

Interview techniques for jobs

Well done, you've secured an interview. You've done really well to get this far – now follow these tips to help make the interview a success.

Before the interview

- **Research**

Research the company interviewing you as it will help you decide if it's the right place for you and lets the interviewer know you are serious about the job. Look on their website. It's a good idea to try and arrange a visit to the company and find out who will be interviewing you e.g. for an interview in the film industry, research the company, director and the person you will be meeting.

Use the internet for your research. www.skillset.org is the sector skill council for the creative media industry and has up to date information on the industry and related careers. They also have useful guidelines on preparing for an interview in the creative media. www.prospects.ac.uk is a useful site for people looking for graduate careers and they have valuable information on interviews. Look at other sources too, like industry journals and magazines.

- **Examples of your work**

Bring examples with you, such as a showreels, portfolios etc. but ensure they look professional. Interviewers may not always have the time to look at them, but some will and good examples demonstrate enthusiasm and dedication.

- **Network**

Within the creative industries, the importance of knowing people in the industry can be more important than talent when getting a job. Networking is key! Always carry your business card and try and meet as many people as possible. At your interview you may be able to refer to an important contact you've made.

- **Questions and Answers**

Prepare in advance a list of positive, relevant and knowledgeable questions for the interview - ask how the company operates or what the internal reporting structure is like. Avoid asking questions about salary, benefits or holidays.

Prepare answers for commonly occurring questions such as: What do you know about the company? What skills have you got to offer? What are your strengths?

Be prepared to also talk about your weaknesses - but try to give positive answers, such as "People tell me I can be too much of a perfectionist".

- **Double check**

Check the time and date of the interview, the location of the company, the journey details and the time it will take to get you there. Make a note of who you are meeting and what their job title is, and also their phone number in case you get delayed and need to let them know.

- **Dress**

Dress smartly to create the right first impression. The dress code for their employees might be jeans and t-shirts, but it's best to be cautious and dress smartly for the interview.

During the interview

- **First impressions**

Making a good first impression is vital, so ensure you are well presented, punctual and friendly. A firm handshake, eye contact and a smile are good openers. Creative industries are often people-orientated, so good social skills are important. Your attitude is also important - always be upbeat and positive. You can always turn down a position, but it's hard to retrieve an interview if you fail to make a good first impression.

- **Personality**

Never sit back and expect your experience and qualifications alone to secure the job. Personality is just as important - be positive, honest and open. Remember to be confident about experience you have gained, but don't make out that you've got more experience than you really have!

Don't be lulled into a false sense of security if the interview appears relaxed and the interviewer is making light conversation. Some interviews within the creative sector may be quite relaxed but don't be fooled - they are still checking you out and are looking to see not only if you can do the job, but also whether you will fit into the dynamic of their team.

- **Be passionate and interested**

Try not to be too fazed if you are applying for your first job. It's more important to show you are passionate about working in the industry and prepared to spend a lot of time making tea if necessary!

- **Body language**

Be aware of your own body language - sit up straight and don't lean back in your chair gazing all around the room. Use eye contact and lean forward slightly as this implies interest. Try to project enthusiasm throughout and smile.

- **Time**

They might only have 10 minutes or so to see you and the interview could be held in a noisy, busy office. Try not to let this make you lose your focus - make the most of the time available.

End of the Interview

- If you are asked whether you are interested in the position, always answer yes unless you are absolutely sure it's not for you. Make it clear that you enjoyed the meeting and are interested in taking things further and always thank the interviewer for their time.

After the interview

- Don't be afraid to ring up and ask for feedback - this will provide valuable information for future interviews.