

INTERVIEW PREPARATION GUIDE

Planning Your Next Move

Before you make the next move in your career, be sure you know where you are headed and identify your personal goals. Make sure the two goals compliment each other rather than conflict with each other. Working with Howard James Limited will help you get there faster. Here is what you need to do.

Firstly, determine your long term goals.

- Why are you in the field in which you are currently working?
- Are your talents and personality traits being utilised?
- Are your continued professional, educational and training priorities being achieved?

Think about the consequences

Don't make career decisions in isolation. Be sure that your family is supportive of your choices. You'll be able to move faster when an offer is made. And of course, consult with your consultant.

Actively manage your own career

Between where you are now and where you want to be is a world of uncertainty. But it doesn't have to be that way. Take the bull by the horns. Take control of your life. You know where you want to go. Take action to get you there.

Build an effective personal career network

Word of mouth. It's not only an effective sales tool, it's also an extremely effective networking tool. For starters, identify and "work" your own career network. Include:

Friends	Suppliers or customers
Co-workers (past and present)	Consultants
Professional colleagues	Recruiters

- Actively maintain a fresh, current network and cultivate your network.
- Reciprocate. Always be willing to give at least as much as you take in the way of information, introductions and referrals. It'll pay off in the long run.
- Don't wear out the welcome mat by calling too much.
- Remember, your professional references should be part of that same network. Consider them the crème de la crème and treat them accordingly.

Take a fresh look at your skills

Things change quickly in today's economy. Make sure your skills are cutting-edge. Research career enhancement opportunities both in your industry and through associations or training organisations.

Interviewing

Preparation:

Before you walk into any interview, you should know as much about the company and the position as you possibly can. If you found the position through Howard James Limited, we should be able to provide that information for you. If not, search the web or go to the library. In today's world of mass communication, there's no excuse for lack of research.

After you have studied the company, write out a list of questions to ask the employer. For example:

- Why is this position available?
- What type of training programs will be offered to the person in this position?
- What obstacles must be overcome for the person in this position to succeed?
- How will my performance be evaluated?
- What opportunities are there for growth in the next 12 months? Two years? Five years?
- What growth do you anticipate for your firm in the next 12 months?

No one can predict the exact questions that an interviewer will ask, but your consultant should be able to give you a good idea of the hiring authority's personality, his or her typical interview, and a few important questions that the employer is likely to ask. To prepare, think about how you would answer the following questions:

- Tell me about yourself. Keep your answer in the professional realm only. Review your past positions, education and other strengths.
- What do you know about our organization. If you've done your research correctly, you should have no problem answering this one. Be positive.
- Why are you interested in this position? Relate how you feel your qualifications really match the requirements of the job. Also, express your desire to work for that company.
- What are the most significant accomplishments in your career so far? Pick recent accomplishments that relate to this position and its requirements.
- Describe a situation in which your work was criticized. Focus on how you solved the situation and how you became a better person because of it.
- How would you describe your personality?
- How do you perform under pressure?
- What have you done to improve yourself over the past year?
- What did you like least about your last position?
- Are you leaving (did you leave) your present(last) company?
- How would your co-workers describe you?
- What do you think of your boss?
- Have you ever fired anyone? What was the situation and how did you handle it?
- What are your goals in your career?
- Where do you see yourself in two years?
- Why should we hire you?

8 easy lessons on interview technique

1. Make sure you are clear in your own mind what type of work you want. This is really important – you need to be certain from the beginning that you want the job and know the basic parameters of the description. Otherwise you may be wasting your own time and that of your interviewers.
2. Do your homework on the company that is interviewing you. If you have gone through a recruitment consultant, make sure that they give you plenty of background information. And don't leave it there. Ring up and ask for a company brochure or details that you could collect or be sent in advance. Make it your business to learn theirs! Plan how best to present your skills and application to the role.
3. Dress appropriately for the job. Ideally, you should look professional, smart and in control.
4. Offer a firm handshake on introduction and look your interviewer squarely in the eye to ensure a perception of openness and enthusiasm. Smile – don't look horror-struck and nervous. First impressions count for a lot.
5. Ask questions about the job, your potential prospects and personal career development. Ask about the company's commitment to training on the job and their long-term view of the role they are looking to fulfil.
6. Always arrive on time. Don't be tempted to cut it fine and arrive sweating and stressed. It does not make a good impression.
7. Make sure you come across as a team player and demonstrate how you work well as part of a team. This is very important in the majority of roles.
8. Never be tempted to tell an untruth – it always comes back to haunt you. Stick to the facts and your integrity will remain intact.

Interviewing Do's & Don'ts

Do's

- Arrive 15 minutes early. Late attendance is never excusable.
- Clarify questions. Be sure you answered the questions the employer really asked.
- Get the interviewer to describe the position and responsibilities early in the conversation so you can relate your skills and background to the position throughout the interview.
- Give your qualifications. Stress the accomplishments that are most pertinent to the job.
- Conduct yourself professionally. Be aware of what your body language is saying. Smile, make eye contact, don't slouch and maintain composure.
- Anticipate tough questions. Prepare in advance so you can turn apparent weaknesses into strengths.
- Dress appropriately. Make your first impression a professional one.
- Ask questions throughout the interview. An interview should be a mutual exchange of information, not a one-sided conversation.
- Listen. This is probably the most important ability of all. By concentrating not only on the employer's words, but also on the tone of voice and body language, you will be able to pick up on the employer's style. Once you understand how a hiring authority thinks, pattern your answers accordingly and you will be able to better relate to him or her.

Don'ts

- Don't answer vague questions. Rather than answering questions you think you hear, get the employer to be more specific and then respond.
- Never interrupt the employer. If you don't have time to listen, neither does the employer.
- Don't be overly familiar, even if the employer is doing all of these things.
- Don't wear heavy perfume or cologne.
- Don't ramble. Long answers often make the speaker sound apologetic or indecisive. Be clear and concise.
- On the other hand, don't answer questions with a simple "yes" or "no." Explain whenever possible.
- Do not lie. Answer questions as truthfully as possible.
- Do not make derogatory remarks about your present or former employers or companies.

Closing the interview

Too many people second-guess themselves after an interview. By closing strongly and asking the right questions, you can eliminate the post-interview doubts that tend to plague most interviewees.

If you feel that the interview went well and you would like to take the next step, express your interest to the hiring authority and turn the tables a bit. Try something like the following:

"After hearing more about your company, the position and the responsibilities at hand, I am certain that I possess the qualities that you are looking for in the (title) position. Based on our conversation and my qualifications, are there any issues or concerns that you have that would lead you to believe otherwise?"

You have a right to be assertive. This is a great closing question because it opens the door for the hiring authority to be honest with you about his or her feelings. If concerns do exist, this is a great opportunity to overcome them. You have one final chance to dispel the concerns, sell your strengths and end the interview on positive note.

A few things to remember during the closing process:

- Don't be discouraged if no definite offer is made or specific salary discussed. The interviewer will probably want to communicate with the office first, or interview other applicants, before making a decision.
- Make sure you answer the following two questions: "Why are you interested in the company?" and "What can you offer?"
- Express thanks for the interviewer's time and consideration.
- Ask for the interviewer's business card so you can write a thank you letter as soon as possible.

Follow-up

When you get in your car, immediately write down key issues uncovered in the interview. Think of the qualifications the employer is looking for and match your strengths to them. Call your recruiter! Follow-up now is critical to close for the next interview generate you an offer of employment. Call your consultant with feedback

The Counter Offer

Any career move should be carefully considered as the act of resignation is a major step; working closely with your consultant as a company we will help you manage this most difficult of situations.

The act of resignation often prompts a counter offer from your current organisation. Prior to resigning you should, and we encourage you to, consider the consequences of your actions most carefully.

Prior to the event we urge candidates to:

- Meet with their line manager to discuss promotion and development opportunities.
- Discuss future salary rise and career aspirations.
- Review training and development needs.
- Review advancement and promotion opportunities.

You will gain the respect of your manager and company by discussing these issues prior to delivering your resignation. You will gain an honest and frank view of what the future holds with your current employer. This allows you to view any potential offer in the full knowledge of where your career is going.

Delivering a threat to leave does not always receive an honest response that is in your best long-term career interest.

Always consider that any offer from your current company made after your resignation has been delivered may not be what it seems, all too often it's a knee jerk reaction to keep you. The offer of more money may only satisfy you in the short-term; rarely addressing the deep routed reasons for moving.

Working with Howard James Limited we will ensure you receive full counselling to not only handle the counter offer but to be able to evaluate its motives and understand your motivations for taking the next career step without jeopardising your current position.