

# Steps to a successful job interview

by Stella Shepard

Job Search

The interview with a potential employer is a crucial step in your job search.

**Nicky Perry** is a **Career Practitioner** with **PEI Career Development Services Inc.** in Souris. She assists clients with job search, résumé writing and provides labour market information.

Nicky provided the following answers to our questions about the job interview:

**Q: What are employers looking for in an interview with a potential employee?**

**A:** Employers may want to look beyond the qualifications listed on the résumé to find out about the applicant's attitudes and work ethic.

**Q: Could there be more than one person interviewing you?**

**A:** Personally, I have rarely been interviewed by just one person. Often other staff or board members sit around the table and take turns asking questions.

**Q: What should I bring to the interview?**

**A:** Bring a hard copy of your references and extra copies of your résumé. It shows that you are both prepared and organized.

**Q: If I think I might be called for an interview, how can I prepare?**

**A:** Sometimes, a pre-interview is done over the phone. Be ready to answer some basic questions about yourself. Ask where and when the interview will be held, and who will be interviewing you.

**Q: Any suggestions to eliminate nervousness before and during the interview?**

**A:** The best remedy for stage fright is preparation and practice. Hone your interview skills through a mock interview. Employers may describe a situation and ask how you would react. Make the answer relevant to the job position or the employer. Boost your confidence and project a professional image by being rested and well-groomed.

**Q: Why should I research the company before the interview?**

**A:** By researching the company through their website, related news articles, and personal networking, you will come across as a serious and informed applicant.



Career Practitioner Nicky Perry does a mock interview with a client. "The interview is a crucial step in the job search," says Nicky. "Rehearsing will better prepare you for the interview."

**Q: How long should an interview last?**

**A:** Typical interviews run about half an hour. Some longer interviews may include testing or assessments.

**Q: Should you ask about pay, health coverage or perks?**

**A:** No. Save those questions for the job offer. Use your interview time to promote your qualifications. If asked about your expected salary, be prepared to provide a standard wage range. This information can be found on these websites: [www.labourmarketinformation.ca](http://www.labourmarketinformation.ca) and [www.pei.jobfutures.org](http://www.pei.jobfutures.org)

**Q: Any suggestions for a follow-up after the interview?**

**A:** Remember to show appreciation for the interview opportunity. Follow up with a thank-you card, e-mail or phone call. Remember to keep the language professional in all your correspondence. Before leaving the interview, thank the interviewer(s) for their time. Ask them when a decision will be made. After that date, call to enquire about the position.

**Q: If you were not offered the job, should you ask why?**

**A:** If you don't get the job, thank them and express interest in future opportunities with the company. I once followed up an interview in this manner and was later offered the job when it became available again. The follow-up call is also a great opportunity to respectfully request constructive feedback on your interview skills and qualifications. As well, ask about other employers who might be hiring.

For more information, visit or call the **PEI Career Development Services** office nearest you.

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