

## **FIVE INTERVIEWING TIPS TO PUT JOB APPLICANTS ON THE FAST TRACK**

### **Maintain eye contact at least 60 percent of the time.**

If you don't maintain good eye contact, you could create the impression that you are uneasy, not interested, or have something to hide. Good eye contact signals to the interviewer that you are candid, comfortable and sure of yourself. However, be careful not to stare at the interviewer. Proper eye contact should be practiced so that it becomes second nature and doesn't make you self-conscious.

### **Dress for a job two levels higher than the one for which you are being interviewed.**

You only get one chance to make a good first impression. The way you present yourself absolutely influences the decision to hire you. Dress at a level of formality that shows you understand the importance of the situation and respect the person you are meeting. This usually means dressing more formally than you would on the job.

### **Become part of the 5 percent of interviewees who conduct research.**

You can distinguish yourself from other applicants by showing you know such details as the size of the company, its age, its owner, what they do and their current needs and challenges. Among the useful sources of information are annual reports, internal and external company publications and recent newspaper and magazine articles.

### **Prepare and practice a personal Two-Minute Drill.**

In many interview situations, you may be asked to start by talking about yourself. The Two-Minute Drill is a verbal resume that captures the listener's interest and brings him or her up to date on your background in a clear and concise manner. The Drill should address not only what you have done, but where you are headed. Include two or three key events from your experience, while also communicating that you know what you want going forward. Two minutes is just enough time to convey key pieces of information without appearing to take over the conversation. Revise the drill until it fits that timeframe.

### **Ask good questions.**

This is a *big tip!* Don't just tell the interviewer how wonderful you are and how good your achievements have been. Demonstrate you have done your homework, that you are really listening and you understand what's going on. You can do this by *asking relevant questions* about the company and the job in question. If, in the limited time of the interview, you can ask one or two questions that actually make that interviewer think about the answer, or better still, maybe cover issues they hadn't even thought of, then you are really on the home stretch.

You can take a very direct approach when doing this. Here's a question which can be used when applying for most positions. Rarely used by candidates, it can make a lasting impression with interviewers, particularly if they have seen three or four other candidates for the same job that day. It covers management style, and at a very personal level, asks the interviewer or prospective boss, exactly *what it is they are looking for in the new employee and how they are going to measure their performance*. The question might go something like this:

*Mr Jones, I understand the position in question and I now have a good feel for the department and the division. But at a personal level, if I am successful in getting this job, what would you expect of me in terms of daily activity and performance, and what do you see as the critical factors in achieving the best possible results, thereby ensuring my success?*

In effect, what you're asking is *how are you going to manage me and how will get the best out of me*. And by getting the interviewer to "come clean", a much more healthy level of dialogue is going to take place.

The ultimate objective is to develop the sort of rapport you would like to think you will have with this prospective employer a week after you've started the job. In other words, you will no longer be selling and trying to impress, but listening and getting down to basics. This will produce a more effective result and ensure there are no misunderstandings.