

You have just one opportunity to convince, that you are the stand-out candidate.

Your CV might be good enough to get you to this point, but decisions are made at interview stage. No matter how strong your application is, if you don't make a great impression at interview, the job is going to someone else.

COVER LETTERS & APPLICATION EMAILS

Interviews for quality jobs, can be hard to come by. Competition for jobs is tough when they do arise and your performance at interview is the single biggest factor in whether you win the job or someone else does.

It is at interview that a hiring manager decides if you are the right person for the job. Technical competency is no longer enough, organisations are looking for employees who demonstrate they will fit in and go the extra mile for them. Give yourself a real advantage at interview by preparing and performing better than your competition.

i) Find out everything you can about an organisation without relying on their website. Too many candidates see this as the limit of their research. In most cases the hiring manager has heard it all before and regurgitating it is a mark down, rather than a mark up. There are many ways to find out about companies, through trade associations, previous employees, product or service information; even a trip to the reception of the hiring organisation will yield some corporate information.

ii) Get to the place of interview 15 minutes ahead of time. Know your route and the time it takes to get there in traffic. A trip one evening to the premises before the interview will help reduce any anxiety you might feel on the day.

iii) At executive level, it surely goes without having to be said, but make sure you are professionally dressed and presented.

iv) Most people suffer from some level of nervousness at interview. Circular breathing, in through your nose and out through your mouth

for five continuous minutes while you wait in the reception area will reduce that. Being thoroughly prepared will make you feel less anxious.

v) Make eye contact with all members of an interview panel. When introduced to them, say their name out loud. Write their names down on a pad reflecting where they are sitting and use their names in your answers when you respond to their questions. Look for opportunities to build relationships on common interests. When greeting the interviewers, give a firm handshake. A weak handshake is a terrible thing.

vi) How you say it, is as important as what you say. Be clear, be enthusiastic, be warm and be positive. Never bad mouth at interview no matter how "entitled" you might feel to do so. Be gracious when you leave the interview. Thank everyone for their time and follow up with an email repeating that.

The impression every employer wants is that you are enthusiastic about their company, their job and that you would fit in their organisation. If you can not do all of these, don't go for that job.

