



# Interview skills

# By the end of this session, you will be able to

- appraise the role of effective verbal and non-verbal communication in job-interviews
- use a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to face a job interview successfully

“Job interviews are scary, even when you’ve prepared thoroughly. But when you are prepared, you can harness the adrenaline to work for you so that you put your best foot forward and get the job you want.”

(Locker & Kaczmarek, 2007: 499. *Business Communication: Building Critical Skills*. Boston: McGraw Hill)

# Job interviews

- A job interview is a conversation between an job applicant and a representative of the organization that is looking forward to hiring the interviewee. Everyone involved in a job interview has a common purpose, i.e. getting information and evidence.
- The interviewer wants to know about your competencies, skills, knowledge and experience. They need to find out whether you are the best match for their job.

An you are want to know about the job, the colleagues, the terms and conditions, the working environment - to see if the job matches your expectations and needs.

# The best interview strategy

The best interview strategy is the one you develop for your yourself by answering the following questions:

- What do I want the interviewer to know about myself?
- What disadvantages or weaknesses do I want to minimize?
- What do I need to know about this job or this organization?

# The role of effective communication

The way you conduct yourself and responds to questions at an interview also gives information and evidence about your attitude, style and the impact you make on others. Therefore, communication skills are essential for success at a job interview.

The communication skills used at job interviews include

- non-verbal communication
- listening
- responding
- questioning

# Choose the best answer.

Mutual understanding is mainly established and maintained

- a) non-verbal communication
- b) verbal communication

# The role of non-verbal communication

Effective communication is mainly established and maintained by non-verbal cues.

- 7% of what we say is communicated by our words.
- 38% of what we say is communicated by our tone of voice
- 55% of our message we say is communicated by our body language.
- Therefore, 93% of face-to-face communication is via non-verbal channels.



- Know the job and the company well. Some prior research would help.
- Respond to topic shift.
- Use industry terms and technical jargon
- Use specifics and examples
- Ask questions where appropriate.
- Speak more than interviewer/s.

# Communication

- Learn and practice how to smile and greet.
- Maintain positive and comfortable eye contact
- Sit firmly and straight on your chair.
- Don't show your nervousness.
- Pick up on interviewer's cues.
- Show your enthusiasm.

# Unsuccessful Candidates

- Had vague ideas
- Rarely used company name
- Didn't know about the company
- Responded in neutral tone
- Made little eye contact
- Resisted shift of topic
- Didn't use jargon
- Gave short answers
- Asked few questions

# Successful Candidates

- Were specific and consistent about position.
- Used the company name.
- Showed research about company
- Responded positively to information
- Made eye contact often, SMILED
- Accepted topic shift
- Used technical jargon
- Asked questions
- Answered with specifics, supported claims
- Spoke more than interviewer/s

# Active listening

- Listening is one of the most important skills you can have. How well you listen has a major impact on your success at the interview, and on the quality of your relationships with others. The top tips for active listening are:
  - a) Pay attention.
  - b) Show that you are listening.
  - c) Seek clarification if you don't understand.
  - d) Deter judgment.
  - e) Respond appropriately.

# 6 C's of Effective Communication.

- Clear: Ensure that information is presented clearly.
- Concise: Do not lose the message by being long-winded.
- Correct: Avoid giving misleading information.
- Complete: Give all the necessary information and not just part of it.
- Concrete: Give examples and stories rather than talking about things in general.
- Courteous: Always be and sound polite.
- Confident: Demonstrate a confident tone and a 'can do' attitude.

# Language support

- Describing your personality: adjectives
- Describing your strengths: present tenses
- Describing your education and experience : past simple and present perfect
- Describing your future goals
- Solving common pronunciation problems
- Structuring your answers

# Describing your personality

accurate  
active  
adaptable  
adept  
broad-minded  
competent  
conscientious  
creative  
dependable  
determined  
diplomatic  
discreet  
efficient  
energetic  
enterprising  
enthusiastic

experienced  
fair  
firm  
genuine  
honest  
innovative  
logical  
loyal  
mature  
methodical  
motivated  
objective  
outgoing  
personable  
pleasant  
positive

practical  
productive  
reliable  
resourceful  
self disciplined  
sense of humor  
sensitive  
sincere  
successful  
tactful  
trustworthy



# Describing your strengths

- *I'm good at meeting deadlines.*
- *I'm skilled at working under pressure/working to a deadline.*
- *My main strength is my ability to communicate effectively. I am a near-native speaker of English.*
- *My strengths include my ability to problem solve/be enthusiastic/speak fluent English, etc.*
- *I have a flair for...*
- *I am passionate about...*

# Describing your education

- I have a degree/diploma in journalism.
- I have completed a degree/diploma in Geography.
- I have studied graphic design up to diploma level.
- I have successfully completed the strategic level of...
- I recently graduated from the University of Kelaniya with a degree in Marketing.

# Describing your work experience

- I have five years' of experience as a....
- I (have) worked in the retail industry for....
- From 2013 to 2016, I worked as../I was employed at..
- At university, I volunteered as a...

# Describing your future goals

- I'm looking to further my skills as an accountant/in hospitality, as a childcare worker/in training and development
- I want to further my career in physiotherapy/as a physiotherapist, in administration/as an administrator, in retail/as a branch manager
- I feel my skills set is a perfect fit for your team and I can contribute by...

# To give your opinion...

- In my opinion...
- As far as I am concerned...
- To my mind...
- From my point of view
- To the best of my knowledge
- I strongly/firmly believe that...
- It seems to me that...

# Interview Structure

- Introduction
- Evidence-speaking
- Your questions
- Closure

# Structure each of your answers

S	Give brief details of the <b>situation</b> .
T	Say what you wanted to achieve – your <b>target</b>
A	Say what you did – your <b>actions</b>
R	Say what the <b>result</b> was.

And remember to **signpost** your evidence:

OK. I'm going to tell you about the time when I ..... my goal was as follows  
....to achieve this objectives I did three things..... As a result of my actions..

Question: Tell us about a challenge you've faced and how you handled it

Possible answer:

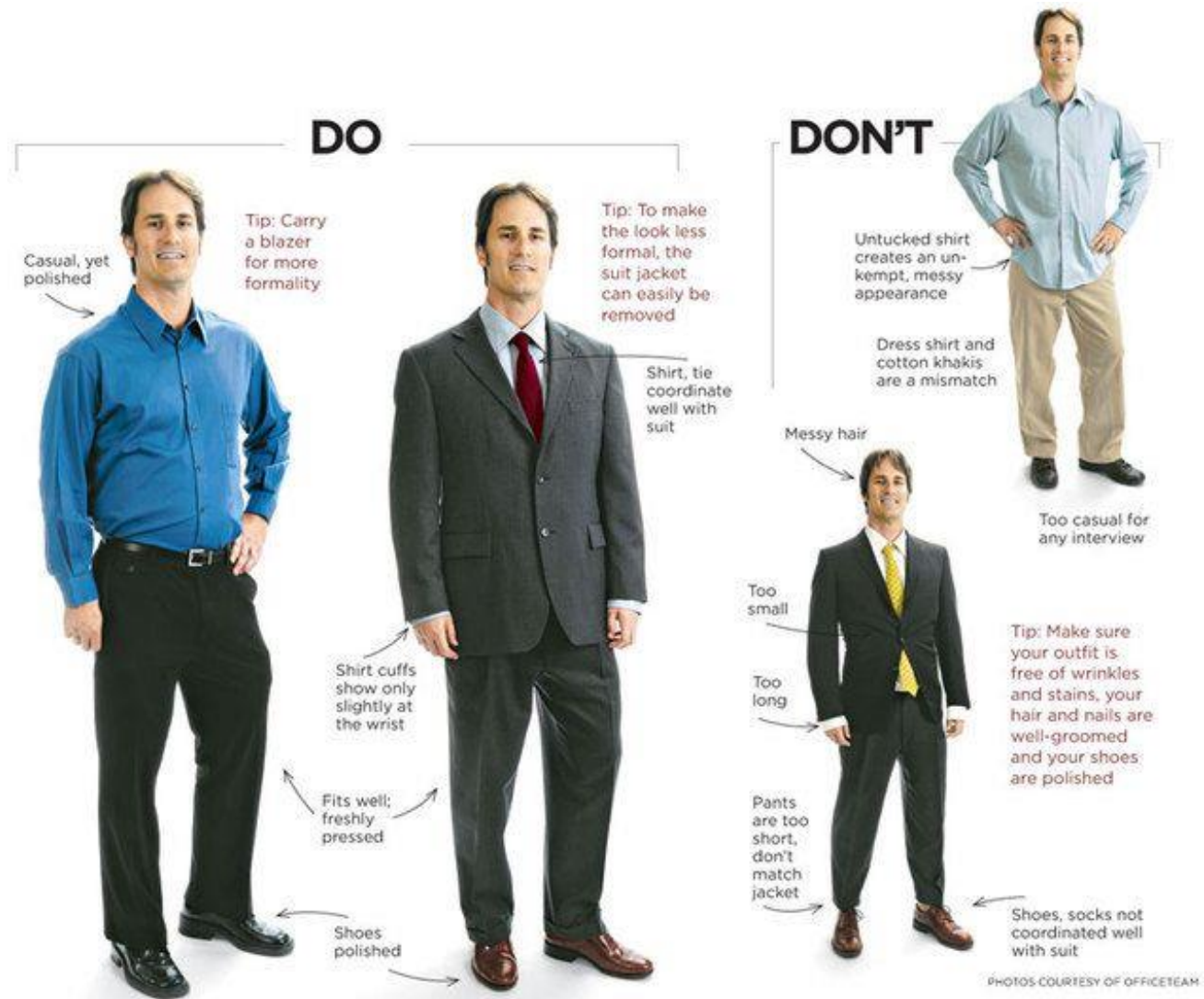
In my last job, we were facing a tough deadline and my boss was out for the day. Our client was expecting a project to be delivered by 5PM, but we were far behind schedule. I took the lead on the project, delegated tasks to the four other team members in a way that I thought would utilize everyone's strengths best. And then I re-organized my own personal tasks so I could dedicate my entire day to contributing to this project as well. The project was a success and we delivered the work on-time. I went on to lead more projects after that, and used what I learned to be a better project manager."



# Other interview details

- What to wear
- What to take
- What to note down
- How to get there

# Attire



# Interview outfits

## DO

### Business casual

**This interview look would be appropriate for these industries:** IT, startups, teaching, entry-level government positions, environmental engineering, aerospace (non-management), architecture, health-care/life-sciences research, social media, advertising/PR and retail.



Detail adds interest but doesn't distract

Sweater and pants fit well

Casual, yet polished

Pants are appropriate length for heels

### Business professional

**This more formal interview look works for these industries:** health-care management and sales, hospital administration, biotechnology, banking, personal financial services, academic administration, hospitality, pharmaceutical sales and aerospace management.



Blouse color, collar style go well with the suit

Minimal jewelry

Jacket not too short, not too long

Tip: Check yourself in the mirror before leaving the house

Could wear heels rather than flats to increase formality

## DON'T



Necklace too large

Tip: Avoid any bright or patterned clothing that may be distracting

Too tight

Cotton capris: too casual

Too informal; this would be a better outfit for shopping at Pike Place Market (with different shoes)

Mock interviews