. I then apologised and asked if they had time for a replacement meal or would prefer a refund.

R

Result: Describe the results of your actions. What did you achieve and/or learn?

The outcome was a very happy customer who felt listened to and acknowledged. They took the refund and I followed up with the staff member responsible. They said they would visit the restaurant again and they did.

EXERCISE 2



Practice answering the following questions using the STAR method.

Tell me about a time when....

- ✓ you faced a challenge at work/school, and how you dealt with it...
- ✓ you had to multitask at work/school...
- ✓ you dealt with conflict in a team setting...
- ✓ you showed leadership skills...

NOTES

NAVIGATING TRICKY QUESTIONS

Sometimes you simply don't know how to answer a question- maybe you don't understand what they are asking, the question is a little tricky or you simply can't put the words together in the moment.



Don't panic! Take a few deep breaths...

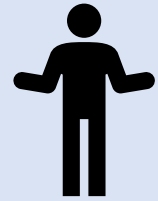
Here are a few options on how to handle these situations:

- Ask them to clarify or reword the question
- Ask for more time to think about your answer: "hmm that's a good question, give me a moment to think about that..."
- Request to come back to it later- *"to be honest, I'm not sure about that- could we come back to this question at the end?"*

You might be asked a question that you don't have the experience to answer.

In these situations, be honest. For example- if asked "tell us about a time that you dealt with conflict in the workplace?" you could say *"Luckily, I haven't encountered this in my previous work experience. However, if I did encounter this kind of situation, I would approach it by ..."*

The Importance of Body Language



Humans form opinions within seconds of meeting new people, so first impressions are crucial in a job interview. When communicating with others, it's not just about the words you're saying. You also communicate through nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures, body movements and tone of voice. These all make up your 'body language', which is said to account for 50% of communication.

Coming across as relaxed, friendly and confident is the goal. Here are some basic tips to monitor your body language:

- When greeting the interviewer, a handshake and eye contact goes a long way
- Sit up straight, still, confidently
- Voice- make sure your voice is loud enough, speak clearly and not too fast
- Eye-contact- if this is something you struggle with, you can try focusing on the space between the interviewer's eyes instead.
- Nodding- shows you're listening and understanding what they're saying
- Smile and don't be afraid to show some humour (as long as it's appropriate)
- Remove anything that you might fiddle with or be distracted by- whether this is jewellery, a scarf, a watch, etc. Also make sure to put your phone on silent mode and in your pocket!

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Immediately afterwards, confirm your interest in the job and ask about the next steps. The interviewer should give you a timeline so you know when you can expect to hear back from them.

- Reflect on the interview. Were there any questions that you might need to practice more? What went well? What could you improve on next time?
- It's a good idea to follow-up after your interview within 24 hours. Send the interviewer an email to thank them for their time and express your interest in the job. Eg:

“Thank you for your time yesterday. It was great to meet you and hear more about the Front of House position. I really enjoyed seeing the café and I am very excited about the possibility to join your team. I look forward to hearing from you”

If you don't get the job? It happens! Rejection is never fun, but it genuinely happens to everyone at least once in their lives and there is no need to see it as a failure. Recognise that this was a great learning opportunity- every interview gives you valuable experience which will help you in the future.

MOCK INTERVIEW

Practicing your interview answers out loud is a great way to improve your confidence in an interview setting.

Mock interview Checklist and feedback form

LINKS FOR FURTHER RESOURCES

- Careers website- interview question generator
- Trade me, seek, SJS

