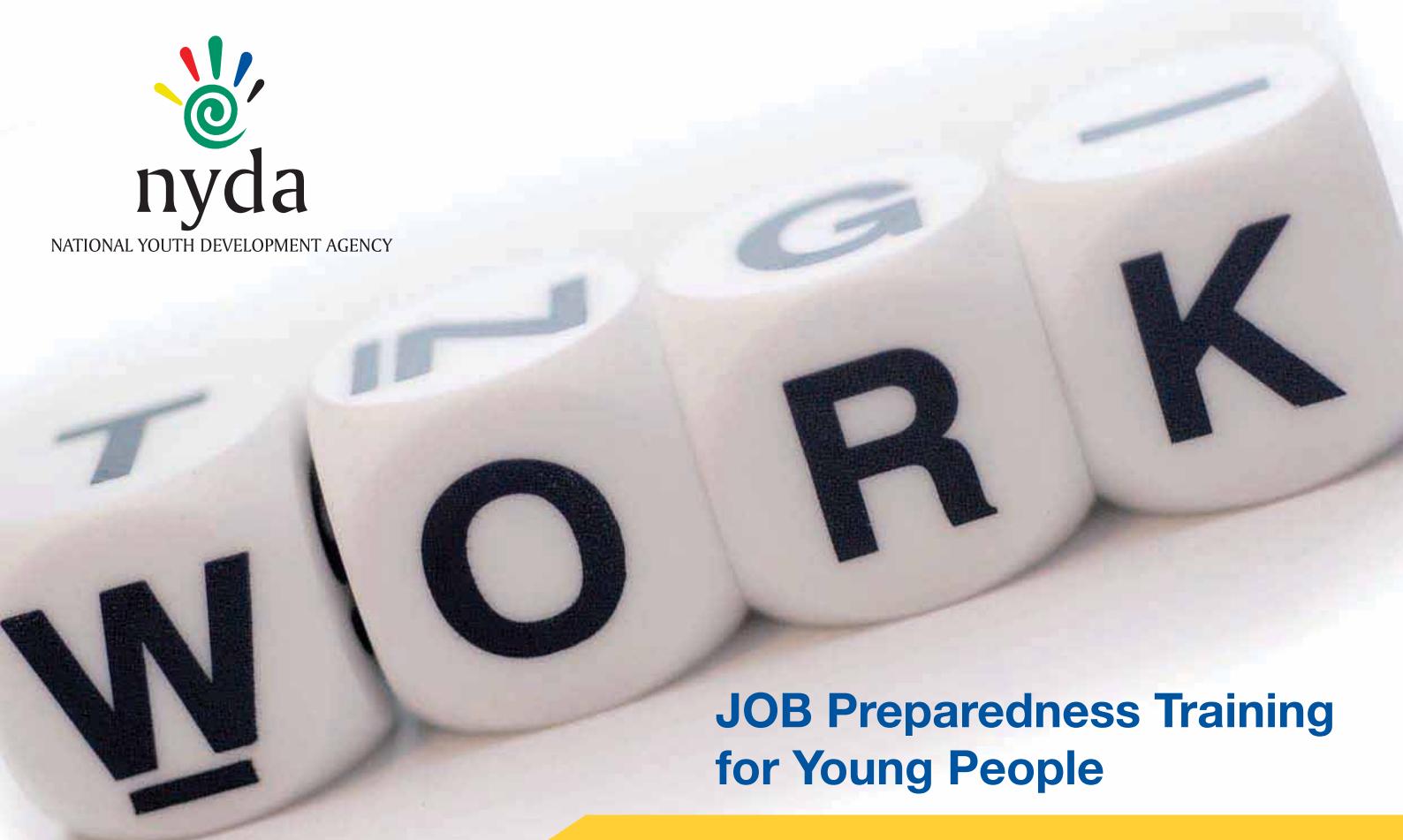




nyda

NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



## **JOB Preparedness Training for Young People**

Participants Guide

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## Notes to the learners

### Purpose

The purpose of the JOB Preparedness Training is to:

- Upskill you with the knowledge and skills required to prepare you for the world,
- Enable you to develop a positive attitude in life and be willing to try out new ideas, maintain high standards and pay attention to detail when preparing CVs, interviews and image as progress in career and life depends largely on how these personal qualities were developed.

### Overall learning outcome

On completion of this learning programme, you will be able to:

- Assess yourself in an attempt to understand what you have to offer the employer
- Develop a successful CV
- Prepare for interviews
- Project a professional image

### Target audience

- Young People

### Duration

It will take you 1 day to complete this learning programme.

### Pre-requisites

The following learning programmes must be attended before attempting this training:

- None

## Icons

Activity

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Definitions

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Example

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Group discussion

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Reference

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Refresh

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Questions and Answers

---



Small group discussion

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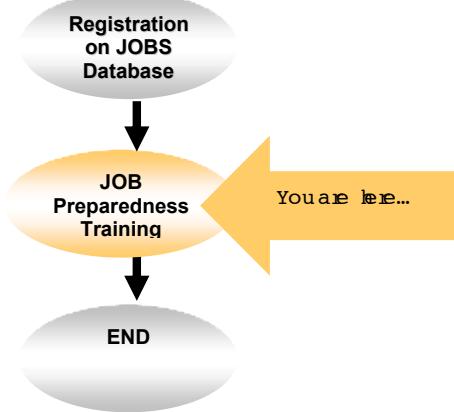
Important information

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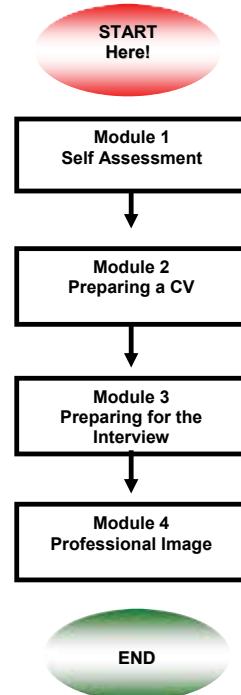
## Learning pathway

The NYDA JOBS Programme will follow the sequence depicted in the diagram below:



## Learning flow

The following flowchart shows the sequence of learning during the workshop: **JOB Preparedness Training**.



# Module 1

## Self Assessment

### Learning outcomes:



By the end of this section you will be able to:

- Compile an achievement list
- Develop a PAR lis
- Describe critical skills required in the world of work

"I agree Hepworth you do have drive, ambition and self-confidence, but what you're looking for is ability."

### Self assessment

#### Introduction

Most of us have little time for reflection when doing a full time job and are sometimes so busy that we are not aware of the skills we have acquired and demonstrated during our careers.

The Assessment Model has therefore been designed to help you "See yourself as other see you" – particularly as employers will see you.

#### How well do you know yourself?

Below are questions often asked by employers and your ability to answer them is largely dependant on self awareness.

| Question                                  | Expected answer   |
|---|---|
| "Can you do the work?"                    | What competencies / skills do you have and how do they match these requirements?  |
| "Will you do the work?"                   | What kinds of work assignments motivate and satisfy you, and how does that pattern of motivation fit with the work that needs to be done? |
| "How will you fit into the organization?" | Overall, will you be able to adapt to the organisational culture?   |

Were you able to answer these questions? If not, have no fear as this module is filled with information that will enable you to answer these questions with excellence and accurately.

#### Self assessment process

Many people do not recognize the specific contribution they have made in their work lives i.e. Achievements. It is not uncommon for them to say "I just did my job" or "I was just a secretary". An achievement is something you are proud of and consider well executed.

#### Self assessment process...



### **Examples of achievements:**

- You increased sales
- You reduced costs
- You improved profitability
- You won a prize or award
- Your ideas or suggestions helped increase the performance of a team or group
- You successfully handled an emergency situation
- You conceived and/or created a product or service that filled an important niche

It is hard to identify our achievements or recognize and analyze our own skills and competencies and the self assessment process has been designed to assist in this regard.



**Activity 1:** Write down all the positions you have held during your career, working backwards from the most recent. Think about these role and what it involved. Consider what changes were going on in the organization at that time and how they impacted on you. Remember any annual appraisals or positive feedback – what was that all about? Finally, having identified what you contributed, move to Step 1 which follows.

### **STEP 1 : Create a list of your achievements**

Write down at least 20 ideas that you possibly believe are your achievements.

### **Self assessment process...**

Please feel free to continue on a separate page until you have about 20 ideas for your achievements.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_
17. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

### PAR Formula

The best way of selecting the most important achievements to include in a CV is “telling the story” of each of the achievements listed in Step 1. This is accomplished by breaking them down into the PAR formula i.e. Problem, Action and Result. The benefits of this approach are threefold:

- It enables you to focus in on the key features of the achievement that will have the most impact in your CV.
- It provides the foundation for answers to interview questions such as “Tell me a bit more about this item on your CV in which you ...?”
- It reveals your core skills and strengths.

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>P<br/>Problem</b> | This is a challenge or circumstance you face.   |
| <b>A<br/>Action</b>  | An approach you will take to solve the problem.   |
| <b>R<br/>Result</b>  | Results you obtained – in business terms, quantifiable where possible in terms of Rs, percentages, days, sales or cost savings. |

### Self assessment process...



**Activity 2:** Rewrite the achievements captured in Step 1 as actions. Use action words/verbs listed below to describe your achievements. Ensure that you vary the use of verbs when describing achievements e.g. Do not say managed or implemented for each achievement.

If you feel that your list of achievements is a bit short, read through the list of action verbs again. Do any of the words listed there trigger any further memories of past accomplishments?

# ACTION WORDS/VERBS

|              |              |              |             |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Accelerated  | Completed    | Created      | Directed    |
| Established  | Headed       | Installed    | Motivated   |
| Performed    | Proposed     | Researched   | Sparked     |
| Strengthened | Systematized | Trimmed      | Widened     |
| Accomplished | Conceived    | Cut          | Doubled     |
| Evaluated    | Implemented  | Instituted   | Negotiated  |
| Persuaded    | Provided     | Revised      | Spearheaded |
| Stressed     | Traced       | Tripled      | Withdrew    |
| Achieved     | Conducted    | Delegated    | Earned      |
| Expanded     | Improved     | Introduced   | Operated    |
| Planned      | Purchased    | Scheduled    | Staffed     |
| Stretched    | Tracked      | Uncovered    | Won         |
| Administered | Consolidated | Delivered    | Edited      |
| Financed     | Improvised   | Invented     | Organized   |
| Presented    | Recommended  | Serviced     | Started     |
| Structured   | Traded       | Unified      | Worked      |
| Analyzed     | Controlled   | Demonstrated | Eliminated  |
| Forecast     | Increased    | Launched     | Originated  |
| Processed    | Recruited    | Set-up       | Streamlined |
| Succeeded    | Trained      | Unravelled   | Wrote       |
| Approved     | Converted    | Designed     |             |
| Formulated   | Influenced   | Led          |             |
| Produced     | Redesigned   | Simplified   |             |
| Summarized   | Transferred  | Utilized     |             |
| Budgeted     | Convinced    | Developed    |             |
| Founded      | Initiated    | Maintained   |             |
| Programmed   | Reduced      | Sold         |             |
| Superseded   | Transformed  | Vacated      |             |
| Built        | Co-ordinated | Devised      |             |
| Generated    | Innovated    | Managed      |             |
| Promoted     | Reorganized  | Solved       |             |
| Supervised   | Translated   | Verified     |             |

*Step 2 :* Specify the Problem, Action and Result (PAR) of each achievement described.



**Activity 3:** Use the list of achievements you developed on activity 2 to prepare a PAR list. A worksheet has been provided to enable you to record the achievement best described as a Problem, Action or Result.

### **PAR Worksheet**

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>P – Problem</b> |  |
|                    |  |
|                    |  |
|                    |  |
|                    |  |
|                    |  |
| <b>A – Action</b>  |  |
|                    |  |
|                    |  |
|                    |  |
|                    |  |
|                    |  |

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>R – Result</b> |  |
|                   |  |
|                   |  |
|                   |  |
|                   |  |
|                   |  |

### **Self assessment process...**

*Step 3 : Identify your specific skills*

*“What do you have to offer to this position?”*

This is a question often asked by employers the first time they read your CV and it is also asked during the interview. In the words of the assessment model the question will be phrased as follows:

*“Can you do the job?”*

A good way to identify your demonstrated specific skills is by reviewing your PARs and asking: “What skills do I have that assisted me in achieving the results section of my PARs?”

Identifying skills can be difficult, particularly when you have been in a particular position and organization for a long time, and you take your own skills for granted.



**Activity 4:** The next pages will be dedicated in assisting you to think and reflect on your skills.

## Interpersonal skills



Interpersonal skills in the business context refer to the measure of a person's ability to operate within business organizations through social communication and interactions.

A person demonstrating this skill is able to:

- Actively listen to other people
- Build rapport with a wide range of people
- Understand issues from another person's point of view, not simply your own
- Deal with individuals and groups with ease
- Demonstrate a sense of humour
- Handle conflict effectively, addressing interpersonal differences
- rather than allowing them to worsen
- Be approachable, making time for people

## Organizational skills



Organisational skill is ones ability to schedule and coordinate activities (self and/or others) and identifies the appropriate resources to perform these activities within a specific time frame in order to achieve business objectives.

A person demonstrating this skill is able to:

- Juggle a number of priorities - Time management
- Deliver to deadline
- Work under pressure
- Organize paper flow

## Teamwork



Teamwork is the cooperative effort of a team of people to achieve a common goal.

A person demonstrating this skill is able to:

- Appreciate differences in others and contribute constructively to the tasks as a team member or leader.
- Willing to discuss issues openly with others and the ability to gain support.

## Problem solving skills



Problem solving skill is the ability to thoroughly and accurately identify and define a problem with a view to select the most appropriate course of action once alternatives have been generated and assessed in terms of practicality, effectiveness and implications.

A person demonstrating this skill is able to:

- Apply analytical skills to solve business and / or technical problems.

- Determined to find a solution and ability to approach a problem from a number of angles.

## IT Literacy



IT Literacy is the ability to use technology.

A person demonstrating this skill is able to:

- Use office software, spreadsheets, databases, Internet, etc.
- Learn new software packages quickly.
- Use keyboard skills.
- Use programming skills.

## People Management Skills



Project Management involve organizing and managing resources (e.g. people) in a way that the project is completed within defined scope, quality, time and cost constraints.

A person demonstrating this skill is able to:

- Motivate a team and individuals within the team.
- Give direction, creating buy-in and encouraging team / individuals to take ownership.
- Coach others to achieve results.
- Delegate work and leading by example.

- Trust people and focus on helping them to achieve personal and organizational goals.
- Manage a project, form a team and construct a realistic project plan.
- Choose and justify resources to complete tasks to quality standards.
- Review and monitor team progress against set guidelines.
- Communicate with those concerned about progress.
- Regularly report high impact risks / issues to appropriate senior management.

## Commercial Acumen



Commercial acumen comes from a sound understanding of commerce: the buying and selling of goods and services and the factors that influence success.

A person demonstrating this skill is able to:

- Developing plans for maximizing business results.
- Good understanding of the sector.
- Appreciation of profitable ideas.

## Customer Service Skills



Customer service is often seen as an activity, performance measurement and a philosophy. That is why, generally speaking, one single definition of customer service does not exist.

Here are some definitions of customer service in use today:

- *“Customer service is the ability to provide a service or product in the way that it has been promised”*
- *“Customer service is about treating others as you would like to be treated yourself”*
- *“Customer service is an organization’s ability to supply their customers’ wants and needs”*
- *“Customer Service is a phrase that is used to describe the process of taking care of our customers in a positive manner”*
- *“Customer Service is any contact between a customer and a company, that causes a negative or positive perception by a customer”*
- *“Customer service is a process for providing competitive advantage and adding benefits in order to maximize the total value to the customer”*
- *“Customer Service is the commitment to providing value added services to external and internal customers, including attitude knowledge, technical support and quality of service in a timely manner”*
- *“Customer service is a proactive attitude that can be summed up as: I care and I can do.”*

### Creativity and Innovation



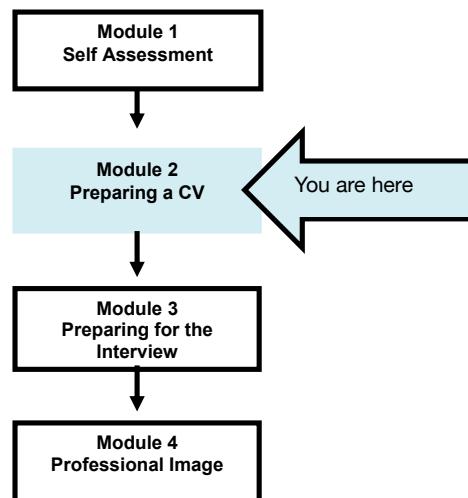
Generating new and imaginative solutions in work situations; trying different and novel ways to deal with work problems and opportunities; breaking away from tradition.

A person demonstrating this skill is able to:

- Finding new ways of doing things, and looking for new ideas which will add value to the business.
- Shedding new light on complex situations, enabling others to take a fresh perspective.
- Being prepared to take risks with new ideas to move things forward, pushing out the boundaries and continually re-establishing best practice.
- Initiating and driving major change across a team / department / business.

### Learning flow

The following flowchart shows the sequence of learning during the workshop: **JOB Preparedness Training**.



# Module 2

## Preparing a CV

### Learning outcomes:

By the end of this section you will be able to:

- Explain a CV in your own words
- Describe the different CV formats
- Your description should include but not limited to Chronological and Functional CVs
- Extract useful information from PAR to add on your CV.
- Develop a CV
- Analyze CV

### Preparing a CV

#### Definition: CV



A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a document with an outline of a person's educational and professional history, usually prepared for job applications

#### Overview

A CV is a document that opens the way to interviews with a number of placement agencies and employers and that pulls you through the selection and decision-making process successfully.



The best way to write a CV is to consider what recruitment agencies and prospective employers would be looking for amongst the thousands of CVs they receive from job seekers daily.

They don't have the time to read every lengthy submission in detail. Decision makers commit no more than 30 seconds to a submission unless provided with an incentive to study the document in more detail.

### Writing a CV

When writing a CV, ensure that:

- You identify yourself and the job that you applying. This information should be captured in covering letter.
- The style of the CV is tasteful
- Your qualifications and track record are up to the minimum requirements for the job
- You offer substance to the employer you want to work for
- You are creative and you present information in a logical manner
- Check for spelling errors
- You identify and obtain permission from people you intend putting in references and add their names and contact numbers
- In the end a successful CV is the one that drives a process that:
- Excites a recruitment officer/prospective employer.
- Wins you an interview.
- Wins you the trust and respect of the recruitment officer/

- prospective employer.
- Gets you the job you want in terms of right responsibilities, compensation and future prospects.

### What do prospective employers look for in a CV?

Writing a successful CV requires an understanding of the corporate mind of the employer. Employers in high-performance organizations base their selection and appointment decisions on the value the new staff member will add on the organization and the risk he/she will be able to manage to prevent and/or control.

The selection and decision-making criteria will therefore include the value-add and risk management aspects. The selection criteria and decision-making criteria will depend on the job advertised and will differ per job category i.e.:

- Lower level staff**
- Management level**
- Top management level**

### Selection criteria at lower level

At the lower level in the organization candidates are employed to carry out routine tasks. Candidates will be appointed based on the following:

| Personality Traits | Learned Competencies |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Accuracy           | Numeracy             |
| Continuity         | Literacy             |
| Cooperativeness    | Communication        |

|                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tolerance for repetition | Writing skills          |
| Team fit                 | Computer skills         |
| Development potential    | Basic accounting skills |
| Neatness and tidiness    | Craft/hand skills       |

### Decision making criteria at lower level

The following questions will need to be answered to enable the recruiter or prospective employer to appoint a candidate for the position advertised:

- Easy fit into the organizational culture
- 17 lower level
- Hassle-free employment relationship/employment equity
- Maturity/stability
- Free from substance abuse and anti-social behaviours
- Development potential

### Building a CV

To ensure that your CV is successful and address the selection and decision-making criteria of prospective employer you need to build it as follows:

- Give your CV a good format
- Target the job you want
- Search for the right Job
- Analyze the job advertisement and specification
- Select jobs that would stretch you and advance you mentally and materially
- Measure yourself against the job advertisement
- Customize your CV to the needs of the employer
- Write the covering letter

Although CVs come in several designs, two formats are most common and generally successful, these are:

- The Chronological CV lists your various positions or employment, starting with your most recent experience and working backwards. Less detail is needed the further you go back. The advantage of this format is that it presents your background in a clear-cut, straightforward manner, and therefore enables the reader to assess you quickly.
- The Functional CV avoids, or plays down, your employment record, being essentially “skills-based”. It emphasizes your relevant experience and competencies. It allows you to de-emphasize work areas you do not wish to highlight. This type of CV is generally recommended format unless if:
  - The career change you seek is a radical departure from your recent experience
  - Your employment history is erratic
  - You wish to omit certain positions, as you consider them irrelevant

Examples of both formats are included at the end of Module 2.

***STEP 1 : The following information is crucial and should be captured in both formats of CVs.***

- Personal details and interests to be captured in a manner that addresses the personality traits identified in the selection criteria.
- Education and qualifications to be captured in a manner that addresses the learned competencies identified in the selection criteria.
- Work experience, skills and achievements to be captured in

a manner that addresses the personality traits and learned competencies identified in the selection criteria.

- List of Referees.

***STEP 2 : Target the job you want. How? Ask yourself the following questions and record the answers. The overall answer will give you an idea of the type of job you are targeting.***

***What type of job do I want?***

- What jobs can I get with my qualification and skills?
- How much do I want to earn?
- What benefits do I want?
- Where do I want to work – location/employer?
- What type of career do I want to pursue?

***STEP 3 : Job searching. Where? Below are some of the avenues to search for jobs:***

***Browse through newspapers***

- Browse through professional magazines
- Browse through web sites
- Contact job agencies
- Contact friends and family
- Company newsletters
- Company notice-boards
- Websites
- Recruitment agencies
- Advertisements can be confusing, find example on Activity 2. Some only specify qualification requirements and omit experience and outline of the job. A good advertisement would

inform potential candidates of the job content, accountabilities, compensation and benefits, qualification, knowledge, skills and personality requirements. By providing this information applicants can assess whether the job is the right one.

**STEP 4 : Analyze the job advertisement to ensure it meet your needs as specified in step 2:**

**Identify the purpose, responsibilities and accountabilities of the job as specified by the employer/agency.**

- Identify the specified requirements of the job in terms of competence, qualifications, and experience and personality traits.
- Determine the remuneration and benefits offered.
- Ascertain the identity of the employer.
- Assess the future prospects.

**STEP 5 : Select the mot suitable job by assessing...**

**The level of accountability.**

- The mental challenge of the job.
- What value contribution you may make.
- Your passion level for the job.
- The future prospects.

**STEP 6 : Match yourself to the position advertised by...**

- Identifying and listing your own personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Identifying your own core competence and specialization (Knowledge and skills).
- Matching your profile against the specified requirements of the job.

- Identifying areas of conformance and non-conformance.

**STEP 7 : Customize and align your CV to the job advertised i.e.:**

- Provide your personal data and contact information.
- Use clear terms to describe your present position and responsibilities.
- Use clear terms to describe your knowledge, skills and related experience.
- Use clear terms to describe your career interests and best achievements.
- Be bold and show passion about your distinguishing features, achievements, knowledge and skills (competence).

**STEP 8 : Write cover letter and submit your CV. To write a comprehensive cover letter you need to:**

- Specify advertised Job Title, Publication and Advertisement number.
- Provide details of your identity and contact information.
- Provide concise account of your qualification.
- Provide concise chronological account of your present and previous employment – employer, period, job title, mission and responsibilities.
- Provide concise description of your core competence (Knowledge and Skills).
- Provide a summary of career highlights and achievements.
- Provide a list of references and professional associations, if applicable.

**Online Job searching**

Tracking down the job that you dream of is hard work but has in recent years gotten easier as a result of the immense search engine power of the World Wide Web (Website).

The website is the fastest growing source of information on job opportunities and talent in the world is the internet. South African companies and agencies are starting to exploit the web for staffing purposes. In 1998 the United States there were already more than 100 000 job related web sites and more than 2, 5 million CVs on the sites.

The ability to prepare a CV for the web site has therefore become imperative.

### Other CV Variations



**In addition to these formats, there are others applicable to specific professions. In the academic or scientific fields, the emphasis may be on educational background and published papers.**

- In fields of publishing or public relations, a CV might have a narrative style or show a creative flair.
- A law firm will require a very specialized format and a public accounting firm might expect a very formal, conservative type of CV.
- Many executives also develop an 'Executive Profile' which includes such information as career highlights and a brief summary of professional affiliations.

## CHRONOLOGICAL CV FORMAT

### YOUR NAME

Home address in full and postcode

Telephone / Fax number: Home and confidential work number, if applicable

E-mail address

### SUMMARY / PROFILE

Short statement summarizing your key strengths and experience. Your summary needs to resemble the person they are looking for, and is most important, as it is the first paragraph to be read. This is also the hardest part to write, so we advise you leave it to last.

### CAREER HISTORY

#### Name of last / current employer

Job Title (descriptive of what you did)

Brief description of the company and department you worked in

#### Dates in years

- Rework your PARs so that you have five or six statements illustrating your skills and contributions to the company.
- If you are a manager, you may wish to have a statement about people management skills, and the number of direct reports you had.
- A good achievement answers the question: "So what?"
- Ask yourself: What skills are they looking for? How can I illustrate I have them? Make this section positive and strong.
- Your objective is to entice the reader to ask you more – be sure you can expand on each point in the interview.

#### Previous employer's name Dates in years

Job Title

- Only include historical detail if it is relevant and shows you in a positive light.
- You can use previous positions to demonstrate versatility and adaptability;
- It is advisable to account for the whole of your working life, leaving no unexplained gaps.

### EDUCATION, TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

Degrees are clearly worth mentioning, although where and when is usually less relevant, unless you consider the college or university a selling point.

Trade and professional qualifications relevant to the work you do are important.

Corporate training – for example customer service courses, teambuilding, and management development – is relevant and considered valuable. A long list of these is, however, not

particularly readable. Choose a few most relevant to the position.

#### PERSONAL

It is usual to include date of birth, status, driving license (if appropriate) and interests in this section.

### FUNCTIONAL / SKILLS BASED CV

#### YOUR NAME

Home address in full and postcode

Telephone / Fax number: Home and confidential work number, if applicable  
E-mail address

#### MAJOR STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

##### Skills Areas

Look through your PARs and choose five or six key skills, which you believe are important to the roles you will be applying for and that you demonstrate well. Choosing which skills should be your headings and their order of importance is often the most difficult part of the functional CV.

##### Brief description of skill

Under a skill heading, give a brief description of what that competency means. For example the skill, "Strategic Planning", could be followed by "Vision and ability to convert ideas into reality".

##### Quote Examples

After briefly describing the skill, you then need to make your achievements in that area real and specific to the reader. Use qualitative and quantitative data. We recommend at least three bullet points under each skill area.

#### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Name of last / current employer

Dates in years

Job Title (descriptive of what you did)

Brief description of the company and department you worked in.

Previous employer Dates in years

Same as above. The further you go back, the less detail you need to provide.

### EDUCATION, TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

Degrees are clearly worth mentioning, although where and when usually less relevant, trade is and professional qualifications relevant to the work you do are important. Corporate training – for example customer service courses, teambuilding, and management development – is relevant and considered valuable. A long list of these is, however, not particularly readable. Choose a few most relevant to the position.

#### PERSONAL

It is usual to include date of birth, status, driving license (if appropriate) and interests in this section



**Activity 1:** Develop and submit your CV for the position advertised below. Your CV must include achievements and skills/talents as discussed on Module 1. You have 30 minutes to complete this activity.



**Activity 2:** - What type/format of CV will be acceptable for this position?

- Is a covering letter necessary?
- What are the general rules for writing a CV?
- Are you going to include your age and marital status?

- If yes, why do you think this information is important?
- If no, list the required content for a CV.

Leading international security company requires individuals with exceptional communication skills to fill various positions in the Call Center:

**Position available:**

Call Center Agents

R5 000.00 per month basic salary excluding benefits

Must have similar previous experience and the following:

- Grade 12 Certificate
- Must have a PASSION FOR CUSTOMER CARE SERVICES
- AVAILABLE TO START IMMEDIATELY
- FLEXIBLE as shifts will be worked
- Must be well spoken in ENGLISH with patience, sensitivity & empathy
- Excellent COMMUNICATION & LISTENING SKILLS ESSENTIAL
- Extensive High Profile Client Liaising
- Handling all client queries, billing queries, product queries, etc
- EXCELLENT TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE
- Own reliable transport

**CV Checklist**

Swap CVs around in the class and analyze the one you have using the checklist below:

1. **First impression:**  
What first impression did the CV create?
2. **Spelling mistakes:**  
Have you run some form of spell check?
3. **Does the CV have “eye” appeal?**  
Is it too crowded? Too fussy?
4. **Are the margins too narrow/wide?**  
Is there enough / too much “white space” ?
5. **When a reader scans the CV for continuity in career,**

**are there any unexplained gaps?**

**How does the person come across**

Are they interesting, team player or loner?

**In the interests section**

Consider whether there are a range of interests. Consider artistic/creative, team/social, active/physical and intellectual interests. Does it have a mix of these, or are all the interests from one category? Four or five is the norm.

**Is there organizational jargon or acronyms in the CV that might be unfamiliar to readers?**

**If the role is technical e.g. Programmer or Systems Analyst, does the CV contain too many IT acronyms?**

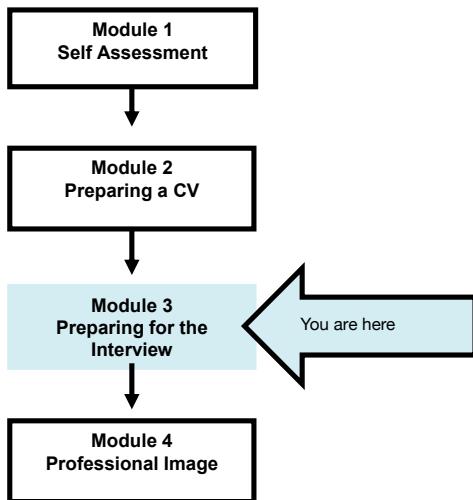
It is advisable to have the key skills on your first page and then include the full range as an appendix?

**Check syntax and grammar**

For example, is there consistency in tenses and in pronouns?

## Learning flow

The following flowchart shows the sequence of learning during the workshop: JOB Preparedness Training.



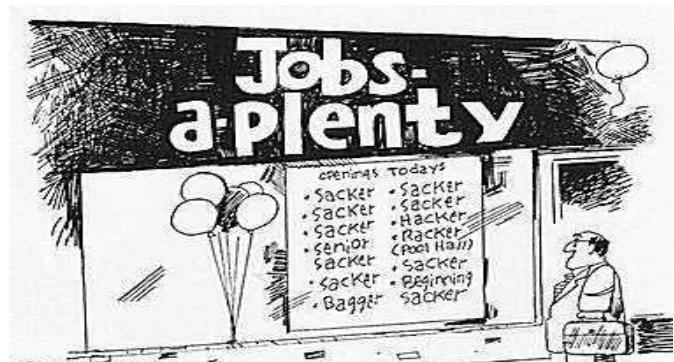
# Module 3

## Preparing for the Interview

### Learning outcomes:

By the end of this section you will be able to:

- Explain the key steps in the interview process
- Conduct research as part of preparing for the interview
- Demonstrate acceptable behaviours during the interview
- Ask important questions during the interview
- Provide answers to tough questions asked during the interview
- Review own performance after interview





## Preparing for the Interview

### Definition Interview:



An interview is the questioning of a person (or a conversation in which information is elicited) to determine whether an applicant is suitable for a position of employment.

### Overview

The CV is one of the keys which unlock the door and yet many people do not live up to the very positive picture which it has painted. One of the central ingredients to ensure success is preparation. In

order to do this in a meaningful way it is necessary to keep firmly in mind the purposes of the interview, which are as follows:

- To determine if you are as good as your CV says you are.
- To find out whether you can do this specific job.
- To see if you will fit in with the team, the boss and the organization.
- To explore what “added value” you may bring beyond the job spec.

There is no doubt that there will be significant competition for attractive positions, so do not be lulled into complacency and think you can “wing it”. Someone out there will have done their preparation well and they will have a better chance of the job offer.

### Interview preparation

You may have the required skills for a position, but unfortunately, if you are unable to articulate these during an interview, the interviewer may never get to know that you are the perfect candidate. We aim to help you define and communicate the skills that are most relevant.

For many of us, interviews seem like an almost insurmountable hurdle, which make us nervous, anxious and fearful – and so incapable of doing our best. With the right preparation things can be different. Working through this section in the Programme, you will be introduced to the skills you need and will begin to develop greater confidence and expertise. Once you put them into practice, you will find that an interview can become a stimulating and rewarding experience which will lead you to an improved performance and to that all-important job.

A good interview technique is really important and you need to make a good impression to give yourself the best possible chance.

## Preparing for the interview – Step 1

### GETTING STARTED



It may sound simple, but before going to an interview, it is important to understand why you are attending. If you understand why you are there and what is expected of you, you are more likely to give a better account of yourself.

Although an interview may sometimes feel like an interrogation, it should be a two-way process. You need to answer the questions put to you, but you should also include the points you want them to know – and the questions you have for them. You will need to collect your “selling points” together before you get to the interview.

## Preparing for the interview – Step 2

### RESEARCH BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Review your skills base by revisiting your achievements and the PAR (Problem, Action & Result) of each of them.
- Look carefully at the information given to you. This will often include a job description, giving an outline of the main duties associated with the job and perhaps a person specification, showing the sort of person they are looking for. You should also look at the original job advertisement (if you have one) and study it carefully. Look at the details of the job and also note how the company describes itself. “A fast moving leading-edge technology company” is probably looking for a different style from a “long-established family firm”.
- Now see how you can best match your skills to their requirements by using the following simple table. On the left-hand side you write down what they say they want. Use their phrases as much as possible. On the right hand side note your skills, linking them to specific achievements.

#### They want

- “Energetic self-starter”
- “Good attention to detail”
- “Excellent communication skills”

#### I offer

- Proposed and ran finance project ...
- Prepared monthly figures when in sales ...
- Gave presentations to board and facilitated meetings for customer service people.

## Preparing for the interview – Step 3



**SEO job interview goes bad...**

### PHYSICAL PREPARATION

As the day of the interview approaches, use the following checklist to make sure that you have done all the small but vital things that make such a difference to the final outcome.

1. Check the time and location of the interview. Allow some spare time
2. Learn the interviewer's name and correct pronunciation.
3. Take a copy of your CV, and the advert with you.
4. Consider your appearance. Is it smart, comfortable and appropriate, given what you know about the company and position? Are your shoes polished?

5. Jewellery should be sparse.
6. In wet weather, try to get rid of outer clothing (coat, dripping umbrella) before you go into the interviewer's office.
7. Never smoke before the interview or chew gum during the interview.
8. Do not drink alcohol or eat garlic or spicy foods before your interview.
9. Do not use too much perfume or aftershave. Use a deodorant.
10. Check the time and location of the interview. Allow some spare time
11. Learn the interviewer's name and correct pronunciation.

### Waiting for the Interviewer

No matter how you are greeted, sooner or later you will find yourself sitting and waiting for the formal interview to start. Now is the time when you may really start to get nervous.

**R E L A X**

Take some deep breaths. The more focused you can be when you enter the interview room, the better impression you will make. While you are waiting there are one or two points to remember:

1. Take every opportunity to read literature about the particular area of the organization.

2. Be polite to everyone with whom you come into contact.
3. Be prepared to wait.
4. If you wait longer than half an hour it is reasonable to ask courteously when your interview is likely to take place.

### What happens during the Interview?

Each interview is different, but there are some general principles that can help you be more successful:

#### Do

- Be positive and enthusiastic.
- Give real life examples to back up your points.
- Speak clearly and concisely.
- Stress your flexibility.
- Talk about your strengths.
- Be truthful but do not volunteer negative information unless specifically asked.
- Be aware of your body

#### Don't

- Underestimate your skills and abilities.
- Ramble or waffle.
- Use jargon words.
- Antagonise or argue with the interviewer.
- Talk about your weaknesses without saying what you are doing about them.
- Criticise your present superiors .

- If at any time you do not understand a question, ask the interviewer to clarify; you do not want to answer the wrong question!

- If you know you are waffling or answering badly, have the confidence to STOP. Just say that you are not answering well and go back to the beginning. You will gain respect for taking this course of action and you will not miss out in answering what could be a vital question.

### What Interviewers are looking for?

The successful candidates are those who can demonstrate that they meet the interviewer's needs. Most interviewers are concerned with three things:

- Can you do the work?  
Do you have the necessary skills and experience?
- Will you do the work?  
Are you motivated?
- Will you fit in?  
Does your personality and style fit the company culture?



During the course of the interview the interviewer(s) will have these three criteria in mind and will be looking for positive and negative factors about you.

Your behaviour impacts the interviewer. In the tables below we show some common behaviour in interview and how they might influence the interviewer.

| Behavioural Cause   | Impressions on Interviewer   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Smiling, sitting comfortably, relaxed and positive. Making good eye contact.</li><li>Being on time and well prepared. Having all necessary documentation.</li><li>Talking positively about yourself and your achievements.</li><li>Showing clear understanding of the job being offered.</li><li>Staying calm and assertive if questioning gets tough.</li><li>Giving specific examples of how you succeeded in your last job.</li><li>Answering clearly about hopes and expectations for the future.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Able to function well under pressure. Confident and competent.</li><li>Organized and professional.</li><li>Good sense of self-worth.</li><li>Has done „homework“ well; will be thorough if given the job.</li><li>Clear, concise thinker, able to present ideas logically.</li><li>Able to bring same success to new job.</li><li>Well-motivated, with realistic objectives, thoughtful.</li></ul> |

## Questions, questions, questions

You cannot know in advance the exact questions you will be asked, but there are a number which crop up in most interviews. The precise form of the question will vary but the underlying meaning will be the same. It will greatly help you if you are prepared for these questions. There are two things to think about – the interviewer's reason for asking the question and how you can answer it to give the best account of yourself. Remember that the interviewer is looking to find out about your skills, motivation and style (Can Do, Will Do, and How Fit).

### The tough questions

The following questions are some of the most commonly asked. In preparation for your interview, read through them all and think about your answers. The best answers are those which are positive and honest.

Do NOT attempt to learn your answers off by heart otherwise you may come over as too rehearsed and insincere and you may be put off your stride completely if you suddenly forget your script.

The tough questions referred to above are based on the following"

- General
- Can you do the job?**
- Will you do the job?**
- How will you fit in? (Relationships)**
- Management**
- Salary, your job search, personal**
- 

*The detail list of tough questions with possible answers is included at end of Module 3:*

## Questions to ask the interviewer

Interviews need to be a two-way conversation. An interviewer is entitled to question you and likewise it is appropriate for you to ask the interviewer a few questions. The questions you ask will reveal as much about you and your values as your answers do. It is therefore wise to consider the impact of a particular question, just as you would consider the impact of an answer.

*The main point is: Do your questions express interest and enthusiasm for the position and company?*

### Questions to ask the Interviewer..

Below are key questions to ask the interviewer:

1. What are some of the objectives you would like to see achieved in this job?
2. What are some of the challenges faced by the person performing this role?
3. Can you tell me about the training and development available to the successful candidate?
4. How is the success of this role measured? How is one judged?
5. What freedom would I have in determining my work objectives, deadlines and methods of measurement?
6. What significant developments in products / services / sales do you expect in the near future?
7. How would you describe the culture of this organization?
8. What would you see as the main priority for the incumbent on commencing the job?

## Body language and voice

“It is not what you say, but how you say it !”



*“I want all the money in the world... And after I get it,  
I want all the money in every other world!”*

It is commonly accepted that most communication occurs non-verbally i.e. Body language. Your voice – tone, pause- emphasis and your body – movement of face, arms, and hands relay the message more than the content of what you say. This is a crucial point to bear in mind when being interviewed. Voice and body language play a key role in the “chemistry” or rapport you create with the interviewer.

### **Key points to note:**

- Is your handshake firm? Beware of the limp handshake or the bone-crusher?
- How are you sitting compared to the interviewer? Can you match them subtly? Or are they relaxed whilst you sit too stiff and upright?
- How much do you use your hands? Do they flail everywhere? If so, some containment might be advisable.
- How animated is your interviewer? If they have a high energy, you too could be a bit freer.
- Is your voice monotonous? Do you need to vary the tone?
- Do you make eye contact frequently?
- Is your face tense and rigid? Take a deep breath, relax and smile!

### **After the interview**

End the interview on a positive note. Thank the interviewer(s) for their time, shake hands if appropriate and make sure you know the correct way out of the room! If the interviewer has not advised you when you will hear the results, ENQUIRE! Most importantly REWARD yourself! You have done well to get and attend the interview – irrespective of the outcome. Consider the interview and learn from any mistakes that you might have made to help in any future interviews.

## **REVIEWING YOUR PERFORMANCE**

Each interview is a learning opportunity. You need to review your performance each time to ensure you improve your interview technique. The Review DBM below may help.

### **1. What I did well**

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### **2. Important Successes / Achievements**

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### **3. Body Language**

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### **4. Areas of questioning where I felt uncomfortable and unprepared**

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### **5. What could I have done better?**

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### **6. What I will do differently next time?**

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# The Tough Questions

## Tell me about yourself

This question can reveal much about all the other categories below. Used wisely you can give a very positive first impression provided you have tailored your Tell Me about Yourself to the job and you have practiced it.



**“My short-term goal is to bluff my way through this job interview. My long-term goal is to invent a time machine so I can come back and change everything I’ve said so far.”**

## Can you do the job?

The following questions represent only a portion of what could be asked. Your technical skills may be put to the test so you should update yourself on the latest developments in your field. You may be required by some interviewers to answer questions on the technical side of your last job at a detailed level.

1.

## What can you offer us?

Be sure you know something about the job situation they have in mind before you try to answer. Then you can relate some of your past experiences where you have succeeded in solving problems that appear similar to those of your prospective employer.

2.

## What are your strengths?

By now you should be able to list and concisely explain three or four key strengths that are relevant to their needs.

3.

## What have you accomplished?

Try to pick out accomplishments that bear on the challenges you have been discussing. Stay away from ancient times.

4.

## What are your limitations?

Respond with a strength which, if over-done, can get in your way and becomes a weakness. For example you might say, “My ambition to get the job done sometimes causes me to press a little too hard on my organization. But I am aware of this problem and believe that I have it under control.” Or suggest you have a need for further training in some aspect of your profession. Do not claim to be faultless.

5.

## What do you know about the company?

If you have done your homework, you can honestly state that you have studied the information that is publicly available about the company and are thus aware of several

of the published facts. However, you might also state that you would like to know more – and then be prepared later to ask some intelligent questions.

Do not try to show off and recite all you have learned, but merely let your naturally through the informed way in which you handle the interview.

**6. Please give me your definition of a ... (the position for which you are being interviewed)**

Keep your answer brief and task-orientated – that is, deal with responsibilities and accountabilities.

**7. How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution?**

In would be helpful if we could discuss your priorities at this point as it would enable me to respond more realistically to this question.

**8. What important trends do you see coming?**

Pick out two or three things that you see coming in the future – macro – and big picture. This is your chance to show that you have thought about the future in your field of expertise

**9. How much financial responsibility have you had to account for?**

You can answer this in terms of your budget or head-count or the size of the project or sales that you directed.

**10. In your recent position, what were some of your most significant accomplishments?**

Be ready to describe three or four of them in detail. Where possible, try to relate to the nature of the new challenges you might be facing.

**11. If I spoke with your previous superior, what would he / she say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?**

Be honest about this one, but do not emphasize the negative. Your previous superior will probably want to give you a good send-off. Recount some of the good things you did for him / her.

**12. How do you hold up under pressure or deadlines?**

I can handle it. It is a way of life in the business world.

**13. In your most recent position, what problems have you identified that have previously been overlooked?**

Keep your answer brief and do not brag unduly.

**14. What are your strongest points?**

Be ready to present at least three – preferably in a way that relates them to the potential job opening.

**Will you do the job?**

Many of these questions are intended to reveal your true level of interest in this particular job. Be wary about eliminating yourself at too early a stage by not preparing your responses.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. How much are you worth?</b>   | <b>5. What do you look for in this job?</b>  |
| Try to delay answering this until you have learned quite a bit about the job and, if possible, explore beforehand the typical ranges they are accustomed to pay for similar positions.  | Keep your answer opportunity-orientated. Talk about the chance you would have to perform and get recognition.  |
| If you feel obliged to answer something, you might reply along these lines, "You are aware of what I have been earning. Perhaps we can discuss this question a little better when we both have a more complete idea of what the job responsibilities and scope would be."   | <b>6. Do you not feel you might be over-qualified or too experienced for the position we have in mind?</b>   |
| <b>2. What are your ambitions for the future?</b>   | A strong organization needs strong people, with the appropriate experience to deal with current problems. Explain that your interest in the company would be long-term, and that you are willing to bet that your accomplishments in the first year or two will lead eventually to growth opportunities for you. |
| Indicate your desire to concentrate on doing the immediate job well – and your confidence that the future will then take care of itself. You do not want to convey the idea that you have no desire to progress, but you need to avoid statements that are unrealistic – or that might threaten some of the present incumbents. | <b>7. Describe what you feel would be an ideal working environment.</b>  |
| <b>3. Why do you want to work for us?</b>   | This is a place where you can bring in some of your satisfiers and ideal work preferences – but do not make it sound too sublime or impractical. Otherwise, they may conclude that you are not ready for the realities. Play down the dissatisfiers.   |
| Indicate that many of the activities and problems would give you a clear chance to contribute past experience and skills. If you can honestly say so, explain your admiration for the organization and what it is that appeals to you.  | <b>8. Which do you like better – working with figures or words?</b>  |
| <b>4. What do you find most attractive about the position we are discussing? What is least attractive?</b>  | Answer honestly but do not talk yourself out of the job.   |
| Mention three or more attractive factors, but hold the unattractive down to one or two minor ones.  | <b>9. In your last position, what were the things that you liked most? And liked least?</b>  |
|   | Be careful here. Emphasize the positive and do not carry on at length about the negatives.   |

10. **Do you think you are cut out for this type work?**  
“I can handle either, and my preference depends a lot on the specific job, the superior I would be working for and the challenges in the position.”

11. **If you had your choice of jobs what would you choose?**  
Talk about the job at hand and what is attractive in the company that is interviewing you.

12. **What are your long-range goals?**  
Relate your answer to the organization you are interviewing with, rather than give a very broad, general answer. Keep your ambitions on a realistic track.

3. **Describe a situation in which your work was criticized.**  
Be specific and brief – avoid getting emotional or defensive about it.

4. **Do you consider yourself to be a creative person?**  
Yes (and be prepared to give a couple of examples).

5. **How would you describe your own personality?**  
Balanced – mention two or three of your useful traits.

6. **What sort of relationships do you have with your colleagues, both at the same level, above and below you?**

#### **How will you fit in? (Relationships)**

Even if you are a perfect match in terms of experience, skills and qualifications, you will not get the job offer if the chemistry is not right. The following examples are typical of those questions which will delve more deeply into your interpersonal relationships.

1. **Looking back, how do you perceive your previous department area?**  
“It is an excellent company, which has given me a lot of good experience and opportunities to perform.”

2. **What do you think of your previous boss?**  
Be as positive as you can and avoid getting in too deeply. This is a loaded question, because most bosses shy away from a contentious or difficult subordinate.

7. **Describe the best team you ever worked in. What were its characteristics?**  
Give clear but positive indications where you also contributed to a high level in terms of interaction and involvement.

## Management

You will need to prepare answers to these questions if you are already a manager or are seeking a managerial position.

**1. What is your management style?**

If you have not thought about this, it is time you did. If the job you are going for has management responsibilities, you might want to talk about how you set goals and then get your people involved in them. Also, describe the techniques that you like to use to bring out the best in people. Try to sense whether the company believes in a highly participative style, or is more autocratic in approach.

**2. Why do you feel you have good potential to be a manager?**

Keep your answer oriented toward your past achievements and the task to be done. Explain how you go about getting work done – either by yourself or through your organization. Use non-work experience if you have never held a management position before.

**3. As a manager, what would you be looking for when you recruit people?**

Their skills, initiative, adaptability – and whether their chemistry fits with that of the organization.

**4. As a manager, have you ever had to terminate anyone? If so what were the circumstances and how did you handle it?**

Answer in brief that you have indeed had experience with this problem and that it has worked out to the benefit of both the individual and the organization. Emphasize that you followed correct procedures.

**5. What do you see as the most difficult task in being a manager?**

Balancing the needs of clients and staff so as to meet business objectives within time and budget.

**6. How many people have you supervised in your recent jobs?**

Be specific – and feel free to refer to those which you had influence over, such as a task force or a matrix organization.

**7. How do you think your subordinates perceive you?**

Be as positive as you can, but remember to be honest too. They can easily check your references.

**8. Are you a leader?**

Yes (give examples).

**9. Have you ever had to deal with a poorly performing member of your team? How did you handle it? If not, how would you handle a poor performer in your team?**

Emphasize by stating the situation clearly, finding out the facts, listening carefully to the individual, carefully questioning as to reasons, putting together an agreed plan and monitoring. Familiarity with the formal discipline code might well be expected.

**10. What do you consider to be the most important leadership skills?**

Providing critical direction and focus, inspiring a builder of teams, excellent communicator, balancing task needs with people needs, dealing with paradox and ambiguity.

## Salary, Job Search, Personal

**1. What sort of relationships do you have with your associates, both at the same level and above and below you?**

This is a very important question, and you can well afford to take your time and answer it in steps. When talking about your relationships with subordinates, be prepared to state your philosophy of handling them, particularly when they have performance problems. With regard to superiors, indicate your keen interest in understanding the expectations of your superior, so that you and your organization can build your goals in a way that will support his goals. You may also want to talk about how you would go about keeping your boss informed.

**2. What are some of your outside activities or recreations?**

Your answer should show that you lead a balanced life. But avoid throwing in so many outside activities that it casts some doubt on how much time you will have for your job. Remember, too, that your hobbies and recreations can be quite revealing as to your own personality.

**3. Are you continuing your education?**

If you are not actually attending or planning to attend formal classes, be ready to explain what sort of outside reading or attendance at professional seminars you undertake in order to keep yourself fresh in your chosen field.

Job Interview Questions About Co-Workers and Supervisors and Sample Answers

**This section is aimed to those who had been in previous jobs.**

For the most part, the following questions may be asked to determine if you are a team player. Take a few seconds, when asked a difficult question, before you answer. An interviewer is not expecting you to have a ready answer. However, the Boy Scout Motto - Be Prepared - - certainly applies here as well.

**Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a co-worker who wasn't doing his/her fair share of the work. What did you do and what was the outcome?**

I worked closely with Ann who, for the most part, always carried her fair share of the work load. During a stressful time, working on a project with a deadline, I realized Ann's contributions to the project were almost minimal. I made the decision to wait until after the project to speak with her. I'm glad I did, because I learned she'd been going through a very tough time in her personal life and she appreciated my willingness to go the extra mile so the project was completed on time. As a result, our ability to work well together significantly increased.

**Give me an example of a time when you took the time to share a co-worker's or supervisor's achievements with other?**

At my most recent position, one of my co-workers, Dan, did an outstanding job of calming an irate customer, solving the customer's problem and completing a sale. When our boss asked me how things were going, I told him everything was going fine and that Dan had just completed calming an irate customer and closing a sale. It was a win-win-win- for our boss, Dan and the customer.

**Tell me about a time that you didn't work well with a supervisor. What was the outcome and how would you have changed the outcome?**

Early in my career, I had a supervisor (Judy) who was in a fairly good mood on Monday, but it deteriorated each day until by Friday, the supervisor was finding fault with everything I did. I didn't realize, until I left that position, that I had been a contributor to the decline in her mood. Judy would ask me how my weekend was (on Monday) and during the week she would ask how it was going. I would tell her how much fun I was having (I was single) and how I was looking forward to the weekend plans. After I left, I realized my life was in complete contrast to hers and I reminded her of it almost daily. When she asked the questions, I should have had a quick answer, and then asked her how she was doing!!!!

**Have you worked with someone you didn't like? If so, how did you handle it?**

Yes, I've worked with someone whom I found difficult to like as a person. However, when I focused on the skills they brought to the job, their ability to solve problems and the two things I did appreciate, slowly my attitude towards them changed. We were never friends, but we did work well together.

**Tell me about a time that you helped someone.**

Most recently, we had a new hire (Paul) that was really struggling with getting to work on time, and I knew the boss (Harry) was getting irritated. Over lunch one day I explained to Paul how important it was to our boss for everyone to be there at least 10 minutes early. It was personal with the Harry, but you could really get on his bad side when you were frequently late. The new employee was grateful for the advice. At his previous employment, the boss was only concerned about the work getting done on time; he/she did not "watch the clock".

**Tell me about a time that you misjudged a person.**

There was a long-time employee (Unathi) at my second company who was very gruff when she spoke to me. At first, I went out of my way to win the Unathi 's approval. Then I realized that was compounding the problem. So I observed how she interacted with other employees and discovered I wasn't alone. She was gruff to most people. I quit trying to gain her approval and, in the process, discovered he'd learned her behaviour from a former boss she'd had whom she admired.

**How do you get along with older (younger) co-workers?**  
**Suggested answer if your co-workers are older:**

There are times when I just know that a new way of doing something makes more sense to me; but, first hand, I learned that my "better way" may not be the best way to get the job done. As a consequence, I respect my older co-workers knowledge and I've learned how to make a suggestion at the appropriate time. Suggested answer if your co-workers are younger: I quickly realized it was not

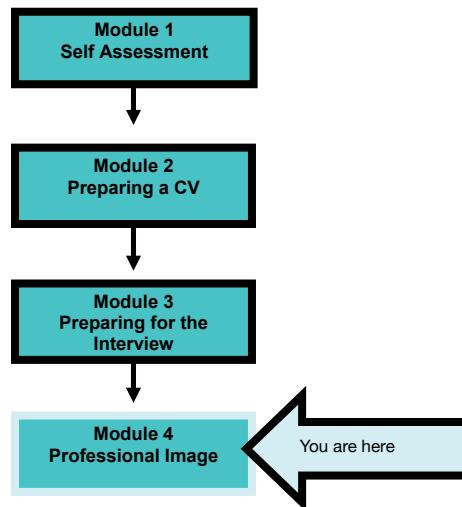
my job to “parent” the younger people with whom I work; it was my job to get to know them and for us to find common ground where we could effectively work together. It took time, but the result was worth the effort.

### Interview Questions NOT to Ask

- What does this company do? (Do your research ahead of time!)
- If I get the job when can I take time off for vacation? (Wait until you get the offer to mention prior commitments)
- Can I change my schedule if I get the job? (If you need to figure out the logistics of getting to work don't mention it now...)
- Did I get the job? (Don't be impatient. They'll let you know.)

### Learning flow

The following flowchart shows the sequence of learning during the workshop: JOB Preparedness Training.



## NOTES

## NOTES

# Module 4

## Professional Image

### Learning outcomes:

By the end of this section you will be able to dress professionally for:

- The interview
- Work when you get the job



### What is a Professional Image?

Your image is a statement of who you are and what you represent and it will help you get the job offer. What's the appropriate dress code for an interview? You'll want that first impression to be not just a

good one, but, a great one. The candidate dressed in a suit and tie is going to make a much better impression than the candidate dressed in scruffy jeans and a t-shirt. Professional image is the image you project in the working world. The way you look may not make up for poor performance, but it could give you a competitive edge during your interview and in your future career. Employers often decide whether an applicant will fit in with their organization based on a first impression.

***"You only get one chance to make a first impression. Make it count!"***

### Dressing the part

There are no specific rules regarding attire. Appropriate dress differs based on the:

- Occupation
- Location
- Preference.

A “suit” atmosphere is always popular, but many corporations are adopting a “business casual” policy that allows workers to follow a more relaxed dress code.

However, no matter the circumstance, dress as well as you can for the interview. Dress found in the work world is quite different from dress found on campus, and if you are in doubt, it is always better to dress up/formal for the interview. If you are in a new situation, the best option is to dress conservatively. For professional positions, a business suit is an excellent interview choice for either a man or a woman.



Most importantly, you should feel comfortable about the way you look. Wear something that you have tried on before, check yourself out in a mirror. If you are confident about your appearance, you will project a confident and positive image.

### Getting that professional look

#### Male

- Facial hair should be freshly shaved or trimmed.
- A man's tie should end just above his belt, and coordinate with his suit.
- This is not the time to express individuality so avoid flashy patterns.
- Wear dark shoes and socks (black is best).
- Remove any earrings and rings (except wedding/engagement ring) before an interview

#### Female

- Jewellery should be kept to a minimum such as one set of earrings and one ring on each hand.
- Makeup should look natural
- Long fingernails and chipped nail polish are distracting. If you wear nail polish, make sure to use a subtle colour.
- Avoid high heels & Stockings
- Dont wear anything sexy (e.g see through fabrics, mini skirts or body hugging clothes)

#### For Everyone

- Hair should be neatly arranged and clean.
- Fingernails should be neat, clean, and trimmed.
- Shoes should be well polished.
- Avoid or use sparingly colognes, scented powders and perfumes. Your "scent" should not linger after you leave.
- The most acceptable business colours for suits are gray and blue. Other basic colours are navy, white, cream, brown, black, light blue, red and pale yellow. Always wear subtle colours and styles.
- Keep your pockets empty of tinkling coins or bulges.
- No chewing of gum, candy, or smoking cigarettes before the interview
- Carry a light briefcase or portfolio
- Prepare for multiple interviews. Make sure you have more than 1 outfit available for interviewing within the same company. Mix and match from among the pieces you already own

## Acting the part

### How Can You Act the Part?

Imagine that tomorrow is your first day working at your new company. You are standing in your closet.

What do you pick out to wear, and why?

Body language and facial expressions are important aspects of your professional image. Research shows that body language, including voice, account for 38% of an overall first impression. Therefore, your nonverbal communication impacts your interview presentation. Before the interview, practice in front of a mirror to analyze your body movements and gestures.

Be aware of how you look and act so that nonverbal messages coincide with what you say. During the interview follow these suggestions:

- **Posture**

Walk confidently into the room, hold your head up, and offer a firm handshake. You should appear confident, yet approachable. During the interview, sit straight in your chair and lean forward to indicate interest and attentiveness.

- **Greeting**

Express your gratitude when meeting someone for the first time. Step forward, maintain eye contact, smile, and extend your hand. Be sure your handshake is firm and positive. Once you've given your name, repeat the interviewer's name.

- **Initiate Conversation**

Find an interesting approach to begin conversation. Comment about the weather, offer information about yourself or give a compliment (make sure a compliment is sincere). Be aware of the world around you so you can join in on a variety of topics. Also, appear interested and always be a good listener.

- **Eye Contact**

Make eye contact, but be careful not to stare. Shifty eyes are associated with deviousness, and a lack of eye contact may be associated with lying.

- **Gestures**

Try to control nervous gestures like hair-twisting, nail-biting, and pen-clicking. Warm gestures may include leaning toward a person, smiling, touching and gesturing expressively. Cold gestures include avoiding eye contact, not smiling, and placing your hands on your hips. Vary your gestures and be sure they look natural.

- **Voice**

The sound of your voice should be warm and friendly. Project, speak slowly, and enunciate. Use your grammar skills to avoid wrong use of verb tense, pronoun or other incorrect use.

- **Be Yourself**

Try to appear comfortable during the interview and show that you are at ease in your surroundings. Don't be afraid to relax and show your natural characteristics. You want to give the impression that you're someone they want to have around.

## **Basic etiquette**

There are a few etiquette guidelines that must be followed during an interview. The best way to remember basic etiquette is to follow the lead of the employer. Below are the basic ones:

- It is not proper to fold your coat or apparel onto a visitor's chair unless you are invited to do so.
- In an interview, don't loosen your tie or remove your suit jacket unless the interviewer does or suggests that you do.
- Respect the interviewer's space. Never pick up photographs, flip calendars or borrow a pen.
- Do not place your briefcase on the desk but keep it on your lap or on the floor beside you.

## **What if you like your own style ?**

There are few absolutes when it comes to dress and the professional image. You need to decide what is most important and acceptable to a potential employer.

The best advice for a successful job interview is to act and look conservative. However, if you are committed to a certain style, you must target employers who share that style.

The following list offers actions and styles that are NOT recommended:

- Chew gum, smoke or eat during the interview
- Hum, whistle or rustle papers
- Apply makeup or look in a compact mirror (use the restroom for this)
- Too much makeup
- A variety and excess of body piercing
- Scuffed, dirty shoes

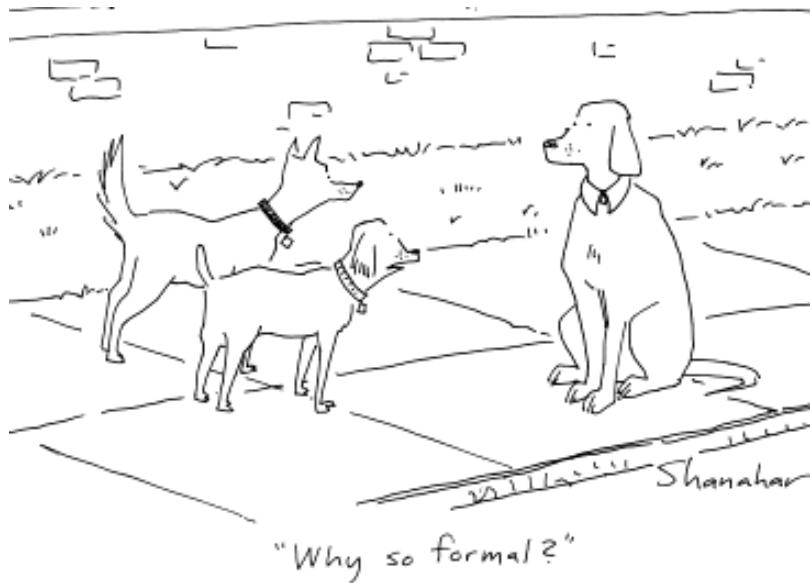
- Long, dangling earrings
- Chipped nail polish or dirty fingernails
- Dirty hair or dandruff
- Long hair for a man
- Very large or overstuffed handbag
- Skirts well above the knees
- Casual pants or dress shoes (dressy flats are appropriate)
- Clothes that are too tight

## **Useful hints**

Below are tips to consider to pull-off that professional look:

- The quality of your clothing is a direct reflection of your self-esteem, as well as a reflection of your success; therefore always buy the best quality you can afford.
- Do not compromise; it is better to have a few good garments than a large number of cheap shoddy ones. You can achieve a variety by using accessories.
- Natural fibres look better than man made, although they tend to crease and require more care. There are however many blends which are crease-resistant and look good.
- Tailor made garments are always preferable, especially if you are not a standard size or shape.
- When you feel confident about the colours and styles which suit you, you will also have the confidence to spend more on individual items in the sure knowledge that you will wear them and therefore justify the additional expense.

**REMEMBER**  
Fashion is always changing, but style stays forever



**Activity 1:**

- What is your preferred style?
- What is a professional look?
- You are required to change your preferred style in exchange for a professional look. Will you do it? Why?

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