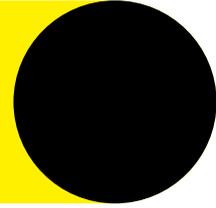


# The Ultimate Job Seeker's Guide

## Interview Preparation



# The Ultimate Job Seeker's Guide: Interview Preparation



The interview is a key part of the hiring process. It's how an employer gets the information they need to select the best person for the job. It's your best opportunity to show that you are, in fact, the right fit for the company.

Even for the most experienced and qualified candidates, job interviews can be stressful. No matter where you are in your career, it's easy to make interview mistakes and let nerves get the best of you.

The truth is we could all use a little help when it comes to interviews. The best way to increase your confidence and ace an interview is to take the steps to prepare.

This comprehensive job seeker's guide will outline different types of interviews, how to prepare for them, common interview questions, and what to wear to an interview.

Put these expert tips into practice to make a fantastic first impression!

## Types of Interviews

Employers use a variety of interview types to assess candidates. In one interview, you may tell stories about your successes and challenges in previous roles. In another, you may find yourself putting your skills to the test at a computer. Understanding different interview types will help you perform your best when you walk through the door.

### The Screening Interview

Companies screen candidates to ensure they meet minimum requirements. Interviewers often use software programs to filter unqualified candidates, while screening interviewers dig for inconsistent information, such as gaps in employment, to determine whether there is a reason to disqualify a candidate.

Screening isn't conducted to determine whether you're the ideal fit for the role. Rather, it's used to determine whether or not you are a match.

#### Some tips for screening interviews

- Highlight your qualifications for the role.
- Answer questions honestly and directly.
- Address salary requirements tactfully. It's best to give a range and avoid giving specifics.

## **The Directive Style**

In this interview style, the interviewer follows a clear agenda. Sometimes, companies use this style to ensure uniformity between interviews. Candidates are asked the same list of questions, which enables the interviewer to better compare the results.

These interviews are typically used to learn specific information about you, using strategic methods and questions.

### **Some tips for directive interviews**

- Follow the interviewer's lead.
- To gain some control of the interview, politely interject any critical information the interviewer has not asked for that you think is important.

## **The Meandering Style**

In this type of non-directive interview, you control the conversation. The interviewer may ask you open-ended questions like, "Tell me about yourself." Take advantage of the meandering interview style to highlight your skills and qualifications and guide the discussion in a way that best serves you.

### **Some tips for meandering interviews**

- You won't be able to rely on the interviewer to jog your memory, so come prepared with notes that highlight your experiences, qualities, and skills.
- Be aware of the interviewer's role and adjust quickly if they take the interview in a new direction.
- Ask about the company and its needs. Don't focus only on your own agenda.

## **The Informational Interview**

The informational interview is a meeting you initiate. This type of interview is used to learn insights into a company and seek advice from a professional in your field of interest.

You can request an informational interview with an employer who is not currently hiring. During this meeting, you exchange information with an employer and get to know each other better. Employers often feel flattered by the request and enjoy sharing their knowledge. These interviews also enable them to stay apprised of current talent in the industry.

### **Some tips for informational interviews**

- Go to the interview prepared with questions about the company and the industry.
- Use this interview as an opportunity to gain references to other people, but ensure the interviewer is comfortable if you contact other people and use their name.

- Remember to share your contact information, card, and resume with the interviewer.
- Follow up with a thoughtful thank-you note.

### **The Behavioural Interview**

In the behavioural interview, hiring managers want to learn more about your past behaviours, expecting these past actions to indicate your future performance at the company. Standardized tools are used to dig up information about competencies in a certain position. You may be asked to describe past experiences, such as when you were required to use your leadership, conflict-resolution, or problem-solving skills.

#### **Some tips for behavioural interviews**

- Make connections to the qualities and transferable skills required for the role.
- Know your resume backward and forward. The interviewer may ask about any skill you've listed.
- Use your educational, professional, volunteer, and personal experiences to develop short stories that describe the use of your skills and best qualities. Ensure you know which stories you'll discuss ahead of time.
- Your stories should identify context, highlight your actions, and identify the results of your actions.

### **The Audition**

Employers want to see you in action to evaluate your abilities. This is your chance to demonstrate your skills in an interactive manner. This can level the playing field if you're lacking in terms of experience.

#### **Some tips for auditions**

- Make sure you understand the interviewer's expectations and instructions.
- Treat the audition as if it were a professional situation laid before you.
- Brush up on any skills you believe might be tested during the audition.

### **The Tag-Team Interview**

Sometimes, you'll find yourself in an interview with several people. The hiring manager as well as the supervisor, staff members, and the director might be in the meeting. Other times, you'll face a series of interviews with different people.

Employers use this interview style to gain insights from more people. This style is often used when teamwork and cooperation are highly valued. You will not only be interviewed on your skills but also your ability to get along with your future colleagues.

### Some tips for tag-team interviews

- Learn each individual's name and treat everyone present as an individual. You might want to write down their names. Make eye contact with each person and always speak directly to the person asking the question.
- Each interviewer will have a different position in the company as well as unique insights. Use this interview as an opportunity to learn more about the company.
- Bring twice as many stories to a tag-team interview. Be ready to share your skills and experience in different ways to different interviewers.
- Expect to expend more energy than you would in a one-on-one interview.

### The Mealtime Interview

The mealtime interview is tricky for many candidates. It can sound like a professional catastrophe, but there are ways to ace it. T

he mealtime interview is often used to test your interpersonal skills in a social setting. The interviewer not only wants to know how you hold a fork but how you treat the waitstaff, your host, and other guests at the table.

### Some tips for mealtime interviews

- Follow the interviewer's lead and remember you're the guest. Order a meal that's slightly less expensive than your interviewer. However, if your host suggests you should try a specific dish, do so. Only begin eating after your interviewer does, and do not leave them eating dessert or drinking coffee alone. Discuss the topics the interviewer suggests. If they want to talk about business, do so, but if they're talking about an upcoming vacation, do not interrupt to discuss the role or your skills.
- If possible, set aside dietary preferences. If you must refuse food, be as tactful as possible.
- Avoid messy foods like spaghetti and barbecue ribs.
- Excuse yourself from the table after the meal to check your teeth.
- Practice eating and conversing simultaneously.
- Thank your host for the meal.

### The Follow-up Interview

Often, you will be asked to come back for a second or third interview. Sometimes, these follow-up interviews are conducted to confirm your suitability for the role; other times, the interviewer is having trouble deciding among candidates. Often, another decision maker, such as a CEO or supervisor, will be in the room during a follow-up interview to meet you before the hiring decision is made.

Follow-up interviews can go in different directions, so it's important to be prepared. If you're meeting with the same interviewer, you can focus on building your relationship and cementing rapport. You can use the opportunity to learn more about the company and its vision and culture. You may also find yourself negotiating compensation during a follow-up interview, but you could also find yourself meeting with a new person. In each case, be prepared.

#### Some tips for follow-up interviews

- Highlight what you have to offer and make your interest in the company known.
- Ask tactful questions to learn more about the company's culture and dynamics.
- Be prepared for anything.

#### Behavioural Interviews

Behavioural interviewing is a style of interviewing that more companies are using in their hiring process. The idea behind behavioural interviewing is that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation. This type of interview provides a more objective set of facts to help the employer make employment decisions. When answering behaviour-type questions, you should be detailed and specific with good examples. You should divide your answers into three parts:

- 1 Situation**  
Tell the interviewer about the situation and what you were trying to achieve.
- 2 Action**  
Explain to the employer what you did to achieve your result.
- 3 Result/Outcome**  
Tell the employer about the final outcome.

Try answering a few of these behavioural questions.

- 1** Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- 2** By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments.
- 3** Describe a time on any job that you held in which you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
- 4** Give an example of a time which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
- 5** Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get an important point across.
- 6** Give me an example of an important goal you set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.

The key to answering behavioural questions is to be truthful and don't describe how you would behave, describe how you did behave. Be specific, not general or vague. The idea is to let the interviewer see that you learned something from the experience. Remember we learn from mistakes. If you learned something from that, it's a useful example.

**Here are some additional behavioural interview questions:**

- Describe some times when you were not very satisfied or pleased with your performance. What did you do about it?
- Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to a compromise.
- Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Tell of some situations in which you have had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you?
- What steps do you follow to study a problem before making a decision?
- Sometimes it's easy to get in "over your head." Describe a situation where you had to request help or assistance on a project or assignment.
- We can sometimes identify a small problem and fix it before it becomes a major problem. Give an example of how you have done this.
- Recall a time from your work experience when your manager or supervisor was unavailable and a problem arose. What was the nature of the problem? How did you handle that situation? How did that make you feel? Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- In a supervisory or group leader role, have you ever had to discipline or counsel an employee or group member? What was the nature of the discipline? What steps did you take? How did that make you feel? How did you prepare yourself?
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision but didn't have all the information you needed. Use a real anecdote from your experience. The answer doesn't have to be grand—it could be a simple situation that was handled well.

A trained interviewer may ask some questions that are a combination of traditional and behavioural questions, such as:

- What do you think it takes to be successful in this position?
- What has been your most rewarding accomplishment?
- What do you see yourself doing in three, five, or ten years from now?

- Why did you decide to seek a position at our company?
- What kind of supervisor brings out your best performance? Provide examples.
- What is the most significant contribution you made to the company during a past job?
- What degree of training do you feel you will require before you can make a productive contribution to the company?

**Remember, relax and be yourself, and you will do well!**



## Interview Questions

### **What are your short- and long-term goals; how are you prepared to achieve them?**

This question is aimed at finding out what kind of person you are. Keep in mind that your goals must be achievable and you should be prepared to explain how you plan to achieve those goals. Have several short-term (in the next 12-24 months) and several long-term goals (2-5 years) to present.

### **What do you see yourself doing five years from now?**

This question is to see if you can set achievable goals for yourself and whether the position and organization fit with your longterm plans. Even if you know there may be opportunities for advancement within the organization, be cautious about discussing your desire for promotion at this time.

### **Why did you apply for this position?**

The interviewer is trying to determine whether you will be satisfied in this position and likely to stay. Explain why you are interested in the position and working for the company.

### **What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?**

Highlight your most positive attributes (e.g., skill, reliability, enthusiasm, etc.) Use examples to illustrate your positive qualities and how they apply to your work. Talk about the things you have improved and the steps you took to do so.

### **How would you describe yourself?**

The interviewer is asking you to profile yourself to see if you fit with the company and to get a sense of your self-image and how it compares to his/ her perception of you. Be factual and use the opportunity to sell yourself without being arrogant.

### **What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in this position?**

The interviewer is asking you to make their decision for them. If you have to hesitate or can think of only one or two reasons, then they will think the qualifications are not obvious or succinct enough. Quickly list your skills and positive characteristics.

### **What two or three professional accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction and why?**

This question is to find out what kind of professional accomplishments give you a sense of pride. Pick several accomplishments; explain why they satisfied you and how they related to your job performance.

**How do you work under pressure? Give me an example.**

This question indicates that your job will involve working under pressure and with deadlines; reassure the interviewer by giving examples of paid or unpaid activities that involved pressure/deadlines. Stress how capable you are in rising to the occasion.

**What do you know about our company?**

The interviewer wants to know if you have done any research about the company and know it well enough to really want to work there, rather than just wanting to work anywhere. To reassure the interviewer, mention as many positive features about the job, company, or organization as you can. This is where your research will come in handy!

**What have you learned from your mistakes?**

This question is designed to see if you recognize that you have made mistakes and then how you resolved the problem. Be honest—this is a test of your credibility and integrity. Use examples of real mistakes you have made and stress how what you learned led to better performance.

**What is the biggest mistake you have made?**

Once again, be honest. You will show credibility and integrity. Be careful, however, to concentrate your answer on describing what you learned from your mistake.

**What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you work?**

The interviewer wants to know you are being targeted in your job search and you do not want to work for just any company. Give several examples of things you look for in companies you wish to work for (e.g., good reputation, room for advancement, excellent products, friendly work environment, etc.).

**What is the most significant contribution you made at your most recent place of employment?**

Tell a story about an accomplishment that added value to the company, demonstrating skills that showed initiative or resilience. Relate the outcome of your work.

**Was there anything today you were afraid I was going to ask you? Why did it make you uncomfortable?**

Keep your cool. Many people blurt out the question they didn't want to be asked. Be prepared for this one.

**How do you feel about working overtime? Travel? The possibility of relocation?**

If these questions are asked, chances are the position will involve overtime, travel and/or relocation. Ask the interviewer for more details and be honest in your response. If you cannot or will not relocate, say so!

**Do you have any hobbies? Tell me about them.**

The interviewer is trying to determine what kind of person you are outside of work. This is the time to talk about any volunteer work you do, any teams you may participate in, etc.

**What kind of person gets on your nerves?**

Maybe there is a difficult person as supervisor or in the department and the interviewer is trying to determine if you could work with this person. Stress how you can get along with most people and use examples from your past experience of how you have interacted with “difficult” people.

**Define success. Define failure.**

This is a very personal question. The interviewer wants to know how you personally judge success and failure. You may want to address this as individual versus corporate successes and failures.



## **Interview Preparation**

Be as successful as possible in every interview. You may only have one interview with a company, so it may be the only chance you'll have to make a good impression.

Well-prepared candidates are more confident. If you know how to give complete and concise answers, you'll worry less and ask better questions yourself.

### **Write down some things that you are going to say and rehearse them.**

Interviews are "performances," like the ultimate business presentation. Interviewers want to hear crisp, articulate, meaningful information, not someone searching and stumbling for the right word or answer – i.e., someone "not prepared." Memorize your timelines so you can clearly recite what you did, when.

To improve verbal pitches, prepare detailed write-ups for your two most significant accomplishments. Each of these should be two to three paragraphs in length, no more than half a page each. One should be an individual accomplishment and the other a team accomplishment.

### **Words you use make a difference.**

Use action words such as planned, created, implemented, developed, and originated. Results-oriented words such as lead to, achieved, provided for, increased, contributed to, saved, and reduced are also important.

For leadership-oriented positions, use organized, directed, led, guided, built, supervised, managed, responsible for, and coordinated. These are great words to have in your resume too!

### **Dress the part.**

What you wear to the interview should match what they wear in the workplace. Polish your shoes. If everything else looks great, people will notice unpolished shoes.

### **Arrive early.**

Arrive at an interview 7–10 minutes early. You should give yourself a few extra minutes to find the place, even if you're sure you know where it is. Impress everyone you encounter, including the receptionist. If you're a few minutes early, ask to see the interviewer.

Being a little early gives a great first impression. Pick up a company publication, such as an annual report. Some people advocate remaining standing while you wait for the interviewer. You want to remain energized and not become relaxed and distracted when the interviewer shows up. Standing gives the person who greets you the impression that you mean business, you're keen and want to "get at it."

## **Have trouble breaking the ice?**

Most of us do. After the firm handshake and smile, and the initial “nice to meet you” or other initial pleasantries, as you’re walking together somewhere or just starting to sit down together, try “I’ve been looking forward to this meeting,” or compliment some nearby wall-hanging. Interviewers right away will begin to think that you’re keen and that you like their surroundings – that you “fit in.”

## **During the Interview**

Sit up straight. Don’t cross your arms. Be positive, enthusiastic, and energetic. Display confidence by speaking authoritatively but without appearing arrogant. Employers look for people who command power and respect. Project your voice when you speak. Don’t mumble or speak softly.

Prove you’ve done some research on the company, industry, and current market situation. Even if they don’t ask something such as “what do you know about us?” bring up the fact that you’ve done some research—e.g., visited their website.

An interview opener: “Thank you very much for meeting with me today. I am familiar with Company X and your great reputation. I’ve had a chance to look at your website/materials and have read about your latest achievements (be specific) in (e.g.,) the Wall Street Journal. Can you tell me a little more about the company and the skills you are looking for?”

## **Get to know your interviewer.**

If they are of a technical nature, you should customize your words accordingly with technical details. If they are HR-oriented, speak about your accomplishments in general and don’t bore them with technical details!

Let the interviewer run things. Don’t answer a question before it is asked or try to dominate the interview. This can be taken as a sign you will put your ego needs ahead of the good of the company.

## **During the Interview**

If they ask you to tell them about yourself (this is sometimes posed as an open-ended question to see how/if you wander), you must remember their time is valuable and you want to give them enough information to determine if they want to hire you (sometimes too much info is bad info). So the way to handle this is to say... “I’d love to tell you about myself. I have a wealth of experiences. Where would you like me to begin?” or “I have numerous years of relevant experience. What particular aspects are of greatest interest to you?” They should pick the starting place. If they say “you pick,” relay a brief summary of key job experiences and results that match appropriately to their requirements.

Talk about your accomplishments and what you're proud of. Write down three to five things, with evidence, prior to interviewing. Think about how they address the interviewer's needs. Use the situation-action-result formula for each. For instance, "I saw a challenge..., I took action..., and the result was a 20-percent increase in revenues." Ego, exaggeration, and bragging that come with it are major interview killers. If you emphasize "I" too often, it can appear you are trying to come on really strong.

Some accomplishments are certainly your own and you should make those points, but if something was a team effort, talk in terms of "we." For example, stating that you built an organization from the ground up is great on a resume, but it doesn't sound as good when verbalized. Instead, emphasize how you motivated employees to support your goals/vision. Emphasize your personal qualities, values, and behaviours that demonstrate your corporate cultural fit. Be a little bottomline oriented. Employers like candidates who recognize the business importance of the opportunity.

Be able to articulate why you're particularly interested in their company; you're not just looking for a job! Have you thought about what you could do to help them with their particular business situation? How about saying "I've given your industry and business some thought (or I'm quite familiar with your industry...) and I already have some ideas on how to help/make an impact...for example..."

Often, these days, people are brought in to rebuild/ redefine an organization. In this case, the ability to handle change is more important, so portray flexibility and the ability to make change happen/make a difference quickly. For example, if you have been involved in mergers, acquisitions, centralizations, decentralizations, downsizing, or expansions, outline what you did, how you did it, and how successful it was.

### **Never:**

- Indicate you're using an opportunity as a stepping stone (e.g., to eventually become a contractor; to eventually move to another technology)
- Portray that you're tire kicking or indifferent about the opportunity
- Discount yourself (such as "I should tell you that I'm really weak in \_\_\_\_\_")
- Be overbearing, conceited, a know-it-all
- Show a lack of career planning—drifting from job to job
- Make highly negative comments about companies or people—you never know if you are offending an interviewer's friend or former employer
- Be controlling or over-talkative—respect that you are being invited to the interview, so be conscious of the interviewer's time by being concise and direct in responses and statements; wait for the appropriate time to ask questions. Silence conveys the fact you're comfortable with who you are
- Use obscenities or risky colloquialisms such as "pissed off," "hell," or "jerk"

## How to handle the question of money.

If they solicit your desired salary or range, avoid discussing it. It's no-win to discuss compensation pre-offer. Why? It's in their best interest not to introduce the monetary aspects, as this could become the focus of the meeting and things could get confrontational or awkward.

You're already qualified for the position and its range, and as such, talk about everything else. If you say something too low, they may disqualify you on the basis of perceived under-qualification. If you say something too high, they may disqualify you for overqualification. If you say a number or range, be prepared to live with it!

The best way to handle this with dignity, logic, and etiquette is to say, "Although money is important, there are a number of important factors in this opportunity (state two or three reasons you're attracted to the opportunity). I'm comfortable and open with the income potential, and I would love to pursue this opportunity further."

If they persist and say something such as, "That's great but we need to know where to position you," or "We are required to get that information at interview time," tell them that you're open and seeking compensation commensurate with your skills and the marketplace. If they persist further, provide a range and indicate that you're open and would entertain a reasonable offer.

## Questions for the Interviewer:

Here are some impressive questions you can ask in almost any interview. Have them in your back pocket, especially when the interviewer prompts you with "Have you any further questions?"

- What are your company's short-term and long-range objectives?
- What characteristics does the company feel are unique about the organization? (You want to see if the interviewer can sell you the opportunity.)
- What outside factors influence the success of the company?
- What areas does the company excel in? What are the company's limitations in your opinion?
- What are the common denominators of successful employees here?
- What factors about the incumbent would you add or subtract to increase their effectiveness?

As mentioned before, you may only have one interview with a company, so it may be the only chance you have to collect as much information as possible about the opportunity.

### **Probe around:**

- Technologies – e.g., “I understand this organization is embracing ‘WYZ’ technology. Can you tell me about the future around other application platforms?”
- Responsibilities
- Possible career paths
- Earnings of those successful employees in their third-to-fifth years
- Company growth plans

### **Things you *must* do before the interview ends**

- Ask “At this time, do you have any concerns with me meeting your requirements?” This will let you know what they think of you, and it is your final opportunity to deal with any concerns they have with you, right there, on the spot! Another way of asking in a more open-ended fashion is “How do you see me fitting into your team?”
- Another great question at the end is “Based on what you see so far, where do you think I can contribute the most in this position?”
- Ask about the next step. This will let you know if they are planning a next step and confirms to them you are interested in proceeding further; the best way to articulate this is to say, “I’m very excited about the opportunity as you have described it and I’m very interested in joining your team; what is the next step in the process?”
- If there is time, you may even ask if there are other people they’d like you to meet right away or if you can have a brief tour of the workplace. This may kill two birds with one stone in terms of number of interviews/meetings required.

If you like what you hear, let them know you are excited about the opportunity! Clients always tell us they would rather hire someone who they feel is excited about joining them than those who might be more technically qualified but show no keen interest. A great way to do this near the very end is by saying, “Based on what we’ve discussed today, I want to let you know I have a sincere interest in pursuing this further.”

Leave an interview conveying strong desire, energy, and enthusiasm to work for that company. Leave having the interviewer think you want this job. Will you ever meet your interviewer again? Will a more exciting position open up with the company soon? It is important to remember that a negative or apathetic attitude has a way of sticking in people’s minds...and so does a positive one.



## **What to Wear to an Interview**

### **What Your Clothes Say about You**

In an interview, your attire plays an important supporting role.

Your conduct, interpersonal skills, and ability to articulate intelligent and well-thought-out responses to questions are the most important elements to any job interview.

Appropriate attire supports your image as a person who takes the interview process seriously and understands the nature of the industry in which you are trying to become employed. Be aware that in some industries, customer contact and image presented to the customer are critical. In these cases, your attire will be judged more critically.

Your attire should be noticed as being appropriate and wellfitting, but it should not take center stage. If you are primarily remembered for your interview attire, this is probably because you made an error in judgment! Dressing appropriately is a compliment to the person you meet, so if in doubt, err on the side of dressing better than you might need to.

Even if you are aware that employees of an organization dress casually on the job, dress up for the interview unless you are specifically told otherwise by the employer. Never confuse an interview or business function with a social event. Don't dress for a party or a date.

### **Interview Attire Specifics for Men**

Wearing a suit to a job interview will help you look professional and make a great first impression. You may also wear a well-fitted blazer or sportscoat.

#### **Conservative colours/fabric**

Black, navy, and dark grey are common and are the most conservative for men. Other colour trends may come and go; avoid the extremes. Choose a solid or very subtle weave pattern or plaid (the kind that looks solid across a room).

#### **Cost/quality**

You are not expected to be able to afford the same clothing as a corporate CEO. Do invest in quality that will look appropriate during your first two or three years on the job. One good quality suit is sufficient for a job search if that is all your budget allows. You can vary your shirt and tie.

#### **Shirts**

Long-sleeved shirts, even in the summer. Choose white, a light blue solid, or conservative stripes.

## Ties

Tie styles come and go. Select good-quality silk ties. Avoid fashion extremes, like character ties, in interviews. Notice what men in your industry wear on the job, at career fairs, at information sessions, and when they meet with clients.

## Socks

Dark socks, mid-calf length so no skin is visible when you sit down.

## Shoes

Leather, lace-up or slip-on business shoes, preferably black or brown. Invest in a good pair; even if you don't wear them daily on the job, you'll need them for other occasions and you should expect to get many years out of good shoes.

## Belt

Black or brown leather, to match your shoes.

## Facial hair

If worn, should be wellgroomed. Observe men in your industry if you are unsure what's appropriate or are considering changing your look.

## Jewellery

Wear a conservative watch. If you choose to wear other jewellery, be conservative. Removing earrings is safest. For conservative industries, don't wear earrings. Observe other men in your industry to see what is acceptable.

## Details

Everything should be clean and well-pressed. Suits typically have tacking stitches to hold vents—on the jacket back and on sleeves—in place before the garment is purchased. Cut them off if your retailer/tailor doesn't. And that tag stitched on the outside of your sleeve is not meant to stay there—cut it off. Carefully inspect clothes for dangling threads, etc.

## **Interview Attire Specifics for Women**

### Suit—pants/skirts

Tailored pant suits are appropriate for women. Pant suits can be an excellent choice for site visits, particularly if the visit involves getting in and out of vehicles and/or the site is (or includes) a manufacturing plant or industrial facility. If you wear pants, they should be creased and tailored, not tight or flowing. If you are pursuing a conservative industry and are in doubt, observe well-dressed women in your industry on the job, at career fairs, at information sessions, etc.

### **Skirt lengths**

Much of what you see on television shows that masquerades for professional attire is actually inappropriate for a work environment. Your skirt should cover your thighs when you are seated. Showing a lot of thigh makes you look naive at best, foolish at worst. A skirt that ends at the knee when you're standing looks chic and professional. Longer skirts are professional too; just make sure they are narrow enough not to be billowing, but not so narrow that you can't climb stairs comfortably. Don't purchase a skirt or decide on a hem length until you sit in the skirt facing a mirror. That's what your interviewer will see. Ask yourself whether it will be distracting or reinforce your image as a person who looks appropriate for a business environment or gathering. High slits in skirts are not appropriate. A small back, centre slit in a knee-length skirt is appropriate. On a calf-length skirt, a slit to the knee to facilitate walking and stair climbing is appropriate.

### **Shirt/sweaters**

Wear a tailored blouse in a colour or small print that coordinates nicely with your pants or skirt. You can also choose to wear a nicer top, but make sure you wear something with sleeves and do not show cleavage. A nice cardigan or sweater is also appropriate.

### **Jewellery/accessories**

Wear a conservative watch. Jewellery and scarf styles come and go. Keep your choices simple and leaning toward conservative. Avoid extremes of style and colour. If your industry is creative, you may have more flexibility than someone pursuing a conservative industry.

### **Purse/bag**

If you carry a purse, keep it small and simple, especially if you also carry a briefcase. You may choose to carry a small briefcase or business-like tote bag in place of a purse.

### **Cosmetics**

Keep makeup conservative. A little is usually better than none for a polished look. Nails should be clean and well-groomed. Avoid extremes of nail length and polish colour.

### **Shoes**

Should be leather or fabric/microfibre. Shoe styles and heel heights come and go. Choose closed-toe pumps. Regardless of what is in style, avoid extremes; no stilettos or chunky platforms. Make certain you can walk comfortably in your shoes; hobbling in uncomfortable shoes does not convey a professional appearance.

### **Hosiery**

Should be plainly styled (no patterns) and in neutral colours complementing your outfit. Avoid high contrast between your suit and hosiery colour.

## **Grooming Tips for Everyone**

### **Hair**

Should be clean and neat.

### **Shoes**

Should be in polished condition. Make sure heels are not worn out.

### **Details**

No missing buttons, no lint. Don't forget to remove external tags and tacking stitches from new clothes.

### **Hands**

Clean fingernails.

### **Fit**

Clothes should be clean, neatly pressed, and fit properly.

### **Smell**

Perfume or cologne should be used sparingly or not at all. No odours in clothes. Don't smell like smoke.

### **Padfolios**

Preferred over a bulky briefcase. A small briefcase is also appropriate. But if you have no reason to carry a briefcase, don't; you risk looking silly.

## **Find Your Next Job with Agilus**

Whether you're looking for work as a permanent employee, temporary employee, or independent contractor, Talentcor is here to help. We build our success on the strength of our client and candidate relationships, our long history of integrity, and our hard work.

Our recruitment specialists can help you stand apart from the competition and find a fulfilling job—whether temporary, contract, or permanent. We have the expertise and connections to find you the perfect entry-level, intermediate, or senior-level position.

### **Learn More**



## Our Offices

info@agilus.ca  
Toll Free: 1.855.622.1200  
agilus.ca

### VICTORIA

1124 Fort St  
Victoria, BC V8V 3K8  
250.381.3254

### VANCOUVER

Suite 2250, 555 West Hastings St  
Vancouver, BC V6B 4N6  
604.689.7717

### EDMONTON

10012 Jasper Ave  
Edmonton, AB T5J 1R2  
780.428.1505

### CALGARY

Suite 1620, 800 5th Avenue SW  
Calgary, AB T2P 3T6  
403.233.2788

### WINNIPEG

Suite 102, 226 Osborne St N  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 1V4  
204.772.5040

### LONDON

Suite 106, 200 Queens Ave  
London, ON N6A 1J3  
519.672.6888

### TILLSONBURG

261 Tillson Ave  
Tillsonburg, ON N4G 5X2  
519.842.9555

### SARNIA

Suite 405, 201 Front St N  
Sarnia, ON N7T 7T9  
519.336.4590

### WINDSOR

2892 Kew Dr  
Windsor, ON N8T 3C6  
519.988.1000

### TORONTO

Suite 905, 40 University Ave  
Toronto, ON M5J 1T1  
416.340.1004

### MISSISSAUGA

Suite 103, 10 Kingsbridge Garden Circle  
Mississauga, ON L5R 3K6  
905.890.0093

### MISSISSAUGA HO

Suite 505, 10 Kingsbridge Garden Circle  
Mississauga, ON L5R 3K6  
905.890.0093

### OAKVILLE

Suite 500, 2650 Bristol Circle  
Oakville, ON L6H 6Z7  
905.829.4848

### MARKHAM

Suite 401, 3100 Steeles Ave E  
Markham, ON L3R 8T3  
905.470.3111

### THORNHILL

Suite 101, 123 Commerce Valley Dr. East  
Thornhill, ON L3T 7W8  
905.882.5800

### BRAMPTON

Suite 123, 284 Queen St E  
Brampton, ON L6V 1C2  
905.454.4972

### BROCKVILLE

105 Strowger Blvd  
Brockville, ON K6V 5K1  
613.865.8695

### OTTAWA

Suite 101, 85 Albert St  
Ottawa, ON K1P 6A9  
613.288.0115

### MONTRÉAL

Suite 740, 606 Rue Cathcart  
Montréal, QC H3B 1K9  
514.906.4777

### HALIFAX

Suite 3, 26 Bancroft Lane  
Dartmouth, NS B3B 1G3  
902.491.4494