Group interview: do's and don'ts

Group interview do's:

- Arrive early – When you're competing against a number of other candidates, it's essential you make the most of every opportunity to stand out

- Aside from being punctual and courteous, arriving ahead of schedule has another unique advantage, you have longer to impress. It also allows you to interact with other candidates in a less formal setting, showing off your social skills. However, always bear in mind that there is such a thing as arriving too early.

- Remember the icebreaker – Before any of the actual tasks begin, you'll almost always be asked to provide some sort of introduction for yourself (or for someone else in the group). To avoid embarrassing situations, always prepare your answer beforehand

- Remember: if you can't think of anything particularly exciting, embellishments are allowed.

- Sit up straight – Body language can make all the difference. You'll appear attentive and alert, showing your interviewers that you're genuinely interested in what they have to say.

- There's nothing wrong with relaxing as the interview progresses and showing that you're comfortable. But you needn't let your attitude compromise your posture. So try and sit up straight wherever possible.

- Include everyone/Be inclusive – Although your leadership skills are being assessed, don't be tempted to go overboard. One of the most important facets of leadership is the ability to ensure everyone's opinions are heard, not just voicing your own.

- If there's an introvert in the group, getting them involved in the task and encouraging them to participate will win you major points, both with your fellow candidates and with your interviewers.

- Other things to do: Praise others' ideas, take notes, dress appropriately, smile.

Group interview don'ts:

- Be fake – It may be a cliché, but sometimes the best advice is just to be yourself. Trying too hard to stand out is not going to make you many friends, especially amongst your assessors, so always try to be as genuine as possible.

- Talk over people – This is one of the most common mistakes of the group interview. When the competitive nature of the interview kicks in, it can be tempting to increase the volume to get your point across. However, whatever role you're applying for, you should never underestimate the importance of teamwork.

- Remember: the wisest people don't always speak the loudest, but they always make their voices heard. So always try to think before you speak.

- Get lost in the group – There's a fine balance between this point and the last. It's highly likely that, whether genuine or not, one or two people in the group will try and take control. If and

when this happens, don't let yourself be intimidated or overwhelmed. Instead, use them to your advantage.

- If you don't agree with their points, feel free to be controversial and offer your own opinion, then open up the discussion to the group

- Become too informal – As in any other interview situation, there's a certain etiquette for group interviews which should always be adhered to. It's fine to appear comfortable and

    relaxed in some instances. Do not, however, use this as an excuse to leave your manners at the door.

- Number one: don't refer to your interviewers or co-interviewees as 'mate'. Your interviewers are not your friends.

- Number two: never swear. Being controversial is ok, as long as you have a well-articulated, polite and appropriate argument. Being rude, vulgar or offensive, however, is definitely not.

- Number three: avoid discussing any excesses you might enjoy in your own time (obvious topics include gambling and drinking etc).

- Lose concentration – Finally, it's essential to maintain maximum concentration at all times. Take notes, keep eye contact at an acceptable (and socially acceptable) level, smile, nod, and generally try and look enthusiastic and engaged throughout.

- Avoid spending your time staring off into space, or worse, checking your phone during proceedings. The same also applies to doodling.