

## UNIT 4

### Conducting Job Interview



(source: <http://www.theage.com.au/executive-style/management/blogs/management-line/job-interview-blues-20110319-1c16r.html>)

#### Learning outcomes:

- Students understand kinds of job interview.
- Students understand what to prepare before the interview.
- Students understand what to do during the interview.
- Students are able to answer common questions asked by the interviewer.
- Students are able to ask questions to the interviewer during an interview.
- Students practice to interview both face to face and on the telephone.
- Students are able to write a follow-up letter.

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Job interview is usually an ultimate stage in a job seeking campaign. In another words, it determines whether you will get a job you really want or not. The future employer needs to find out if you are the best candidate for the job. On the other hand, you need to find out if this is a good opportunity for you to have the job and work at the company. However, fresh graduates often fail in succeeding a job interview because this can be so tricky and unpredictable. It indeed needs some careful preparation. Thus, you need to know what kinds of job interview are, what to prepare and what to do.

## A. Kinds of Job Interview

There are many kinds of job interview you, as an applicant, may get through. Here are the most common types:

### 1. Phone interview

It is conducted by phone usually for its practicality and efficiency. Sometimes it is conducted to test your social and basic telephone skills.

### 2. A *face to face* interview:

In this case you meet directly with your future employers. It can be in form of:

#### a. Individual interview

This is *one on one* interview between you and your future employers and the most frequent type usually conducted. In addition, it is usually for personally getting to know you and what you have to do to make a good impression to only one person to decide whether you are hired or fired.

#### b. Panel interview

This type of interview is a bit challenging because you are facing two or more people with relevant positions in the company you are about to work for. The panel of interviewers may sit all together facing you (and other applicants) in the same room or they ask you to meet each separately (in different rooms).

It is a bit hard because you need to impress more than one person whom you may not know their individual responsibilities. Moreover, they may have different impression and personal judgments about you.

#### c. Group interview

Possible types of group interview usually conducted are first, you are interviewed by a group of people (just like a panel interview) and second by a group of other applicants. Furthermore, group interviews often involve a work-simulation exercise, such as a problem-solving activity, to test candidates' leadership and teamwork skills. Therefore, it is sometimes conducted in form of a group discussion (among the other applicants) or a presentation.

## **B. Things to Prepare before Having a Job Interview**

It is suggested that a night before the day of the interview, you should prepare yourself:

1. Learn about the company:  
(the products and/services, its reputation the hiring policies and practices, their salary ranges, ...)
2. Learn about yourself:  
(your qualifications/ strengths and weakness, your plan, your motivation to work there)
3. Prepare all the necessary papers (your CV, qualification papers, copies of references, letters of recommendation, and samples of work (your portfolio). Make sure everything is well organized and neatly presented.
4. Practice answering the questions.
5. Prepare your outfits to wear for the interview.
6. Have a good night's sleep. It will help you remember and process things better.

By Phone:

1. Confirm the time
2. Prepare the place (strong phone network connection and less noise)
3. Prepare stationery
4. Prepare something to drink, but do not eat nor smoke during the conversation

### C. Things Supposed to Do on a D Day (of the Job Interview)

Here are the tips what you are supposed to on the day of the interview:

1. Have (light) breakfast.
2. Do not be late (Arrive 10-15 minutes early).
3. Stay Calm.
4. Check your appearance and smell.
5. Turn off the phones
6. Introduce yourself with a smile and firm handshake.
7. Maintain good eye contact during conversation.
8. Have pen and paper. Asking to borrow a pen indicates lack of preparation.
9. Be enthusiastic. Recruiters remember a positive attitude.
10. Do not lie
11. Do not answer the questions with “yes/no” ONLY
12. Say thanks
13. Listen carefully to the interviewer’s complete question before responding.
14. If needed, pause and take time before answering difficult questions.
15. Keep going even if you feel you made a mistake.
16. Unless asked, do not discuss salary and benefits.

**Exercise 1:** In pairs, discuss the following tips for preparing for an interview. Which ones do you think are more important? Which ones would you do first?

1. Try to predict the questions you are likely to be asked during the interview?
2. Do some research into the company you are applying for a job with.
3. Find out exactly what the job involves.
4. Analyze your skills and experience and identify areas where they match the job requirements and the company needs.
5. Rehearse the interview.
6. Decide what you are going to wear.
7. Prepare a list of questions to ask at the end of the interview.

## D. Common Questions Asked by the Interviewer

**Exercise 2:** Look at the following common interview questions. Write the type of the question (a-c) next to each question (1-12).

- a. Questions that require you to talk about yourself, your ambition, personality, hobbies, and interests.
- b. Questions that require you to prove you have researched your job and company you have applied for work with.
- c. Questions that require you to demonstrate you have the skills and experiences required for the job.

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|---|----------|
| 1. Can you tell us something about yourself?                          | <u>a</u> |
| 2. What experiences do you have that are relevant with this position? | —        |
| 3. What did you learn during your time at university?                 | —        |
| 4. What do you see as your strengths?                                 | —        |
| 5. What do you think about your website?                              | —        |
| 6. What attracted you to the position?                                | —        |
| 7. How would your colleagues describe you?                            | —        |
| 8. What sort of projects did you work on in your last position?       | —        |
| 9. What university did you attend and why did you choose it?          | —        |
| 10. How do you typically approach new projects?                       | —        |
| 11. What do you know about our company?                               | —        |
| 12. Where do you see yourself in five years?                          | —        |

**Exercise 3:** In pairs, take turns to ask and answer the questions in exercise 2. Which questions are easiest to answer? Which are the most difficult?

**Exercise 4:** Read and complete the following interview between Silvia and the interviewer with the verbs provided in the box.

apply	communicate	develop	gain	get (2x)
lead	make	meet	motivate	<del>put</del> work

Interviewer : Can you tell us something about yourself?

Silvia : Well, I'm motivated and I (1) put a lot effort into everything I do, whether I'm studying at university, at work, or even when I'm playing sport. During my last year at university, I was captain of the basketball team. I had to organize matches and (2) \_\_\_\_\_ the players. As captain, it was essential that I was able to (3) \_\_\_\_\_ effectively and get along with everybody in the team... and for the first time in years, our team managed to reach the regional final. We didn't win, unfortunately, but (4) \_\_\_\_\_ the team to the final was a big achievement for me.

Interviewer : What did you learn during your time at university?

Silvia : Oh, lots of things. My Informatics degree was very practical, and there were many elements of the degree that could be (5) \_\_\_\_\_ to the business world. I had a number of challenging assignments, which often had to be completed within a short period of time. This helped me to (6) \_\_\_\_\_ my prioritizing skills and ability to (7) \_\_\_\_\_ to tight deadlines.

Interviewer : What kinds of things do you worry about?

Silvia : I worry about normal things, the same as everybody else, I think. I worry about (8) \_\_\_\_\_ deadlines and (9) \_\_\_\_\_ everything done on time.

Interviewer : Would you say you're an ambitious person?

Silvia : Yes, I would say that I'm ambitious. I'm very keen to (10) \_\_\_\_\_ a job with a company such as yours where I can (11) \_\_\_\_\_ full use of my degree and personal experience. I am a dedicated worker and would hope to (12) \_\_\_\_\_ internal

promotion based on my performance at work.

**Exercise 5:** In pairs, discuss the following questions:

1. Would you prefer to have an interview face to face or on the telephone?
2. Why is it increasingly popular for initial interviews to be held on phone?
3. What are the advantages of telephone interviews for the candidate?
4. When is the best time to arrange a telephone interview?
5. Why should you smile during a telephone interview?
6. What is the candidate's main aim in most telephone interviews?

**Exercise 6:** Read the following article and compare the advice with your answer on the exercise above (exercise 5).

## Tackling telephone interviews

**I**t is common practice these days for initial first interviews to be held over the phone. The main reason for this is that it significantly reduces the cost for employers, who often use telephone interviews as a method of filtering candidates before moving on to face-to-face interviews. Telephone interviews also have benefits for the applicants as well. As well as the obvious financial saving, an applicant may feel more relaxed within their own environment surrounded by their CV and research materials to aid them. You also don't have to wear a suit!

It is essential that you organise a time for a telephone interview that is convenient for you. You should suggest a time when you are unlikely to be disturbed, when you are in a quiet environment and you are confident that you have prepared sufficiently to convince the interviewer you are the right person for the job, or at least a second interview.

During the interview you should:

- smile, as this will help you to relax and project a positive image to the interviewer and will alter the tone of your voice.
- speak slowly and clearly. It's perfectly acceptable to take your time when answering questions.
- give short, memorable answers.
- use the person's title (Mr or Ms and their last name). Only use a first name if you are invited to.
- keep a copy of your CV open next to you, so that it's at your fingertips when you need it.
- have a pen and paper next to you so that you can make notes if you need to.

Remember that your goal is to try and set up a face-to-face interview. At the end of the interview ask if it would be possible to meet in person.

(Downes, 2008: 69)

Your answer on Exercise 5	The advice according to the article above



## E. A Follow-Up Letter

After the interview ends, it is suggested that you write a follow up letter. It is done to thank the interviewer for the time and the chance given to you. In other words, even though the interview is over, there is still a lot you can do to leave a positive impression on your prospective employer.

**Exercise 7:** Complete a follow-up letter below by putting the following sentences in the correct order.

- a. .... the challenges of the post. Having discussed the role of Junior Consultant with you in greater depth. I am confident in my ability to meet these challenges and believe I can make a significant...
- b. With this mind, I have already developed some practical ideas for making the Futerra newsletter and website more user friendly, which would lead to closer communication with key clients. Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information....
- c. As mentioned when we met, I am keen to use the research conducted as part of my Master's degree on sustainability to enhance Futerra's identity, while at the same meeting.....
- d. As I feel my qualification and experience make me ideally suited to work in the area. I recognize the importance of maintaining relationships and ensuring that newsletters and invitations are sent out on a timely basis....
- e. .... regarding my qualifications, experience or suitability for the position. I look forward...
- f. ... to the contribution to the close team at Futerra. I am particularly interested in the projects you mentioned during the interview which involve working with influential business leaders, ....
- g. .... at Futerra, I appreciate the time you and your team took in telling me about the specific aspects of the job and the valuable work Futerra is doing.
- h. Dear Mr. Lewis, thank you very much for taking the time to interview me today for the position of Junior Consultant...
- i. ... to hearing from you soon, and thank you again for meeting me. Yours sincerely,  
Carlisle Cullen.

1. __h__	3. _____	5. _____	7. _____	9. _____
2. _____	4. _____	6. _____	8. _____	

**Exercise 8:** Practice a job interview.