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**It's rarely the
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best CV that gets
the job...**

It's rarely the person with the best CV or experience that gets the job.

It's usually who interviews best on the day.

That can make the process very unpredictable, but equally means everyone has a good chance of being offered the role.

This Guide has been put together by Daniel Barnard (Business Development Manager) and Hilda Leeward (Talent Acquisition Lead) from MedicsPro, a leading National Healthcare Recruitment Agency.


Dan and Hilda have been involved in numerous interviews, experiencing them from all points of view. From interviewing for roles themselves, to being the interviewer as well as preparing others for interviews.

This guide is intended to give you the benefit of their experience and put yourself in the best position to be offered a job.

Before your interview



What I control & what I am responsible for



Interviews can be a powerful mixture of excitement and anxiety. It's important you bring energy and enthusiasm to an interview. However, too much and you'll be overbearing but not enough could make you seem indifferent.

The feelings of stress, in part come from the sense of a lack of control. You give yourself more control through good preparation.

Think of your preparation like an athlete training for a sporting event. The more they train, the better they perform, David Beckham was so successful in scoring free kicks because he relentlessly practised them.

Know your CV

This is your document, you wrote it, so you should know it inside and out.

Are there any errors?

Check the dates for time you spent at each former job.

Timings & Locations

There is never an excuse for lateness to an interview. It's the first test and one you should never fail.

Think about how long the journey is going to take, will you be driving by car, or using public transport.

Getting to the interview **5-10 minutes early** shows you are keen and will allow you to catch your breath, settle your nerves, pop to the toilet/ freshen up, take in your surroundings, and just mentally get prepared.

Be aware some managers ask receptionists about your behaviours whilst waiting to be met, were you friendly and polite to them, from the moment you are on site be your best self.

"The more I practice the luckier I get."

Gary Player, Golfer

"Early is on time, on time is late, and late is unacceptable!"

Eric Jerome Dickey

Company & interviewers

As an interviewer, it can be frustrating to meet a potential hire who knows nothing about the company or the role they are interviewing for.

Why do you want this position?

You don't have to convince the interviewer this is your dream job (unless it is!) but have a good idea about what the role entails and what the company does.

Research as much as you can, the internet is a great resource for this. All companies have a website which will detail their history and what they do. Websites like LinkedIn enable you to research other people who work at the company and even those you will be meeting.

Do your research on the business and the interviewer/s. If you know someone who works there already, speak to them.

Questions

Your potential employer will ask questions about you in your interview. Pre-empt this and prepare for questions or concerns they might have about you.

Think about any skills or knowledge gaps that you have - how will you prove you are still the right person for the job?

If you have spent any time unemployed, think about how you used that time and what skills it has taught you, for example, resilience or perseverance. Showing that you are adaptable to situations and make the best out of them could make you a very attractive candidate.

Prepare questions for the interview too. The research you did on the business should highlight some areas that you would like to know more about. Showing an interest in what they do and how you could be part of it shows enthusiasm and a genuine desire for the job itself.

Write your questions down and have them ready.

Practice & role play



Many of the questions asked during an interview follow similar formats, typically around areas of strength and weakness relevant to the job.

Think about how you might answer the following questions:

1. Tell me something about yourself.
 2. How did you hear about this position?
 3. Why do you want to work here?
 4. Why did you decide to apply for this position?
 5. What is your greatest strength?
 6. How would a friend describe you?
 7. How would you describe your personality?
 8. What are three positive things your last boss would say about you?
 9. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
 10. How do you respond to criticism?
 11. What do you know about this company?
 13. Why should we hire you?
 14. What is your greatest accomplishment?
 15. What are you looking for from a new position?
 16. Are you considering other roles in other companies?
 17. What is the professional achievement you're most proud of?
 18. What kind of working environment do you work best in?
 19. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
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Participate & dress code

This isn't one way traffic, don't just react, engage with the process. What is important to you, what attracted you to the role, what is the culture and environment.

You are interviewing the company too, by asking questions you are demonstrating you want to be there.

The interview can also be stressful for the interviewer. They will come away with a more positive view of you if they haven't had to do all the work.



As the saying goes, we should never judge a book by its cover, but research has shown that the first impressions we make upon meeting someone, continue to influence our relationship with them over a long period of time.

Office and workplace culture is as varied today as it has ever been, dress code can vary from formal (suit and tie) to business casual and even jeans and trainers 'casual'. However, don't assume that this is the expected attire for the interview.

Always go smarter and dress to impress. Make sure your clothes are clean and pressed, your hair is tidy, and your shoes are polished.

Your interview



Control your nerves

Great preparation before your interview will help you to feel more confident, in control and able to deal with the unexpected.

If you feel your nervousness building as you go in, ask for a glass of water, it's a good ice breaker. Having the glass of water on standby will help you slow down your speech. Nerves can give you a dry mouth and an unwanted frog in your throat, so be prepared.

Be Positive

Talk positively, in the future tense where possible and promote your qualities. There are some candidates that unfortunately get remembered for the wrong reason - they talked negatively about their previous jobs or employers, often blaming them for their lack of performance or success. Employers want to hear about what you have done before, but they also want to hear how you will add value to them in the future.

Be as positive and forward-thinking as you can. Don't dwell on the negatives, focus on the positives from your experiences. It's the tough times that will ultimately show you have the resilience to add value to a new employer, think about what they taught you and how they benefit you in the long run.

Take a few copies of your CV with you

This shows initiative and is a chance to give a more recent version if asked for.

Always print more copies than needed and casually leave one on the desk in front of you, it might be a useful reference point for you during the interview. Pressure can affect your memory and ability to focus.

Smile and Listen

Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake (yes limp handshakes are noticed!) and a smile. Smiling will make you look and sound more confident. Who else is in the room? There will be a good reason for anyone else being there so scan the room when talking, acknowledge and make good eye contact with everyone at some point. Eye contact contributes to your overall communication with the interviewers.

It lets them know you are confident and engaged. Remember to maintain eye contact (which does not mean a stare down!)

It can be hard to stay silent when you are keen to impress. Listening is an essential skill in every job and your interview is a great opportunity to show you understand that. Listen to understand, rather than to always respond. Listening will also help to generate some good questions for you to ask too. Listen carefully to the interviewer. Be sure you understand the question; if not, ask for clarification.

Other things to consider:

- Expect to spend some time developing rapport. Don't jump right in and get down to business. Follow the interviewer's lead.
- Focus on your attributes, your transferable skills, and your willingness to learn; don't apologise for a lack of experience; describe your strengths in terms of what you can do for the business.
- Tell the truth. Lies and exaggeration will come back to haunt you.
- Try not to slight an old employer or colleague. Loyalty ranks high on the employer's list.
- Watch your grammar. Employers are interested in candidates who can express themselves properly. Even if you must go slowly and correct yourself, accuracy is preferred over ungrammatical fluency.
- Be prepared for personal questions. Some interviewers may not know what they can and cannot ask legally. Anticipate how you will handle such questions without losing your composure.
- Wait for the interviewer to mention salary and benefits.



**Close on a
positive**

Your interview is coming to an end, thank your interviewer for their time and ask for any initial feedback. If you want the job, tell the interviewer you are interested in the opportunity.

Ask the interviewer what the next step will be.

Don't expect a job offer at the first interview (that doesn't mean they are not sometimes made!). Often you will be invited to a second or even third interview before an offer is made.

It's all over. Or is it?

Last impressions also count.

Whilst the interview may officially be over, remember that you are still potentially under review until you leave the company's premises and are fully out of view. Lighting a cigarette, the minute you step foot outside the office might not be the best move, who knows who is watching from the window above.

The end of the interview isn't the end of the interview.

Should I make contact after the interview?

If the interview has cemented your desire to secure the role, then definitely!

A nicely written email to the interviewer thanking them for their time and following up with any information that they have requested is a great opportunity to impress them. It will also show that you are keen to progress further with the opportunity.

This last step can make a difference. Don't forget it.

