

Tips for job applicants





TIPS FOR JOB APPLICANTS

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INTRODUCTION

Competition will be strong for the advertised International Banking Group (TCI) Ltd jobs. The objective of this guide is to help increase your confidence and provide tips for success, so you can present yourself as the best candidate possible for the job opportunities you are most interested in pursuing.

This guide provides a quick overview of the hiring process for recruitment and selection from an applicant's perspective. It contains information to help you:

- Focus your job preparation activities;
- Assess your skills and knowledge;
- Know what to expect – the next steps after you have applied for a position;
- Prepare for a job interview; and
- Incorporate feedback you receive into your learning/career development plan.

Even if you have experience in applying and interviewing for jobs, there may be some tips in here that are new to you.

Although your job application and preparation for interview are private, we encourage you to enlist the support of your friends and family along the way. Objective feedback from people who really know you, can help you make a positive first impression in your job application approach, and help you feel better prepared to interview successfully.

APPLYING FOR THE JOB

If you see a job advertisement that you find interesting, the first thing to do is to take your time and write a well thought through CV & cover letter. These are two key tips for any CV & cover letter:

- Make them specific to the company and job you are applying for, especially the cover letter. This means referring back to the ad for the position and reflecting your experiences against what the employer is seeking and/or mentioning why you are interested in the particular company or sector of business.
- Take your time but meet the deadline. While an applicant who responds to ads quickly is considered first, they are less likely to be considered seriously if their application contains typos, spelling errors or other grammar mistakes. Don't leave your application to the last moment, make sure you leave plenty of time to re-read it before sending it to us.

RESPONDING TO A SPECIFIC JOB AD

When you see a specific job ad that matches your career aspirations and requirements, send us your CV with a cover letter. The cover letter should include the following information:

- The correct name and spelling for the addressee
- The title of the position you are applying for
- Why you think you would be a suitable candidate for the job
- How your experiences and education reflect the requirements advertised



SENDING A SPECULATIVE APPLICATION

If you are not sure how and whether your particular skills or experience fit the roles currently advertised, but you are interested in working with International Banking Group (TCI) Ltd and/or would like to pursue a career in banking, please send us your CV and cover letter. In this case, your cover letter should include the following information:

- The correct name and spelling of the addressee
- The reasons why you would like to work with the specific company or sector
- A short outline as to why you think you would be an asset to the company, preferably with a specific example of where you have demonstrated these skills or attitude.

Please make sure to **proof read** your CV and cover letter before sending it to us. Typos, grammatical and spelling errors are both a sign of bad attention to detail and lack of good written communication skills. Do have someone proof read your letter and CV for you, sometimes it takes a fresh pair of eyes to notice mistakes.

AFTER APPLYING FOR THE JOB

REVIEW THE JOB PROFILE AND ADVERTISEMENT

During the span of your career, many jobs can come your way. You should always be thinking about the ways you would like to see your career progress. By assessing your competencies and being proactive about your own career development, you are more likely to make the best choices, than if you simply react to opportunities. As you review the Role Profile, think about how you are suited to the role(s) you have applied to; consider your skills, knowledge and experience by asking yourself the following questions:

- Why am I interested in this job?
- How would this job help to develop my career?
- Would it add to my own personal and professional development?
- What could I gain from this job in terms of job satisfaction?
- Am I being realistic about my contribution considering my skills, knowledge and experience, and what I can bring to the role?

ASSESS AND MATCH YOUR SKILL/KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

Have you got what is required? Prior to advertising any position, we have established the purpose of the job and the skills, experience and attributes required to be successful in the role. The job advertisement contains a summary of these details. It's up to you to compare yourself against the job ad and see how you match against what's required, which is essentially a self-analysis exercise.

- **Your Skills and Knowledge** - What skills and knowledge do you have that match the stated job requirements?
- **Your Personal Attributes** - How do your personal characteristics correspond to ones stated in the job ad, and what qualities do you possess that would make you successful in this role?
- **Your Experience** - Do you have relevant experience in the type of role or functional area? How strong is your background and what are your specific achievements? What key responsibilities in your current role would enable your success in the position?



PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

The interview is the key stage in your job search! It's your opportunity to make a positive impression, talk about your skills and accomplishments, and prove you have what it takes to be successful in the role. Everything counts – from the way you answer the questions, to the types of examples you provide, to your attitude and personal presentation in the interview. You shouldn't assume that your background or experience as stated in your job application will get you the job. Instead, carefully prepare for the interview so you can put your best foot forward.

The interviewing team, which will normally be the President and another member of management will employ standard behavioural interview techniques, and use questions based upon the job description and the specialised skills and knowledge required for success in the position.

The following will give you a good idea of what to expect in the interview and how to prepare for it.

BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEWS

Behavioural interviews focus on using "show me" types of questions. A traditional interview question is "What would you do **if** you had a customer who wasn't happy with the service you gave them?". In a behavioural interview you are asked targeted questions about your actual experience and behaviour, and the interviewer will be listening for specific examples of how you have handled situations or problems in the past.

Behavioral questions begin with phrases like, "tell me about a time when," or "can you give me an example of." The interviewer wants to hear your real-life examples. When an interviewer asks such questions, he or she is listening for specific examples of how you handled situations similar to the ones you may handle in this job.

This is your chance to talk about your accomplishments. If you can demonstrate through examples (preferably recent ones) that you've succeeded in certain areas, you will have a stronger opportunity to be the successful candidate for the job. After all, if you did it successfully somewhere else yesterday, you can do here.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

You should be prepared to answer a wide range of questions. Types of questions will vary depending on the role, but for most jobs you can count on specific questions about your communication skills, and your customer focus and team building skills. Here are some examples of "tough" interview questions you should consider as you prepare for your interview:

- Please describe the approach you use today in ensuring excellent levels of customer service in your organisation.
- Describe how your personal background has influenced who you are today, your career progression, and your leadership and management style.
- Explain how you define success, and provide some examples of how "successful" you have been.
- What mistakes have you made during your career?
- What is the most adverse team situation you've had to manage in your professional life? How did you deal with it? What was the outcome?
- What is your greatest strength as a communicator?



SOME TIPS FOR PREPARATION

The most important elements for a successful interview are *preparation* and *practice*. The bottom line: be prepared and ready!

Review the Role Profile – Prior to the interview, you will be provided with a detailed role profile for the position, that provides further description of the job responsibilities and accountabilities, and the skills, knowledge and experience required. You should review this in detail, and think in-depth about how your background and experience meets the position requirements and will enable your success in the role.

Write Out Your Examples - You can prepare by writing out your skills and experiences before the interview. By recalling your past successes ahead of time, specific examples will be “top of mind”, and you will not be caught off guard in the meeting. While there is no way you can predict exactly what the interviewer is going to ask you, you can prepare what you want him or her to know about your past as a predictor of your future performance.

Determine which experiences you have had that would be appropriate for the position based on the role profile. If the job requires leadership, write about the times when your leadership skills were recognised, or made a difference with your team or customers. Don't even think about saying, "I have excellent leadership skills," without having two or three examples of when you used those skills. To help write your examples, you can use the STAR analysis:

S = name a SITUATION you faced

T = explain the TASK you had to complete

A = describe what ACTION you took

R = tell the RESULTS of your actions

Here's an example of STAR, demonstrating sales capability:

Situation: I had a customer who did not want to hear about a product because of a prior interaction with the company.

Task: My job was to convince the customer to give the company a second chance and try the product.

Action: I listened to her story and heard her complaint. I then explained how I would have handled things differently and how I could offer her better service through this new product by...

Result: I helped to change her mind. She not only bought the product, but also complimented how I handled her account. She's now one of our best customers.

Involve Others - To provide you with some practice prior to the interview, you should consider arranging a “mock” session with a colleague, family member or friend. Use any questions you anticipate might be asked, to help you rehearse sharing your examples. The more you practice, the more your confidence will grow. Rehearse until you can easily answer questions with clarity, spontaneity and crispness. Experience shows almost everyone can use interview practice.

Prepare Your Own Questions for the Interviewer(s) – At the conclusion of an interview you may be asked, "Do you have any questions?". A common answer is, "No, I think you've covered everything very well." This really passes on your opportunity to ask some critical questions that could help you decide whether or not you want the role. Remember, the interview should be an exchange of information, and it is essential for you to express an interest in the area and the work being done. By asking questions, you will



demonstrate investigative skills and illustrate you are focused about the type of role you see as your next career move. Here are some relevant questions you may consider asking:

- Are there any major changes in the area expected in the near future?
- What training will be available?
- When will I know if I am a successful candidate?
- What career progression opportunities are there likely to be from this job?
- How do you see this area developing over the next 3-5 years?

YOUR APPEARANCE AND PRESENTATION

Don't underestimate the power of a first impression. People make assumptions based on your appearance and presentation at your first meeting. Your look should be consistent with your message, you are more likely to get a positive reception if you are dressed and prepared for the part. Bring a folder with you, containing:

- some reminders for yourself about your skills/goals/behavioural examples;
- a pen and paper to make notes before and after the interview;
- reading glasses, if required.

Ensure you know the names of the people you are meeting with, and how to get to the exact meeting location. Know where you're going in advance, and leave yourself plenty of time to get there. Plan to arrive a little bit early (about 10 minutes before the scheduled time) -- not just on time and *never late!* Use the first minutes after arrival to become familiar with your surroundings and allow yourself time to settle and breathe. Relax and encourage yourself by thinking positively. You are well suited to the position and an asset to the company.

Here are some other things to keep in mind during your interview:

Do:

- Walk into the room confidently; extend a positive handshake.
- Sit up straight; keep eye contact with the interviewer.
- Speak clearly and audibly; smile.
- Use the interviewers' name if a natural opportunity arises.
- Be enthusiastic and interested.
- Listen carefully and ask for clarification if the question is not clear.
- Keep your answers concise and to the point -- two to three minutes long.
- Act like a consultant not an applicant. Think of yourself in problem-solving mode, and in partnership with your interviewer.
- Present your value and engage in a dialogue.
- Be comfortable letting brief silences occur.
- Confirm whether to ask questions as the interview progresses or save them up and ask all at once.
- Seek clarity about the role, about the leader, about the direction of the business.

Avoid:

- Being too aggressive or argumentative.
- Slouching in the chair.
- Trying to read what is on the interviewer's desk.
- Giving simple "Yes" or "No" answers.
- Giving long-winded, rambling answers.
- Fidgeting or fiddling with fingers, rings, pens.
- Leaving the interview with unanswered questions.



AFTER THE INTERVIEW

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

The President or the other member of Management will be responsible for communicating directly with and providing feedback to those who have been interviewed. Individuals who are not selected will be given specific feedback during this discussion intended to assist them with future applications/interviews.

NEXT STEPS

If you are successful:

- Ask us when you will be able to have a familiarisation visit or next meeting.
- Work with your current manager and IBG to work out a transition plan and timing for taking on your new role.

If you are not successful:

- Keep in mind we are operating in a very competitive market. You won't be successful at every job interview, and there may be other opportunities ahead that are suitable for you.
- Reflect on the feedback the interviewer provides you with in your post-interview discussion. Analyse all possible factors impacting your success, so you can better direct your future job search efforts and continue to develop your skills. For example, consider:

Job Fit / Future Opportunities

- Am I really applying for the right sort of job?
- Did my skills, knowledge and experience match the level of job I applied for?
- Are my aspirations realistic in terms of my current position and level of responsibility?
- Am I being too narrow in my search? How could I widen my horizons?
- Do I need to rethink career direction if there are fewer opportunities in my chosen area?

Application / Interview Skills

- Did my application overstate my potential, expertise, or skills?
- Do I need to review my interview techniques or presentation?
- How can I present myself more effectively in face-to-face situations?
- What was the most difficult part of the interview? Were there any questions I found difficult to answer? What would have made it an easier or a better experience?
- If I could do the interview again, what would I do differently?

You should also consider working with your manager to develop an action plan and identify some immediate next steps for you to enhance your application and interview skills, and further your learning and career development.

GOOD LUCK!

