During the Interview

Your first impression should spark the interviewers’ interest within minutes of your initial meeting. Use these suggestions to capture their attention and keep them engaged.

- **Show up prepared with questions and documents.** When you arrive at the interview, make sure you have your prepared list of questions to ask the interviewer. It will show you are prepared and interested in the opportunity. You should also bring your resume and the other documents listed on the page for ‘Before the Interview’, under Getting Prepared.

- **Be Punctual.** Arrive for your interview 10-15 minutes before your scheduled interview time. If you feel that you might be running late, be courteous and contact the interviewer to let them know; this will give them the opportunity to reschedule if it is more convenient.

- **Give a firm handshake.** Introduce yourself with a solid handshake. Remember not to grip too hard or too soft. If your hands perspire when you’re nervous, be sure to keep a tissue on hand to absorb the moisture while you’re waiting to be introduced.

- **Be friendly, smile, and maintain eye contact.** You’re not just concerned about making an impression on your interviewers; ensure that you are friendly to any individual you are in contact with from the moment you walk in the door to the moment you leave. Smiling will create a warm and positive impression, and maintaining eye contact will demonstrate your self-confidence, focus, and respect.

- **Be aware of your posture.** Sit up straight with your feet flat of the floor, hands on your lap, or chair, and your back against chair, this open position will convey interest and engagement. Poor posture, such as slouching or crossed-arms may come across as too casual, and may imply disinterest or even defensiveness. Avoid closed body language, such as crossing your arms or sitting angled away from your interviewer(s).

- **Avoid fidgeting.** When you’re nervous, it is common to experience unintentional body movements, such as shaking your leg or playing with a pen. These motions could distract the interviewer from your answers. Put methods in place to avoid fidgeting, such as holding your hands on your knees to be more aware of your leg movements, holding your hands together, or removing any objects that you might be tempted to play with from your vision.

- **Be mindful of your speech (pace, clarity, tone, volume).** Pay close attention to how fast or slow you are speaking, speak clearly and articulate your words, show enthusiasm by fluctuating your voice tone, and maintain an appropriate volume for the size of the room and number of people you are meeting with. Valuable observations can be made in improving your speech by engaging in mock interviews and practicing out loud.

- **Keep your content relevant.** Stay on point and keep the content of your answers relevant to the requirements of the job.
• **Spend an appropriate length of time on each answer.** Take your time when answering but be aware of the interviewer’s body language to identify if your answers are going on too long. Are they looking at their watch or the clock to check the time? Although there is no rule of thumb, depending on the question, a one to two minute response is typically appropriate. That being said, assume the interviewer(s) know nothing about you and provide enough details to answer the questions completely.

• **Be positive.** They are looking for a candidate that displays positivity and who will fit well within their team. Make sure to use positive and constructive language when discussing difficult or conflict situations. Past situations may be emotionally charged, therefore avoid using blaming or negative language when discussing previous employers, colleagues, and work environments.

• **Dress professionally.** Your professional image and visual presentation affects an employer’s impression of you. It is important to note that different employers and environments will have differing expectations of formality when it comes to dress codes. For example, a construction company may be much more casual than a law office. As a rule of thumb, focus on dressing one step above what they would wear to work. This may involve researching the company beforehand or asking the person who has called to schedule the interview what the dress code is.
  
  o Avoid any clothing that is too tight, revealing, or uncomfortable.
  o Have polished, clean shoes and avoid shoes that may be difficult to walk in.
  o Choose solid colours and subtle patterns, avoid distracting patterns or bright colours.
  o Avoid noisy or distracting jewellery, watches, and heavy makeup.
  o Make sure your clothes are clean, fragrance-free, ironed, and not wrinkly.
  o Ensure you are well-groomed by having clean and neat hair.
  o Do not wear perfumes and colognes to comply with scent-free policies.