

Graduates – How to impress at interviews

Interviewing, like most things in life, is a learnt skill and mastery in the art requires practice. So to minimise the time it takes to secure a graduate entry role, you need to understand what employers want, know what you're bringing to the table and how to sell your experience and raw potential to employers.

Nerves

Employers don't expect you to give a flawless performance. They *do* expect energy, drive and commitment but understand that you're starting out in your career and haven't had huge experience interviewing. They'll want to see that you've prepared for the meeting, that you're self aware and know your own strengths - but they will understand a degree of nerves.

Passion

As a graduate, you need to show an employer why you decided to follow a particular career path. For example if you're applying for a position as a teacher, you'll need to explain where your love of teaching came from. Was it a teacher who inspired you in your formative years? Did you enjoy giving help to friends who were struggling in particular subjects?

If you're finding it difficult to explain your interest in a particular job, do a bit more digging. For example if you're applying for a role as an accountant – speak to somebody who is currently in this role to get a clearer picture of what they do. Ask them what they like /dislike about their job, what qualities are needed to be good at the job and what they do on a day to day basis. This will help you put together a good answer. Use your network of extended family and friends -you'll be surprised how generous people are with their time when they're asked for help.

Why is this important? Employers are risk adverse by nature and making a mistake is a costly. If you can show you've done your homework and are passionate about your career choice, you'll be much more likely to succeed.

Do your homework

Forensically examine the job spec to see what qualities the employer is looking for. Most graduate roles look for people who are good team players, have good communication skills and can work well under pressure. Have examples to demonstrate your skills in all these areas. You can use your academic, sporting achievements and any part-time/summer/voluntary jobs as a way of proving your ability in these areas. Give link to July article. <http://www.irishjobs.ie/ForumWW/WWIndividualArticle.aspx?ParentID=74&CID=90&ForumTypeID=3710>

Conclusion

As always, preparation is the key to success. For more guidance on how to answer specific interview questions go to our website www.interviewtechniques.ie

About the Author

Laura McGrath is the owner of *Interview Techniques*, a leading provider of interview coaching services. She has spent the last 15 years in staffing and recruitment and is a regular contributor with Irish Jobs and the Sunday Business Post.

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