



Having arrived with time to spare – around 10 minutes before your allocated time – will allow you to relax and visit the washroom. It also allows you to get a feel for the atmosphere in the company; maybe speak with the receptionist to see how they enjoy working there. If there are company magazines to read, this is an ideal time to read up on where the company is and what they are doing alongside their competitors.

Having got this far, your CV or initial telephone interview will have provided an insight for the potential employer of your skills and experience that link into your suitability for the role. The purpose now at the interview will be to confirm your suitability for the role and to get to know you better.

Not all interviews will be the same and the order taken will vary from company to company. Being prepared with your examples that demonstrate your skills, achievements and experience will ensure that you are prepared to answer them fully.

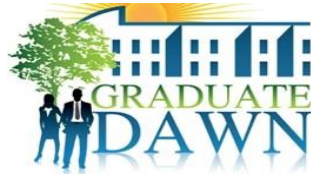
When meeting your interviewer –

- Introduce yourself and offer a firm but not too solid a handshake
- Think about your body language - sit in the chair so that you are comfortable, but not so much so that you are slumped in the chair. Sitting with your bottom into the back of the chair helps us to sit upright and have our diaphragm open (which allows oxygen to circulate and allows for easy breathing)
- Smile – a smile is good for lifting our mood and is a good indicator for the interviewer that you are listening and when answering their questions, shows interest and drive for the role.
- Nod and acknowledge your interviewer. An acknowledgement is also a way of letting them know you have interest, have understood and listened.
- Make regular eye contact but do not stare into the eyes of your interviewer. An average of 7 secs is good timing for eye contact.

Structure of your interview -

Most interviews will follow the following format;

- Introductions
- Get you to tell them a little about yourself and what you enjoy doing as well as why you applied for the role. The interviewer will be looking for responses that link into your past experiences and skills. It is wise to have an introduction prepared so that you cover everything needed and which could also provide some information when they ask you the competency questions. Practice this with a family member or friend.



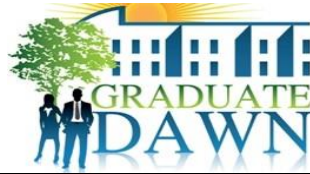
Consider and prepare how you would introduce yourself in the box below

- The interviewer will outline the format of how the interview will progress
- Competency questions – the interviewer will ask a set of competency based questions and will be looking for what you did and how any outcomes were achieved by you. Think about what you did, who you went to for support and who supported you to achieve the outcome (where relevant). Use the STAR model to create an outline of your response based on the areas that competencies will be assessed on. You should have had information and a format for the interview, allowing you to prepare your relevant and purposeful responses. If not, contact the prospective employer and ask them to clarify what format the interview will take and what (if any) competencies will be covered. Below are some of the key competencies that employers look for at all levels of recruitment. Using STAR, think about the examples you could use and make sure that you include all elements of STAR. Practice your responses with a family member or friend. My experience as an interviewer tells me that a lot of interviewees focus on the situation and miss out the actions and result. They also use a lot of ‘we’ as opposed to ‘I’. Interviews are about what you did and how you did it. So unless you are talking about a team event, remember to use ‘I’ not ‘we’!

Below are some sample competency questions and areas covered to provide an opportunity to practice.

SAMPLE COMPETENCIES AND QUESTIONS

- **Working with Others – The interviewer will be asking you questions to gauge how you work with others/your team and how you achieved collaboration throughout. A typical question may be –**
 - Tell me about a time you have worked with others to achieve a specific outcome.
 - What did you do to ensure everyone knew what was expected?
 - What was the overall outcome?
 - **Leading and Communicating – This competency is seeking your experience on dealing with inappropriate behaviour/language/harassment etc. and how you resolve it. The questions you may be asked is -**
 - Tell me about a time when you have dealt with inappropriate behaviour?
 - What did you do?



- What was the outcome?
- **Making Effective Decisions – Here your potential employer will be looking at the process you take to reach an effective decision and what brought you to this. The question may look like this –**
- Tell me about a time when you have had to make a difficult decision.
- What made the decision difficult?
- What impact did this have on the business / staff /etc.?
- What was the level of responsibility you had in this decision?

- There are many other competency questions that could be asked and it is always best if you allow time to prepare your responses based on your previous experiences and skill set, so that however the question is asked you are ready to provide your answer. If you struggle with a response or need clarification on the question, ASK. The interviewer is there to help you and provide every opportunity to respond fully.
- Once all the competencies have been covered you will have your opportunity to ask questions. Asking a question at the end shows a level of engagement on your part and interest in the role you are applying for. A question about the environment you are going to work in or the dress code demonstrates commitment and drive to be part of the team. However if all your questions have been answered previously in the process, let the interviewer know that and summarise those responses.

The interviewer is listening and watching how you respond throughout the interview. Another area to be aware of is how you present yourself through your non-verbal communication (body language).

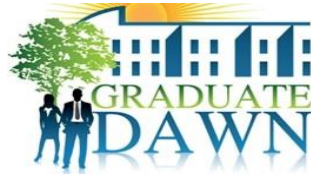
We all provide an insight into who we are; through our body language and can without thinking 'leak' some. Body language is made up of;

- Eye contact
- Smiles
- Posture
- Tone of voice
- Volume of speech
- Speed of response
- Gestures that convey enthusiasm and passion for the role.
- Overall energy level throughout the interview

How we feel before we go into the interview can affect how the interview goes.

Tips to help overcome stress, anxiety, nerves consist of;

- Being prepared
- Arrive on time



- BREATHE – believe it or not on occasions I have interviewed people who forget to breathe and then struggle to respond and engage.
- Think about a positive success and how that felt. Think about what you did and how your body felt, what you were thinking. How broad was that smile etc.
- If you are feeling nervous, focus this energy on asking about the business, talk to the receptionist, look at how people interact with each other.
- In the interview, place both feet flat on the floor. It helps to feel grounded and can help when you feel a little shaky.
- If you need to take a drink into the interview with you, use a bottle as a cup is flexible and can spill with that tight grip you give it!!

It is not a bad thing to feel anxious or nervous. My experience tells me that we need a few nerves to help us focus and develop. No nerves and we can become over confident during the process.

At the end of the interview you have the opportunity to ask some questions. Keep them on the position available; do not focus on the pay or hours of work – all those will have been discussed or provided to you in the initial stages.

Questions around the environment and location you are working in are acceptable. Asking when you will hear about the outcome of the interview is positive steps into letting your interviewer know of your continued interest in the role.

Graduate Dawn can help you with mock interview practice and provide you with constructive feedback on your interview style and the responses you provide, providing you with the best opportunity to outshine on the day and offer the potential employer an opportunity to see you as the best candidate.

Contact us now to book your FREE initial coaching session to assess your suitability for our sessions on interview techniques and to learn more about your individual style and how to develop your potential.

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