

How to Cope with Group Interviews

In my experience the way to cope with any interview is to be prepared, and group interviews are no exception, in fact being more prepared will certainly be to your advantage.

So, how do you get prepared? Well knowing what to expect is a start. Group interviews involve a group of job candidates and are conducted with one or more usually, a group or panel of interviewers. This panel could include potential co-workers, supervisors, colleagues from human resources and managers. Sometimes these interviews include a presentation about the company to inform candidates of their prospects and ethos, providing candidates with a question and answer opportunity at the end.

Sometimes the group of potential employees will be given a work related task, and on occasion the group may be split into smaller groups to develop the assignment and deliver a presentation. Throughout the exercise interviewers will be keeping an close eye on candidates and will be taking notes.

So why do companies choose this method of interview? When companies wish to present themselves to potential employees they provide a presentation. Providing a separate presentation for each candidate would in effect be wasting valuable time and money. But don't be fooled, this is not just an opportunity for you to learn about the company, the company will be learning about you! They will be looking at how you are able to cope with this situation, how you interact with the others you are interviewed with, and how you potentially could fit in their organisation. In other words, it's a quicker way of sorting the wheat from the chaff!

So how can you really make the best of the situation?

- Research the company. Don't just turn up expecting to get all you need to know from the company's presentation! Find out as much as you can about their plans for development, ethos and growth.
- Use your research! Use what you now know to formulate a list of questions that can be posed either at the end of the presentation or at the end of the interview itself. Making a list rather than one or two questions ensures that if your question is answered by the presentation or asked by another candidate, you have a back-up! If in discussion someone uses a point you wished to make think of something you can 'add' to it, showing off that you are actively listening and can think quickly.
- You are being watched! Be body language aware! Right from the word 'go' you are being observed, so when you approach the other candidates introduce yourself in a polite and friendly manner. Throughout the interview you are being examined, interviewers wish you to be confident, yet not arrogant and stay calm. Avoid monopolising conversation, include

quieter members of the group and do not interrupt others. Should the need arise take on any criticism; appear professional, especially when disagreements occur within any group tasks. Where possible and relevant, praise others for their contribution, however ensure that this is done with sincerity.

- To ensure you show leadership qualities without being domineering say things like:

"That's a good idea - who else agrees with that?"

"Shall we take a vote?"

" Are we all agreed?"

"What's your opinion on this?"

"He is doing X, so why don't we do Y, so everything gets done."

- Be punctual! Arrive in good time allowing you possible more time with the interviewers than the other candidates.

- Be alert and ready to take part where ever possible. It's even more important to stand out within a group interview, use any opportunity available to you.

- Prepare, in case the need arises, a short 1-2 minute introduction about you, your education, your position in your current job and how you see your position in the future and your goals.

This is your opportunity to show yourself to potential employers, so dress to impress and present yourself in a positive manner with a smile!

Do you want to ensure that you reach the interview stage? If so prepare your application professionally with the Words Worth Reading Ltd [CV writing service](#).