

# INTERVIEW TIPS

**Congratulations on being offered an interview for your dream apprenticeship or traineeship! Follow these simple interview tips to help you land the role you're after.**

## **1. Come prepared.**

**Do your research on the company, the industry and the apprenticeship/traineeship you have applied for.**

Learn as much as you can about the company.

- What do they make or sell?
- What industry do they operate within?
- Where is the business located?
- What kind of duties do you expect to be undertaking?

**Find out what to take to the interview and learn what the structure of the interview will be.**

Take along your portfolio as evidence of your experience, skills and achievements which may be relevant to the apprenticeship/traineeship.

Your portfolio should include:

- Your resume and cover letter;
- Photo evidence of work projects etc;
- Certificates or documents which you may have obtained in past jobs, school or in your private life (from weekend sports, hobbies or volunteer work); and
- Any paperwork or tests you have been asked to bring.

**Know the location of the interview and how you will get there.**

Double check the address of where the interview will be held and make sure you know how to get there. Pre-plan your transport for the day. If catching public transport, make sure you arrive at your destination with at least 10 minutes to spare. If you're still unsure, time how long it takes to get there with your selected mode of transport a few days before the interview.

## **2. Practice the interview with family or friends.**

Consider some questions the interviewer may ask you and prepare a response for each. Get your family/friends to ask the questions and practice your answers until you feel confident.

Common questions include:

- Why do you want to do this type of work?
- What sort of experience do you have?
- Do you have a driver's licence?
- How will you get to work?
- What are your plans after the apprenticeship/traineeship?
- Do you have any questions?

## **Examples of Behavioural Based Interview Questions**

1. Tell me about how you have worked effectively under pressure in the past.
2. How do you handle a challenge? Give us an example.
3. Have you ever made a mistake at school/work? How did you handle it?
4. Give us an example of how you set goals.
5. Give us an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
6. Give us an example of how you have worked effectively in a team environment.
7. What do you do if you disagree with someone at work/school?
8. Share an example of how you were able to motivate co-workers or peers.
9. Have you had to handle a difficult situation in the past? Talk us through how you did this.

When answering a behavioural based interview question it is best to use the STAR method. This will ensure that you answer all aspects of the question and really impress your interviewer! We have included an example so you can practice before the big day.

**S**ituation  
**T**ask  
**A**ction  
**R**esult

### **Question:**

Tell me about how you have worked effectively under pressure in the past.

### **Answer:**

**S** I currently work casually at McDonalds while I attend High School. I work on the drive through window where we are timed on the time it takes us to serve customers.

**T** I am required to greet the customer within 5 seconds of their approach and take their order within 35 seconds.

**A** To meet these targets I ensure that I am ready to greet each customer as they approach the window and listen carefully to their order, I always repeat the order back to the customer to ensure that I have typed it into the till correctly. I have found other little ways of making this process quick and friendly, for example if a customer orders sauce I will grab that and pop it on the ledge while I am taking the rest of their order to save time and ensure I do not forget to give it to them.

**R** Taking these actions has resulted in my achieving employee of the month twice and having consistently low window times when I work the drive through window.

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### **3. Dress appropriately and ensure your personal presentation is professional.**

Start planning what you're going to wear at least two days before your scheduled interview. This will give you enough time to get something appropriate in case your chosen outfit does not go to plan.

- Have your final outfit ready and out the night before and take care of any last minute ironing of clothing or cleaning of shoes if required.
- Make sure your outfit is suitable for the occasion – overdressed is always better than underdressed!
- Avoid scruffy jeans, beanies, thongs, and dirty joggers.
- Keep it simple and professional – something that will impress your interviewer/s.

### **4. Arrive at least 10-15 minutes early.**

This will give you time to gather your thoughts and double check your appearance. Introduce yourself to the receptionist, tell them of your name and appointment time and that you're attending an interview. If you know who to ask for, tell the receptionist at this time. If you're not sure who you will be meeting, ask the receptionist and try to remember their names for when you meet with them. Remember to speak clearly and politely and listen to the receptionist's instructions on where to wait for the interview.

### **5. Turn your mobile phone off or put it on silent.**

There is nothing more distracting or disrespectful than if your phone goes off midway through an interview; they have given you their time, show them you appreciate it!

### **6. Greet the interviewers.**

Use their first names if you remember them and introduce yourself. Remember to offer a friendly smile and shake their hand firmly.

### **7. Body language is very important.**

Maintain eye contact with your interviewer as much as possible, sit up straight and present a positive, confident attitude when you answer questions. Remember, your mannerisms can say more than your words do.

### **8. Answer your questions honestly and back up your responses with real-life scenarios.**

When answering questions, take a moment to think about the question and how best to respond. There's no rush. If you're unsure what the question means, ask the interviewer to repeat or rephrase the question. Make sure your answers are straight to the point and address the question asked. Always include an example of how you have done something in the past and what the final result was. Tell of your successes and also your failures – what you would do better next time.

### **9. Sell yourself and always try to turn the question to your advantage.**

Tell the interviewer about your skills, interests and past experiences that are relevant to the position. Reinforce why you want the position. Do not lie – the interviewer will find out one way or another if you do. Do not be over confident as this can sometimes be perceived as arrogance. You want to show enthusiasm, but also that you are willing and able to learn and develop your skills.

### **10. At the end of the interview ask any questions you may have regarding the position or the company.**

The interviewer will be more than happy to answer anything you ask them. Don't feel as though your questions are silly. Asking questions shows enthusiasm and that you have actively thought about this position.

### **11. Once the interview is over, ask the interviewer when they expect to make a decision by.**

Again, sell yourself and your interest and let the interviewer know you will be waiting to hear from them. Thank the interviewer for their time and shake their hand again.

### **12. If you have not heard back regarding an outcome within the indicated timeframe, follow up with a polite phone call.**

In some cases the recruitment processes can be quite time consuming. Your understanding of this process will certainly impress the interviewer when you phone to follow-up. A friendly phone call will once again show your interest in the position.

### **13. If you are unsuccessful with the position, seek feedback from the interviewer regarding areas for improvement.**

Look at the interview as a learning experience and something to help you in the future. Take a look at all the tips provided above and ensure you met the requirements for each. Remain positive – something will come up, you just have to keep at it.

The important thing to remember is to remain calm, confident and honest. Even the person interviewing you has been in your shoes before. The job interview is often the first chance for you to make an impression on your prospective future employer. Follow these tips and you should be set to make a good one!

Best of luck!

HVTC Recruitment Team

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