

How to succeed in a group interview

Group interviews are a popular way for employers to assess a large number of applicants in a cost effective and timely manner. They're often used so to determine qualities such as communication/ influencing / leadership skills and are a good way to test how well job applicants will behave in a stressful environment.

Structure

Normally an employer will start by giving a presentation of the company and give everybody the opportunity to introduce themselves. They'll normally then outline the structure of the day and the tasks that will be undertaken; which could include role plays, group discussions or problem solving exercises. During the day there's normally very little one to one interaction with the interviewers, instead they'll be seated around the room quietly observing and taking notes.

Top Five Tips on how to make an impression and stand out from the crowd:

No matter what format the interview takes, the following guideline should be followed:

1 Engage

For naturally quiet people, group interviews can be intimidating but you need to remember that your contribution can't be assessed unless you participate. You need to get actively involved in the discussion, express your views, stand-up and be counted.

2 Avoid confrontation

During the group exercise, you'll be assessed on your ability to deal with conflict and how well you can manage strong personalities. Never raise your voice. Always listen to other people's point of view before putting forward your own. Be sure to back up and justify your own position, outlining the benefits of pursuing your suggested course of action.

3 Accept good ideas

Never be afraid to accept somebody else's ideas if you feel they're better than your own. Remember a good leader doesn't operate in isolation but achieves results by getting the best out of each team member and encouraging the group to work cohesively as a unit.

4 Be inclusive

The quiet person sitting in the corner may well be the smartest person in the group. Encouraging their involvement will reflect well on you.

5 Body Language

The interviewer will be observing you throughout the whole process so it is important to actively listen, smile and be attentive at all times.

Happy interviewing!

About the Author

Laura McGrath is the owner of [Interview Techniques](http://www.interviewtechniques.ie), a leading provider of interview coaching services. She has spent the last 15 years in staffing and recruitment and is a regular contributor with *Recruit Ireland* and the *Sunday Business Post*.

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