

Recent Interview Trends

Have you ever wished that you were a fly on the wall in a job interview or that you could read the recruiter's mind to find out what they *really* want? To find the answers to these questions, Laura McGrath, Managing Director of Interview Techniques conducted a survey with over 500 recruiters and job seekers and uncovered some interesting results.

Stuck in Time

Recruitment methods have changed very little in the last fifty years and the majority of employers still rely heavily on the interview process as a means of selecting staff. Of those surveyed, less than a third conducted psychometric tests, only 30% required a medical and just 15% got their preferred candidate to do a presentation.

Not surprisingly, all human resource professional have received formal interview training but nearly half of those surveyed outside of the human resource function have not received any guidance and rely on intuition and "on the job" training.

You don't get a second chance to make a first impression

Interestingly first impressions still remain enormously important with 57% of recruiters indicating that the first couple of minutes of an interview strongly affects their decision on whether to hire an applicant. Three quarters of respondents said that they placed a high importance on a well groomed appearance and over 80% said that good eye contact was crucial. Body language still plays a huge role during the interview process with 90% of recruiters saying that being passionate about the role strong influenced their decision. Attitude and relevant job experience were seen to be equally important when assessing an employee's suitability for a role.

Are you confident that you are competent?

Competency based interviews have become very popular and the majority of interviewers (70%) use behavioural questions as part of their interview process. Worryingly three quarters of job seekers are unfamiliar with this style of question and don't know how to best structure their response.

In general terms, over half of all job seekers spend less than two hours preparing for interviews with one in five spending less than one hour in their preparations.

Importance of high impact CV

Almost two thirds of prospective employers spend less than three minutes reading a CV when short-listing candidates for interview. So unless your CV makes a strong and immediate first impression, you are unlikely to progress any further in the recruitment process. Surprisingly, even in the face of such increased competition only 40% of job seekers tailor their CV to each job application.

An overwhelming portion of employers (98%) felt that the ideal CV length was 3 pages or less, with a quarter of respondents indicating that CVs have become longer since the economy had fallen into decline. Employers still place a high value on loyalty - candidates with frequent job moves on their CV are viewed in a less favourable light with 69% of employers using this as a reason to not employ a job applicant.

Embellishment of truth

It seems that we have become less honest as a nation since the beginning of the downturn with 40% of employers citing that embellishment of the truth in a CV had become a bigger issue in the last twelve months. Nearly three quarters of respondents stated that in their experience 75% of job applicants had been less than truthful in describing why they left their most recent position, and nearly six in ten applicants had incorrect dates on their CVs to cover up employment gaps.

Lady Luck

Most job applicants (80%) admit to getting a little nervous before attending interview with only 3% feeling the need to take medication to manage their anxiety. Quite a number of us are superstitious - in fact, nearly one in every ten job seekers carries a good luck charm on the big day to boost their chance of success!

Interview Room Humour

- What is your biggest weakness? Women with big bums
- Why did you leave your last job? I have a problem with authority
- "When I walked into the interview, I immediately recognised the interviewer. He was a guy I'd met in a nightclub the previous month. He'd asked for my telephone number but never called!"
- "On the way to the interview I visited the toilets. The interviewer followed me in and stood next to me at the urinal – it certainly broke the ice....."
- "About half way through my interview, I glanced out the window and saw my car being clamped! Needless to say, it was hard for me to concentrate on my performance after that....."

Top Five Interview Tips

- Tailor your CV to each individual position
- Learn how to answer competency based questions
- Clearly communicate your passion for the job
- In interview - what you say and how you say it are *both* equally important
- Practice makes perfect

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 *Recruit Ireland* and the *Sunday Business Post*.

Go to: www.interviewtechniques.ie

Email: info@interviewtechniques.ie

Call: 01 676 8874