



Interview Skills Introduction

Dear participants, thank you very much for taking part in our Canadian Working Holiday Program (CWHP). We have prepared this document to help you with the interview with your potential employer in Canada. Please read it carefully and let us know if you have any questions. This interview - like any interview - requires a positive attitude and clearly conveyed answers. With this in mind you will do a great job.

1) **Why must you do an interview by telephone?**

From Vancouver BC and the Sea to Sky Corridor, Tamwood International/Go International provide you with professional, thorough connections for work and travel. During a pre-arranged interview, it will be your time to **convince** employers that you are the right person for a job. It is also a chance for you to find out if the company is a place where you would enjoy working.

In an interview, the employer is trying to decide if you have the skills and attitude they are looking for and if you will work well with their other employees.

2) **Tips for preparing for the interview**

Interviews can be informal, just a conversation between you and the interviewer. At other times, they can be very formal, with a specific format where all people being interviewed are asked the same questions. You may be told what to expect, or you might find out when you start the interview on the telephone.

Being prepared for any type of interview is important, but can be intimidating. It is useful to spend some time **practicing** your interview skills and getting advice from people who know what you can expect.

Having some practice before you go for an interview can help you to anticipate what an employer might ask you and help you have more confidence in your interview skills.

You can't possibly anticipate all the **questions** you will be asked, but some of them are common. These are questions about previous work experience and educational background. Some of the questions are about your personal traits, for instance, how you handle stress or how you get along with people. Check the company website beforehand. That will give you some insider knowledge. Be enthusiastic and establish a connection, i.e. ask the full name of the interviewer. Know your own

resume well and be able to demonstrate accomplishments. If you are asked about previous jobs, be clear on reasons for leaving each position.

3) Canadian employers interview styles

Job interviews can be very intimidating; especially for a job you really want. You want to make a good impression. You want to sound confident, without seeming *too* confident. Preparing for an interview can be very taxing because you have to worry about making a good impression on all levels - so that your employer will imagine how you can fit into the work environment. If you break it down though, job interviews aren't actually as intimidating as people think.

4) How will the interviewer rate your answers?

When answering each question, interviewer will be evaluating your responses using a **5 levels system**. Level 1 being the worst and level 5 being the best, use this scaling system when you are practicing your interview will greatly increase your success.

Levels:

1. You did not provide an example for the questions.
2. You gave an example but only spoke generally about it.
3. You gave an example that showed you have some abilities to deal with the situation.
4. You gave an example that showed your strong ability, interacting effectively and able to follow through on any issues.
5. You gave an excellent example that specifically showed your strong ability, interacting effectively and follow through on any issues.

On the telephone

There are two golden rules for this one: eliminate slang from your vocabulary. Using slang is reminiscent of a teenager's speech and doesn't sound professional or serious. Another important thing is to eliminate 'up-talk'. This is when you end your sentences with a higher inflection so that it sounds more like a question than a statement, another trait reminiscent of teen talk. If you take these out of your speech, you will sound more professional and well put-together.

If you don't know

An important thing to remember in an interview is if you don't know the answer to a question, don't make it up. It's one of the key points of a good interview because no one ever wants to be caught lying. It ruins your reputation and your interviewer may have many contacts in the industry. Because of this, you never want word to spread around that you're dishonest or else no one will give you an interview, let alone a job. If you don't know something, then the best you can do is say so, and then tell them something you *do* know.

Express interest

Above all, before, during and after the interview, always make sure to show you want the job. Really, really want it. Sometimes, this will make or break the impression you make on your

potential employer. Make sure you let them know that you want the opportunity to work for them and that you would be an asset to them. This way, they'll see you're enthusiastic and ready to take on challenges.

5) **Common Interview Questions to Practice with...**

1: How would you describe yourself?

If you have just finished your studies and have little experience, it would be appropriate to begin presenting yourself by telling your qualities matching with the position. Being motivated, organized, dynamic, friendly, liking challenge and people are some good example of qualities required in a vast range of positions.

Then, make a short, organized statement of your education and professional achievements and professional goals.

2: Can you give a specific example of a time when you were proactive in responding to a problem?

Give an example of a situation where you had to make a quick decision or to react efficiently, such as coping with different requests all at once. If you have never been in a situation like that, give an example of what you would do if you would have to face that (for instance, asking customers to be patient, etc).

3: In your past work experience, can you give me an example of improvement you suggested or/and implemented?

Give an example of a situation where you tried to improve your work by suggesting changes in the way your work was usually done. If that did not happen, try to figure which kind of changed you could have done (such as using different software or organizing the work place).

4: Can you give an example of a satisfied client you had? How did you make sure his/her needs was met?

A good way to answer is first to put ahead the importance of understanding your products. A good sell can't be achieved if you are not able to give the right information to your client. If you have never been in that situation give an example of what you would do.

5: How do you set targets for yourself in the workplace and see if you have achieved them?

A general target would be in sales a certain amount of product or dollar target. In general services, achieving your goal mean leaving the customers satisfied with their purchase and the quality of your service.

6: Can you give me an example of a time when you were confronted with dishonesty in the workplace? How did you handle it?

The best approach to that question is to say that you would advise your supervisor. Show that you are reliable and that one can count on you. What is important for an employer is your commitment to the company.

7: Describe the difference between good guest service and exceptional guest service? Provide an example of a time you left a guest with a positive impression?

The thing that makes guest service exceptional is your ability to go beyond what you are expected to do. Do not be content with just functioning. For instance, always try to help – even if it's not your responsibility.

8: Can you think of a time when safety at work was an issue? How did you address that problem?

To answer correctly is to show that you understand that safety and security are paramount. Give an example. If not, think about the best way to react in case of emergencies.

9: What is team work for you? Can you give me an example?

Team work is about sharing information, helping co-workers, making sure information is transmitted to the right person, thinking about the details that would affect colleagues, being able to listen to suggestions and to take them into account, etc. Try to find an example in a previous job or during your studies where team work was important.

10: What are your strengths and weaknesses?

If you have sufficiently researched the organization, you should be able to imagine what skills the company values. List them, and then give examples where you have demonstrated these skills. Here are few good examples: your ability to prioritize, problem-solving, ability to work under pressure, focus, positive attitude.

Be positive; turn a weakness into a strength. For example, "I can be a person who worries about my work. Because of that I sometimes stay late to make sure the job is done well."

11: What are your goals?

The interviewer wants to know if your plans and the company's goals are compatible. Let him know that you are ambitious enough to plan ahead. Talk about your desire to learn more and improve performance. Be specific about how you will meet the goals you have set for yourself.

12: Why would you like to work in this position?

Few questions are more important, so it is important to answer clearly and with enthusiasm. The best way to respond is to be prepared and knowledgeable about the company. Spend some time researching the company so you can talk about the benefits of working for this employer. Compare your goals with objectives of the company and the position, then reiterate why you would be an asset to the employer. Let the interviewer know what you can do for the company. Even though the question is about why you want to work here, you still need to convince the interviewer that hiring you will benefit the company.

13: What qualifies you for this job?

The best way to respond is to describe your skills and experience in detail and to connect them to the job. If you have sufficiently researched the organization, you should be able to imagine what skills the company values. Tie your skills and experience in with those listed in the job description for the position. That way, the employer will see that you have the qualifications necessary to do the job. It's also important to be honest and accurate. Don't embellish, because you don't know who the hiring manager will be checking with when they check references.

Here are some examples of skills and experiences – depending on the position field – making you a good fit for the position: Computer skills, cash handling, retail experience, languages, mechanically inclined, telephone service experience, high volume retail & guest service experience, conflict resolution & problem solving, professional kitchen experience, training in food safety, etc.

14: How do you think you could make a contribution to our company?

The best way to answer is to give examples of what you have accomplished in the past, and to relate them to what you can achieve in the future. Describe examples of how effective you have been in your other positions, change you have implemented, and goals you have achieved. Also, relate your abilities to the employer's goals. You will want to let the interviewer know that you have the skills necessary to do the job, the ability effectively meet challenges, and the flexibility and diplomacy to work well with other employees and with management. Be positive and reiterate your interest.

15: What are a couple of work related accomplishments that have given you satisfaction and why?

Try to link the satisfaction you got from work related accomplishments, to benefits you may provide to the company: helping people deal with problems; helping find a solution, helping people

accomplish goals. You can also mention your satisfaction of adding useful information to your portfolio of skills, so you show the interviewer your willingness to learn something new.

16: What are the most important rewards you expect from your job?

As you are looking for a job abroad, it's important to mention your will to learn something about another culture and workplace. Doing a complete and respectful job and having experience in a related area work are other rewards you may expect. Tell the interviewer your enthusiasm about working hard and learning something new.

17: What is your ideal job and work environment?

Stay away from a specific job. The best is to stay generic and say something like: A job where I love the work, people, can contribute and enjoy going to work.

18: How do you work under pressure (please provide examples)?

The answer may vary from one person to another. Thus, it's a good idea to give examples of how you have handled stress to your interviewer. That way, they get a clear picture how well you can work in stressful situations.

- Prioritizing responsibilities so I have a clear idea of what needs to be done when, has helped me effectively manage pressure on the job.
- If the people I am managing are contributing to my stress level, I discuss options for better handling difficult situations with them.
- I actually work better under pressure and I've found that I enjoy working in a challenging environment.
- I manage stress by visiting the gym every evening. It's a great stress reducer.

19: What have you learned from your mistakes?

Don't hide your mistakes; make them positives by showing that they allowed you to learn something useful for your future work.

20: What research have you done about this company?

This is a good question to define your organization and willingness to obtain the job. The best way to get global information about the company is to check their website. Find out where they have been and where they are going. What are the current issues and who are the major players. Avoid information that could be perceived as too confidential. Too much knowledge may make the interviewer suspicious.

21: Do you have any questions?

It's your turn! Have interview questions of your own ready to ask. You aren't simply trying to get this job - you are also interviewing the employer to assess whether this company and the position are a good fit for you. Be careful concerning the pertinence of the questions you ask. Avoid the irrelevant ones, such as the possibility to take your vacation at certain times or the possibility to change your schedule. Here are some examples of interesting questions:

- How would you describe the responsibilities of the position?
- How would you describe a typical week/day in this position?
- Is this a new position? Please elaborate.
- If I am extended a job offer, how soon would you like me to start?
- When can I expect to hear from you?

Conclusion of the interview and Job Offer

There will usually be some form of wrap up, perhaps a thank you for doing the telephone interview. In the majority of cases, the interviewer will have spoken to you long enough to make a decision and will often offer (or not) a position. If offered, you may enthusiastically agree and proceed with the next steps. If the interviewer indicates that they need some time to think or discuss your interview with superiors, you should thank the interviewer enthusiastically and let them know that you will be anxiously awaiting their reply. Be sincere and thankful.

Follow-Up, Contracts, Visa Processing and Next Steps...

If you are going through Go International, the next steps involve communication between your home-country agent and us. If the job offer is not immediately offered, we will find out what the outcome is for you. Either way, the next steps will involve Go International having a contract made for the employer to sign. This then goes back to the agent in your home country, who will inform you how to proceed with visa and travel document arrangements.