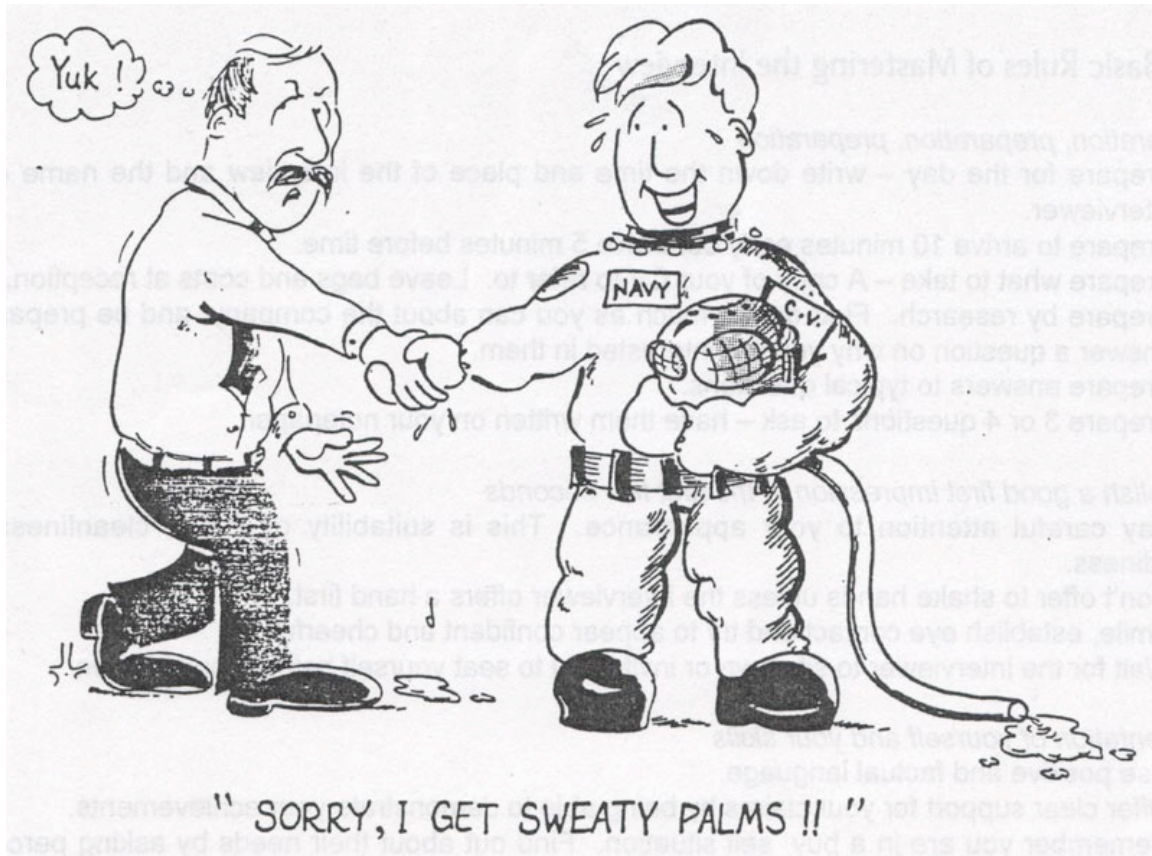


INTERVIEWS



80% of the first impression is made in the first 4 seconds!!

The Interview

The opening paragraph in H Anthony Medley's book 'Sweaty Palms' gives a graphic example of how important interviews are in the selection process.

"A candidate I once interviewed for a secretarial position could type 90 words per minute and take shorthand at 120 words per minute. She was presentable and had good references. But in addition to showing up 10 minutes late, she called me 'Mr. Melody' throughout the interview. The two main things I remembered about her were that she kept me waiting and that she constantly mispronounced my name. I finally offered the position to someone whose typing and shorthand skills were not nearly as good."

Managing an interview successfully is a skill you will develop through practice, both in 'real' and 'role play' situations.

THE BASIC RULES OF MASTERING THE INTERVIEW

THE 3 “PS” – PREPARATION - PRACTICE - PRESENTATION

PREPARATION:

- Prepare for the day – write down the time and place of the interview and the name of the interviewer.
- Prepare to arrive 10 minutes early but arrive 5 minutes before time.
- Prepare what to take – A copy of your CV to refer to. Leave bags and coats at reception.
- Prepare by research. Find out as much as you can about the company and be prepared to answer a question on why you are interested in them.
- Prepare answers to the typical questions listed below.
- Prepare 3 or 4 questions to ask.

PRACTICE

Presentation of yourself and your skills

- Pay careful attention to your appearance. Suitability of dress, cleanliness and tidiness: no gum!
- Smile, greet and shake hands.
- Establish eye contact and try to appear confident and cheerful.
- Wait to be invited to sit down or sit after the interviewer does.

PRESENTATION

Establish a good first impression in the first ten seconds

- Use positive and factual language.
- Offer clear support for your claims by being able to **demonstrate your achievements**.
- Remember you are in a buy: sell situation. Find out about their needs by asking perceptive questions and allowing the interviewer to talk first.
- Give concise answers to questions and don't give too much information. Addition is easier than subtraction! No more than two minutes per answer!
- End the interview with a handshake and a smile, and attempt to establish the next step.
- Remain professional throughout.

PRACTICE

Role play the “meet, greet, seat” question and ending, with a supportive friend or family member.

Some Typical Interview Questions for You to Practise

- Q. **"Tell me about yourself"** – Prepare and rehearse a 1 – 2 minute summary of your education, history and relevant personal details.
- Q. **"What do you know about us"** – Don't be too smart showing off your research! Highlight the services the organisation provides.
- Q. **"What are your strong points?"** – Find 3 and relate them to the position. If you are also asked for a weakness then put it in positive terms and choose only one.
- Q. **"What are you looking for in a job – or - what are your career aspirations?"** – Know what satisfies, motivates, and interests you. They will want to see how you psychologically 'fit' into the organisation etc. Talk about your longer range, future goals, even if for a holiday job.
- Q. **"Why did you make particular subject choices? What is your favourite subject and why? "**
- Q. **"Give me an example of an achievement you are particularly proud of?"**
- Q. **"What extra-curricular activities do you participate in? Why?"**
- Q. **"What experience do you have of (xyz)?"** – Use such questions to show your 'achievement stories', from the skills section of your CV. i.e. 'Maybe I can best answer that with an example...'
- Q. **"Can you work under pressure and meet deadlines?"** – Give an example illustrating your skill in achieving the outcome. Don't confuse 'stress' with 'pressure'.

Some Examples of Questions You Could Ask the Interviewer

- What are the duties of this position?
- Why is this position vacant?
- How many candidates do you select from, for entry to this programme?
- Can you tell me the process after this?
- Is there an orientation programme?
- Does the firm provide on-going training?
- How long do people usually stay in this job?
- What do you most value in an ... (employee)?

BUT DON'T ASK ABOUT MONEY UNTIL THE JOB OFFER!

CHECK LIST

1. How do you come across?

- Self-evaluate and practice the interview with a friend or parent.
- Ask them for feedback.

2. How do you look?

3. Don't forget: 80% of the first impression is made in the first 4 seconds!

- Meet – Handshake, eye-contact
- Greet – Smile & verbal greeting
- Posture & Body Language

4. What is your point of differentiation?

- ie. What makes you stand out from the others?
How can you communicate this?

5. What is your potential value to the organisation?

6. Relate and communicate – use your language of self-description.

- Skills)
 - Abilities)
 - Interests)
 - Experiences)
 - Goals)
- Can you talk about these and give examples ie. demonstrate them?**

PREPARE

PRACTICE

FOR THE INTERVIEW

PRESENT

SUMMARY

Interview Preparation, Practice & Presentation **THE THREE Ps**

PREPARATION

- Analyse the job advertisement
- Research the job – check out the companies web site
- Match up the job details with your abilities, skills and interests
- Prepare answers to the interview questions – turn page for some examples
- Self-market – why are you the person for the job?

PRACTICE THE INTERVIEW IN A ROLE PLAY

Practice with a friend or family member: video it!
Get feed-back on how you can improve

PRESENTATION

- Wear clothes appropriate to the position
- Avoid flashy items of clothes and accessories
- Clothes should be neat, clean and pressed and shoes not scuffed
- Hair clean and tidy and fingernails clean and short
- Plan to arrive early (5 to 10 mins to reflect and relax)
- Think about the distance you have to travel, traffic hold-ups, where you will park, sufficient petrol in the car etc.
- If you are going to be late – ring to apologise
- Greet the receptionist – she may be asked for her initial impression of you
- Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake and smile
- Be alert and enthusiastic
- Make eye contact with the interviewer/s
- Sit comfortably. It is probably best to have your hands in your lap and feet on the floor