

Interview Hints and Tips

Telephone Interviews

If you're expecting a call there are a few things to remember:

1. Make sure you always have your phone near you so you don't miss out on an opportunity.
2. At the expected time of the call find a quiet place. If there is too much background noise it will distract you and not make a good impression.
3. Ideally stand up while taking the call - it makes you sound more confident.
4. Smile as often as possible while talking - the smile comes across the phone line and you'll sound friendly and positive.
5. Always have your CV, the job advert and any notes you've made in front of you. Phone interviews allow you the luxury of referring to these as you speak, so make the most of them.
6. If it's unavoidable and the call comes at an inconvenient time (for example when you're on a train), explain politely and ask to reschedule the call. It's always better to answer the call and explain than to ignore the interviewer.

Presentations

1. Decide on a key message for the presentation based on what the audience want to know.
2. Have a clear start, middle and end to the presentation.
3. You don't have to use PowerPoint – flip charts and notes can be very effective.
4. Always look at the audience.

If you're using PowerPoint...

5. Try to keep words to a minimum - use pictures if possible.
6. Keep to 2 minutes per slide, eg, a 10 minute presentation would take five slides.
7. Avoid overdoing the animations.
8. Keep slides tidy - use large, correctly spelt text.
9. Avoid whole sentences and death by bullet points! Remember - less is more.

Assessment Centres

1. Get as much sleep as you can the night before. The day will be long and tiring. Tasks are often set to see how you respond under pressure.
2. If you've been invited to join everyone for dinner the night before the assessment centre, remember the assessors are not off duty - your behaviour will be noted, so watch the alcohol and don't over indulge.
3. Even if you haven't been asked to prepare a presentation, brush up on your skills. There is a good chance that you'll be asked to prepare one at short notice.
4. Think about the qualities the assessors will be looking for, they might include: leadership, interpersonal skills, ability to handle stress, written communication, flexibility, verbal communication, negotiation skills, business skills, problem solving, decision making, initiative and creativity, interpersonal skills and flexibility.
5. Don't do other candidates down in an attempt to make the assessors notice you. This will make you come across as insensitive and overbearing.
6. An assessment centre is a great opportunity for you to show what you can do. Prepare for it well and try to enjoy it.

Always be positive, be prepared to get involved and project an image of the real you.