

# Technical Recruitment Solutions™

## The Interview Stage



# How to Prepare for an Interview

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*The approach you take at your interview could have a dramatic effect on your career prospects.*

*No matter how good your career record is, the employment interview remains a key step in the process of achieving career ambitions.*

*These suggestions will help you perform confidently and effectively when you meet your prospective employer for that all important first interview.*

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**Preparation is the key to a successful interview.**

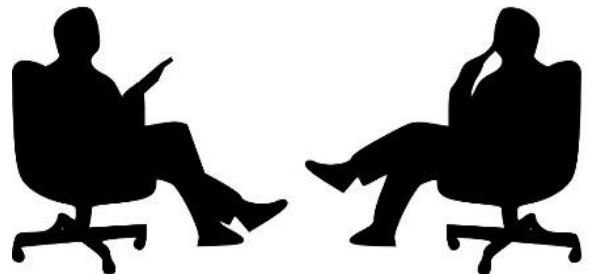
**First impressions count.**

***You only get ONE chance at a first impression.***

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- Know the exact time and place of the interview, the interviewers name and title.
- Find out all you can about the company. Analyse their website as well as research publications in the library.
- Refresh your memory regarding details of present and past employers and your work history in their companies. Pay attention to how you will describe your most important achievements.

- Prepare the questions YOU will ask in your interview.
- Pay close attention to grooming and dress. Standard business attire is normally appropriate, however, find out what is expected.



**Things we like to see evidence of during an interview**

During your interview, the employer will be evaluating your total performance. Listed below are factors that will usually produce a positive reaction from a prospective employer.

- Interested balanced approach.
- Ability to express thoughts clearly.
- Career planning and objectives.
- Confidence.
- Informative replies.
- Tact, maturity, courtesy.
- Maintenance of eye contact.
- Positive handshake.

# What to do during the interview

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## The Interview

You are being interviewed because the interviewer wants to hire somebody – not because he/she wants to trip you up or embarrass you.

Through the interaction which will take place during the interview, he/she will be searching out your strong and weak points, evaluating you on qualifications, skills and intellectual qualities and he/she will probably probe deeply to determine your attitudes, aptitudes, stability, motivation and maturity.



- Be concise but never abrupt.
- If you have the impression all is not going well, don't let your discouragement show. You may be wrong and spoil your chances.
- Never enquire about salary, holidays, etc bonuses at your initial interview.
- Conduct yourself with confidence, but not complacency. A positive attitude is acceptable, arrogance is not.



**Be prepared with answers and supporting examples to questions.**

**For example:**

- Arrive on time or a few minutes early. Late is NEVER excusable.
- Wait to be OFFERED a chair before sitting. Look alert and interested, never let your attention waver.
- Be a good listener as well as talker. Smile when appropriate but never to excess.
- If presented with an application, fill it out neatly and HONESTLY.
- Make sure you get your good points across in a sincere, factual manner.
- What are your career aspirations?
- Why do you want to work for our company?
- Of your previous jobs which did you enjoy and why?
- How have you managed conflict in the past?
- Describe what you have done in your career that shows initiative.
- What are your weaknesses? Your strengths?
- What does teamwork mean to you?
- Can you re-locate if requested?

# The STAR Method

## A methodical approach to interviews

The STAR method is a widely recommended interview technique that you can apply in your interviews.

As many of your reading this document will be technical professionals, the employers who will be interviewing you will want to gauge your technical expertise and prowess. It is therefore a good idea to have some examples ready of difficult situations you have overcome or successful projects you have completed in the past. The STAR method provides you with a simple and effective framework that you can use to structure these examples when asked for them by an employer.



### The STAR Method:

#### **S** - Situation

*Describe the background or context.*

#### **T** - Task

*Describe the task or challenge you were faced with.*

#### **A** - Action

*Explain the action you took and why.*

#### **R** - Result

*Describe what you accomplished.*

## Using this framework

- **Situation:** Describe your employer at the time, what position you held and what your job consisted of. Establish context.
- **Task:** Explain the challenge or task you had to carry out. Make sure it applies to the role you're interviewing for.
- **Action:** Recount the actions or steps you took to address the task or problem. Again, ensure they relate to the employer.
- **Result:** Describe the outcome. It should always be positive and relevant. Make sure you link your actions to the result clearly.

## Video Interviews

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### Skype, WhatsApp, Messenger & Facetime

In this day and age, it's not uncommon to find yourself interviewing for a job from home - especially if the job you're applying for is located in a different city (or country!) to where you're currently based.

In addition to the advice on the previous page, you'll also want to take some extra steps to ensure that your 'internet interview' goes smoothly.

Make sure your internet connection is stable. In other words, make sure your wifi connection is going to be able to keep up with a video call. Applications like Skype will detect a weak or slow wifi connection and will compensate by decreasing the video quality. In extreme cases, you may experience calls freezing or dropping out. If you know your wifi to be sluggish or volatile, plugging your computer or laptop directly into your a LAN port on your router through use of an ethernet/LAN cable can help. You can also use the 'dummy call' feature on Skype to ensure that your video and audio quality are both up to par before you head into the interview.

### Take it just as seriously as a face-to-face!

**Just because the interview is being conducted online, doesn't mean the discussion is any less formal.**

- Ensure that you still dress sharply for the interview and present your best self.
- Speak as clearly as possible, as video call audio can sometimes be difficult to hear.
- Ensure the background behind you isn't too 'busy'. A plain wall works best.
- Look at the camera when answering questions (not the screen!). Doing so will make it seem as though you are making eye contact.
- Ensure your lighting is sufficient. A dark room will diminish the video quality significantly. Try to get as much natural light into the room as possible.
- If you notice any audio delay during the call, make sure you don't interject and cut the interviewer off by mistake.
- Wait for the interviewer to disconnect the call. Remain seated until they do so!

## Once the interview has concluded...

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### Closing the Interview

- If you are interested in the position, let the employer know.
- If you need time to think about an offer, ask for it. Most employers respect the need for a considered judgment.
- Don't be discouraged if there is nothing 'concrete' at the end of the interview.
- The employer always needs time to make THEIR considered judgment. Don't ask how you did.
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration.
- Don't indulge in small talk at the end of the interview (or during it), unless invited to do so.

### After the Interview

Immediately call the consultant (or Administrative Assistant) who referred you to the position and describe how the interview went. He/she will want your views before the employer calls, and will appreciate the courtesy of your feedback.

If you have changed your mind about progressing with the position further, tell us as soon as possible.

**Finally, relax - you have done all you can!**

For more helpful advice for your job hunt, head over to [www.trs.co.nz/news](http://www.trs.co.nz/news) and read our latest blog posts.

