



NOVA SCOTIA WORKS

INTERVIEW TOOLKIT

Nova Scotia Works Employment Services Centre

North Sydney, Baddeck and Ingonish



You have been successful! You now have an interview for the job. Now what?

The job interview gives the potential employee and potential employer a chance to learn more about each other. It also gives you a chance to prove yourself.

Nervous? Most of us get nervous when we go to a job interview. What questions will they ask? Will I be able to answer them? Will I make a good impression?

Here are a few tips to help you get ready for your job interview.

1. **Prepare** for your job interview by knowing about the job, company, business and organization. Practice answering questions with a friend or spouse.
2. **Get ready**
 - Make sure your clothing is neat, tidy, and appropriate for the type of job you are applying for.
 - Bring copies of your resume and other documents that you want to show. For example, diploma.
 - Bring a pen and paper for note taking.
3. **Be on time.** On time means five to ten minutes early.
4. **Stay calm** during the job interview. Maintain eye contact with the interviewer. Listen to the entire question before you answer.
5. **Give examples.** If they ask you what your organizational skills are, tell them how you organize your office, computer files etc.
6. **Follow up.** Ask when you will be hearing from them. Call them if you have not heard from them in that time period. If you did not get the job, ask why? It may help you when you interview for another job.

Job Interview Questions

What will they ask? How should I answer? The key is in your preparation!

1. Think of likely questions
2. Develop excellent answers
3. Practice! Practice! Practice!

Most questions will relate to either to your ability to do the job or to the type of employee you will be. Here are some sample questions you might get:

1. Tell me a little about yourself.

Focus on your personal and professional values.

“I am a very conscientious person and I like to do a good job both at home and at work. People tend to view me as “people person”. I like to work with others and enjoy working as part of a team on a project. I respect other’s opinions and like to give my own input into a project too. I work well in a fast-paced environment and work well under pressure.”

2. What is your greatest strength?

This is a great chance to highlight your best skills. Don’t pick just one, focus on your top three or four. Determine which strengths would fit best with the position for which you are applying. For example, if the job announcement stresses the ability to handle multiple tasks, you could say:

“I have excellent organizational skills and work well under pressure. But my greatest strength is my ability to handle multiple projects and deadlines effectively.

3. What is your greatest weakness?

Tell the interviewer a true weakness, but then say what you’ve done to overcome it. For example:

“Sometimes I struggle with the math involved in carpentry. I always make sure that I check my work with another co-worker or the supervisor before I make the first cut.”

4. How do you handle stressful situations?

Give some examples of stressful situations you’ve dealt with in the past. Tell how you use your time management, problem solving or decision making skills to reduce stress. For example,

“I often make a to do list if I am feeling overwhelmed at work. This really helps me focus on what needs to be done. I also feel really good when I cross off each item on the list.”

5. Why do you want this position?

Here’s where your research about the company or organization will help you stand out among the other candidates. Explain how you’ve always wanted the opportunity to work with a company that provides, for example, a vital public service. Or you can say something about the position that you found interesting.

“I really enjoy working with my hands. I have always wanted to be a carpenter and I hope this is the first step to that goal. I have also heard really good things about your company and hope to learn some new skills and use the skills that I already have.”

<http://www.best-interview-strategies.com/questions.html>

More Interview Questions

Describe a time when you handled a stressful situation successfully?	Give an example of a time you showed initiative.
Tell me about a time when you solved a problem	Describe a recent situation where you dealt with an upset customer or co-worker.
Give me an example where you set and achieved a goal.	Describe a situation where you planned ahead to avoid potential problems.
How do you resolve conflict?	Why did you leave your last position?
Describe a situation where your job required you to go above and beyond the call of duty?	Explain your qualifications for this position.
Describe a time when you had to prioritize because you have too many things to do.	Where do you want to be in five years?
Describe a time when you had to make a quick decision.	How would others describe you?
What do you do best?	What are your long-range objectives?

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Behavior Based Interviews

Behavior-based interview focuses on your past experiences, behaviors, attitudes, personal skills and capacities that are job related.

“Past behaviour is a predictor of future performance.”

Prepare by using the **STAR** formula:

SITUATION – present a situation or challenge in which you found yourself.

TASK – What did you have to achieve?

ACTION – What did you do?

RESULTS – What was the outcome of your actions?

Do you have any questions?

This is always at the end of an interview. The employer may ask you have any questions for them. Always have your questions ready. Here are some suggestions:

- Can you tell me a little more about the job?
- Would there be initial training involved in this position?
- How many employees work for the organization or in this department?
- When will the job start?
- When do you expect to make your final decision?

Types of Interview Questions

General – to learn more about you and assess your “fit” with the job/organization.

Behavioural – focus on past behavior as a predictor of future performance.

Situational – focus on problem solving skills.

Illegal – race, gender, religion, marital status, age, disabilities, ethnic background, country of origin, sexual preference or age.

During the Interview

Firm handshake – follow the interviewers lead

Be aware of body language; listen carefully

Make eye contact; smile; project confidence

Leave your cell phone behind

Be respectful, professional and polite

Prepare appropriate questions for the interviewer

“Remember that the interview starts the minute you walk through the door.”

OTHER TIPS

Arrive 15 minutes early

Bring a smile and positive attitude

Dress appropriately

Make sure you know where you are going

Keep your answers to the point; don't ramble

Answer questions honestly

Good Luck!
Preparation is key!

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