



# UNDERSTANDING SELECTION INTERVIEWS

This information looks at Understanding Selection Interviews. To perform well at interviews, you need firstly to understand their purpose and how the interviewer is thinking and feeling. Here are just a few helpful hints and tips to get the most from your interview and maximise your chances of getting that job!

## **Understanding selection interviews**

Make no mistake, the interview is the main 'battleground' in your job campaign and should therefore be the focus of your efforts. Not all interviews are about offering you a job. Screening interviews, for example, are designed to screen out the unqualified or the unsuitable and may be conducted by telephone. Second interviews aim to draw-up a final shortlist of candidates and can be the toughest of all. Panel interviews, conducted by a team of three or four interviewers, can be quite intimidating and lengthy. Other types include competency-based interviews, technical interviews, psychometric interviews, assessment centre interviews and presentation interviews. All will require different techniques and strategies, too numerous to mention here. But all have some common ground rules!

## **Be prepared**

Set aside at least one or two days to prepare thoroughly for each interview to give you a head start. Make sure you know your CV by heart. Remember – poor preparation will show and could cost you the job.

## **First impressions count**

The first two minutes of an interview are often the most important. Make sure you look the part. Be poised and confident. Wait until the interviewer asks you to sit down. Maintain eye contact throughout.

## **Keep it brief and simple**

Don't talk for longer than two minutes at a time. Avoid jargon and unnecessary detail. Watch for body language signs that the interviewer has heard enough. Listen attentively. Be positive and enthusiastic. Show interest in the employers' needs and demonstrate how the organisation will benefit by recruiting you.

## **Refer to your referees**

Use your referees as support. They can influence the employer's final decision.

## **Points to avoid**

Watch out for these points which, in stiff competition, could lose you the job.

- limp, fishy handshake
- restlessness indicating discomfort with responses
- overbearing, aggressive or conceited
- lack of tact or maturity
- evasiveness on vulnerable areas
- inability to express thoughts clearly
- over-emphasis on money
- condemnation of past employers