

EPISODE 3: An Overview on Interviews

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Mini-Series: Own Your Selection Process. Episode 3: An Overview On Interviews

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In this episode we will be focusing on The Different Types of Interviews, Preparation for Interviews and the Do's & Don'ts in an interview.

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There are various interview types – some are more common than others - e.g. telephonic interviews, face-to-face interviews and virtual interviews. These types of interviews fall under the **Formal type of interviews** and are either conducted on a one-on-one basis, or you will find towards the end of the recruitment process a panel may interview you.

Depending on the type of job and the number of applicants – you may need to attend more than one stage of interview. The first interview is usually a screening interview and if you have passed that, you will sometimes get called for a second interview which goes deeper into competency-based questions and assesses your fit for the role and company. In some cases this is followed by an assessment center (which is usually the final stage of selection) – during this stage you are usually interviewed by a panel of interviewers and are required to complete various assessments during the day.

You then get **Informal Interviews** – which you naturally may not realize are forms of an “Interview” – basically, recruiters are never switched off – and so while you may meet them through a casual chat at a career expo – if you stand out to them, they will try and pursue contact with you. It is therefore very important to be prepared at these events and always have your A-Game switched on. Informal Interviews take the form of Coffee Chats, Networking Events/Career Expos and Virtual Q&A Sessions.

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Preparation is key when it comes to ensuring a successful interview. It could be your make or break. These are the different focus areas for interview preparation:

Logistics – Find out the date and time of the interview and set a reminder. Know the exact location and directions and how long it will take to get there. Find out if you need to prepare anything specific or bring anything to the interview (e.g. a copy of your ID Document or transcripts) and how long the interview will take - so that you can plan your other commitments accordingly and not be stressed about it during the interview.

The Job - Study the job description, or research what a position like this usually involves. Be ready to provide examples for each of the competencies required, and be prepared to answer honestly but optimistically. What this means is that if you do not have some skills that they require, show optimism in your learning ability or willingness to learn.

The Employer – Find out who you are meeting with and research what the organisation does and what they stand for. Be sure to visit the company website to gain as much information before your interview and ensure you aren't asking questions that you can easily find answers to online.

The Industry – Show that you are deeply interested - research major trends and current happenings in the industry. Know about any new technological advances or political changes that may affect how work is currently done at the organisation. Formulate opinions and questions to demonstrate your interest in the sector.

The Culture - Part of your prep is also about digging into the culture of the organisation. Find out from people who have interviewed there before, the company website, and social media pages what it's like to work there. Try and gain a sense of who the company is from an identity perspective...what are their core values? Is it a casual or formal environment? What is the leadership structure like? Answers to these questions would all speak to the culture of the organisation.

Slide 5: How to Dress Appropriately & Professionally

Part of a company's culture is the dress code. Ensure you have researched the company dress code before your interview...Yes, this means understanding whether it's a formal or informal dress culture...however, whether formal or informal – there are dressing principles that should always be adhered to...

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- Always ensure that you look neat and professional – even if it's a T-shirt culture, rather wear a neat, but plain T-shirt without any big logo's or messages.
- Be comfortable – you may not be used to wearing formal clothing, so ensure that you are as comfortable as possible. You don't want to be tripping on your heels or constantly adjusting your tie while presenting or being interviewed.
- Remember your dressing should not encourage distraction to you or the interviewer in any way.
- Don't wear over-powering perfume/cologne. The interviewer should be greeted with a handshake and eye-contact and not the scent you walk in with.
- Poor dress choice can create a negative impression and if not appropriate to the culture, can be an indicator that you do not have a fit for the culture or that you haven't taken the time to understand it.

Slide 7: Do's and Don'ts

Some of these do's and don't's may seem obvious, however it is always good remind yourself as it could be the one thing that creates a negative impression.

Do – BE PREPARED in every way! Show up on time, dress appropriately, be professional, speak in a clear and audible voice, make eye-contact, do your research and be yourself!

Don't – Take an interview (whether formal or informal) lightly, don't ask about salary in your first interview, don't not prepare any questions to ask the interviewers (if asked), don't ask the interviewer personal questions about themselves – if they would like to share, they

will. Ensure your phone has been switched off or is on silent and out of sight. This might seem obvious, but don't chew gum - a glass of water however is acceptable in an interview.

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Thank you for tuning in to Episode 3 of Mini-series: Own Your Selection Process, brought to you by the UCT Careers Service. Be sure to tune in to episode 4 where we will be focusing on How to Handle Interviews: Tips & Tools.