

Interviews

By: [Stephen Richards](#)

* Preparing for Interview

You have made a successful application and now you are rewarded by getting an interview. It would be a shame to blow it all by failing to take the same care and attention at the interview.

It's true to say that the vast majority of interviewers are not trained and make many mistakes themselves, but that is not a reason to make them yourself.

Let's have a look at common mistakes so that you can avoid them.

- Arriving late.
- Being dressed incorrectly.
- Taking unnecessary hand luggage with you.
- Poor greeting.
- Poor body language/Nervous mannerisms

* Arriving Late

You should aim to arrive 10 - 20 minutes early for your interview. Depending on the size of the building you may find that locating the interview is not a simple task and you should ensure that you have enough time in hand to avoid a late arrival.

If the company is in a location that you are not familiar with you would take time to plan your route and allow for unexpected delays, so why should you act differently just because the interview is somewhere you know?

Some of the external events that may make you late are; late public transport, unable to locate parking space, no change for a pay and display car park, unable to locate building.

All of these are genuine reasons to be late, but at the end of the day, they are all avoidable.

Take time to find out about the location of the building and local parking, if the company is a large phoning them will result in you getting the switch board, these people know the area, there is nothing wrong with asking them for advice about local parking.

If the company is a one man band then use your initiative, check maps, local tourist information offices etc.

* Looking Good

Most people are unsure how to dress for an interview. Let's face it, if you are going for an interview to be a garage mechanic then a suit probably isn't suitable, but how do you know what to wear?

As a rule of thumb, think about what you would wear if you were working there already, no smarten up a bit.

If you would normally wear trousers/skirt and a shirt/blouse then by adding a jacket and tie you have smartened up.

If you would normally wear jeans and a T-shirt or polo shirt then you should wear trousers and a shirt and tie, no need for a jacket.

Dressing down at the interview is easier than going home to get changed. That is to say that if you get to the interview and you are wearing a jacket but none of the interviewers is wearing one and you feel uncomfortable, then as you take a seat as if you can remove your jacket.

I'm sure you get the idea.

* Luggage

Taking unnecessary hand luggage with you. Some people take a brief case to interview.

Why?

It may be an idea to take a copy of your resume with you along with the letter inviting you to interview.

If you applied by application form and you followed my guide to application forms then you might want to take your draft copy of the form. Take these in an A4 envelope or in an A4 folder.

Why take them? Because if this is a small or badly organized company they may have mislaid them, being able to offer a copy will allow them to get the most out of the interview and for you to look professional in your approach.

This is only a suggestion and will not usually be required, so why take anything?

You will have to decide, if you are going to take anything in to the interview, but as you can see from the examples above, there is little point in taking anything. As someone trained in interview technique I can tell you that it is noticeable when a potential employee arrives with a brief case and never has to open it in an interview. In fact it has been suggested that there are sandwiches and a flask in there in case the applicant got stuck in a lift!

* Avoid a poor greeting.

This is a big subject and related to Body Language (details below).

When you greet someone you should ensure that you do the following things:

Look the person in the eye.

Smile at them.

Shake their hand.

When you are offered a seat, if possible let your interviewer take their seat first.

* Poor Body Language/Nervous Mannerisms.

Body Language is a big subject but it is worth reading about. I can't cover the subject here but visit <http://911resume.com> and have a look at our current recommendations.

* Focus

The rest of the interview is a case of presenting a positive image of yourself and everything you have done in your working life.

Avoid speaking in a negative way about previous employers to your prospective new employers. After all, if you speak negatively of one employer what is going through the mind of your possible new employer?

An interview should be a friendly conversation about work experience, a poor interviewer will sometimes believe that showing you around is an interview, it's not.

If you are faced with this sort of interview, take the opportunity to point out your familiarity with the environment by relating it to your past work experience.

For example, if you are shown a piece of software that this company uses and your previous company used a similar but not identical package, then you should discuss it briefly and explain how familiar you are with this sort of software.

* Closing the deal

At the end of the interview, take time to thank the interviewer for their time, tell them how interested you are in their company and tell them you will look forward to hearing from them.

Again, keep eye contact and smile, while you are doing this, shake hands and leave. Remember that until you are out of sight of the building you could be watched and therefore you are under scrutiny.

Good luck, I'm sure that the job is yours already; the company just doesn't know it yet!

About the Author: Leaving the Royal Air Force, Steve worked for a Charity helping the unemployed to find work. Within a few months the two programs he ran were top of the counties league table. Head hunted, Steve lead 7 similar programs, within 6 months they were all in the top 10 - including the number one spot.
<http://www.911resume.com>

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