

A guide for Graphic Design students in

MARKETING & SELF PROMOTION

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

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Coping with Interviews - Introduction.

- Having done everything and got that precious interview date you will now need to be able to interview well.
- You will be nervous and full of adrenaline.
- They will be looking at more than just your skills...
- ...your personality and attitude counts greatly.

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Preparing for the interview.

- Have you called and asked about the environment and the resources that will be on hand?
- Have you done your research on the company?
- Is your port folio layout and content appropriate?
- Have you got your questions to ask them?

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Preparing for the interview.

- Have you researched the area for living?
- Will you be happy there?
- Can you afford to make the move?
- Have you planned the day of the interview? When will you arrive/leave?

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Preparing for the interview – Before you leave.

- Have you organised your transport?
- Are your clothes ready and presentable?
- Is there a coffee shop nearby?
- Do you have a contact number if there are transport delays?
- Do you have the interview letter / email to hand?

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Preparing for the interview – On the Day.

- Plan to get there early?
- If you are early enough, grab a coffee and freshen up. Go over your questions and answers.
- On arrival, check that you have the interviewer's name correct.
- Avoid making last minute changes.

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Interview – Keep in mind.

- The interviewer needs someone like you?
- Imagine yourself in the job, how does it make you feel.
- Leave pauses. Give yourself time to think about your answers – Don't rabbit!
- Don't know? Express a willingness to learn.
- There will be unexpected questions. Stay calm and think.

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Interview – Awkward examples.

- Why are you interested in this job?
- Why are you particularly suited to it?
- How long did this project take? Why did it take so long?
- How much would this work cost me?
- Have you worked in a team and how did you contribute?

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Interview – Awkward examples.

- If there was this problem...how would you solve it?
- How did you save these files for print / web?
- Describe your career aspirations?
- What are your strengths / weaknesses?
- What will you bring to the company?

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Interview – Awkward examples.

- Tell me about a dispute that you had to resolve.
- Tell me about a major change in your life.
- What are you currently reading and why?
- What is the weakest project in your portfolio?
- Why is it in there?

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Interview – Awkward examples.

- How competent are you on the Mac/PC?
- Where else have you applied?
- You may be asked to do a design task. This would normally be outlined before you arrive but it could be dropped on you when you get there.

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Interview – Why the awkward questions.

- These questions are designed to put you on the spot.
- Always, always keep your cool.
- Take your time and give it your best shot.
- Be honest in your responses – Don't bullshit!
- All of these examples came from ex-students.

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Interview – Keep in mind.

- You are constantly presenting yourself.
- Try to retain composure and confidence – don't be cocky!
- Pleasant smiles help, even if they are not returned.
- Don't let defensive body language creep you out.
- Keep a natural eye contact with the interviewers.

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Interview – Your questions.

- When your turn comes for questions be prepared and be respectful...
- What are your main responsibilities going to be?
- What problems are commonly encountered?
- How does the team operate?
- Are there any plans for future development?

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Interview – Leave these to last...

- Any questions about terms & conditions / pay etc.
- Only ask these if you have to, they can be checked later if they offer you the job.
- Thank them for their time, it was nice to meet them etc.
- Even if you hate them at this point!
- If you really want the job, leave a keepsake you have designed.

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Interview – Employers comments.

- Selling yourself, whether for a freelance job or a full time one, is all important... After all, every new briefing is an interview isn't it? *(Peter Vosper – HMSO)*
- I never employ on the basis of a portfolio only, how do I know if I can work with them? *(Paul Drewson – SDQ)*
- You see it differently when you have the responsibility to get it all done – a little pressure at interview can give a great insight. *(Ben Louis-Smith – Slightly Different Design)*

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Interview – Employers comments.

- We use a lot of illustrators and designers... we usually interview twice to test them. *(Sharon Blowers – Finishing Line Art)*
- We are responsible to our clients... we never accept onto our books until we are 100% sure. *(Bob Berendsen – IllustratorsRep)*
- Uni projects are one thing but can a student work to direction? *(Eddy Wouters – VMF Hoffman)*

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Interview – Employers comments.

- We sometimes test people by asking them to do a basic test on a computer right now. *(Olaf Robrecht – Illustrators Agent)*
- We work online with most of our freelancers and rarely meet some of them face to face. Illustrators and designers need to develop their internet communication skills if they want to work with companies like ours. *(Su Jones – Tigerprint/Marks & Spencer)*

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Interview – Employers comments.

- If a candidate does not have any questions it worries us. They haven't engaged with the interviewer and our company. *(Nick Gilbert – Agency recruiter)*
- I love to see the faces of people who haven't prepared for the costing questions – they squirm so much and are so totally unprofessional that they are laughed out. *(Bernard McCabe – Dreamscape Design)*

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Interview – Employers comments.

- Presentation, presentation, presentation – Neat concise portfolio and neat concise personal appearance. *(Nick Gilbert – Agency recruiter)*
- Those big portfolios and student projects – what a joke, how on earth do they think the interview will go if they turn up acting like a novice before saying a word? *(Daniel Allen – Danallen Design)*

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Interview – Closing comments.

- Just thought I'd say hi...I wanted to let you know that I have just conducted my first interview...heehee so funny, all the time I was there I was thinking back to what you were saying about first impressions. So important! I can't believe how my perceptions changed sitting on the other side of the desk. *(Anne Scourfield – Hello Advertising Group)*
- For freelance work you need to be better at sales than you are at design.




