

## FAQ'S - INTERVIEWING

### 1. How can you answer questions in an interview when you do not have relevant job experience in that particular position?

When it comes to job applications and interviews, it's not always about having past experience in similar roles/jobs that makes you qualified. It's more about the actual skills that were used in your previous experiences and the relevance of those skills for the job you are applying for or interviewing for. Remember, an employer will not invite you to an interview if they don't feel you have the skills that are needed for the job. If you have an interview, this is an indication that the employer feels your skills/experience are already relevant. Now they want to hear from you about your experiences and how you have used your skills effectively.

If you are preparing for an interview, or just wanting to brush up on your interview skills, I highly recommend that you book a mock interview appointment with our office. This has proven to be a very effective way for students to prepare for interviews and to perform more successfully in interviews.

### 2. During an interview, what is the most important thing that candidates should convey?

**Enthusiasm** - let them see that you are genuinely interested in the position and excited to be interviewing with them. So often candidates get caught up in how they "think" they should act in an interview that they forget to smile, show enthusiasm, and allow the employer to get to know who they really are (which is the whole point).

**Research** - make sure you have done your research on the role and the company. This is also a demonstration to the employer of how interested you really are in the position and in working for their company. Also, make sure you have questions prepared for the interviewer. Interviewing is a two-way street...the employer is assessing your suitability for their company, and you are also assessing whether or not this company is a good fit for you. The questions you ask should provide you with further information that cannot already be researched on their website.

**Be specific** - do not assume that the interviewers have thoroughly reviewed your resume and therefore know your experience/skills. Of course, most employers will review your resume/cover letter prior to your interview, however, it is up to you to communicate how your points on your resume reflect your suitability for the positions. In other words, be specific in your responses, provide enough detail to ensure the interviewer understands your experience and relate your answers back to the question asked.

### 3. What is the most important part of an interview?

The first impression. First impressions are made within 3-5 seconds and it sets the tone for the entire interview. Dress the part, be professional, and be yourself. Make sure you smile, shake hands, and listen attentively. A few other important pieces include being genuine, honest, and allowing them to get to know you...they are there to assess your skills for the job, but they are also assessing your fit for their company (i.e. how well will you fit in with our existing team, culture, etc.).

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### 4. How would you handle multiple interviews and possibly multiple job offers when deadlines conflict?

This is a typical dilemma that many job seekers face, and there is no easy answer. You have to use your best judgment - make sure you know what you are looking for in a job and company. Hopefully you have asked some good questions in the interview to help you in making an informed decision about a particular job or company. In the end, it's a judgment call - if you accept an offer (prior to hearing back about another offer), then you are committed to fulfilling that offer (even if another offer comes in afterward). If you choose to decline an earlier offer, then you run the risk of potentially not receiving an offer from a later interview. Ultimately, you will have to make a decision that feels right to you. Trust your instincts, however, be sure to give every opportunity a fair chance before discounting it immediately. Remember, there is rarely a "perfect" job out there and as a recent grad, you will need to spend time developing your skills along the path to your career goal.

### 5. What is one of the most common interview blunders that would make employers think twice about hiring a potential candidate?

**Not following up after the interview.** Although this is a fairly simple task, many interviewees do not bother to follow up with the interviewers afterwards. This could be a deciding factor between two potential candidates and the interviewer(s) are looking to see if either applicant follows up when making a final decision. Send a thank you e-mail or hard-written message within 24 hours of your interview (regardless of how well you think you did in the interview or if you are no longer interested in the position). It's a simple step that many job seekers do not follow through with and this could set you apart from other candidates.

**Impolite or rude behaviour.** This is not often something that *most* interviewees do "wrong", however, it is important to remember that you are being evaluated from the moment you arrive at the location. Be polite to parking attendants, security personnel and administrative staff as many interviewers will ask these individuals about your interactions.

### 6. What is the first thing interviewers notice about applicants when they enter the interview?

Interviewers will notice how you present yourself (i.e. your attire, your posture, your eye contact, whether or not you are smiling and offering to shake hands) and will get a good sense for your confidence level and enthusiasm/interest level. An employer can tell a lot about your personality from the way you present and carry yourself when they first meet you.