

Stages of Career Planning

Stage 4

Stage 4: Implementing the Plan

- Participating in the CPD program
 - CPD calendar
 - Attending professional development activities
- Job sourcing strategies
- Prepare or update resume
- Applying for new job opportunities
- Preparing for the interview – interview skills and questions

Participating in the CPD program

Make sure that you keep up to date with AIFST events and the Continuing Professional Development Program. Now that you have set some clear goals for your career you can select relevant events to help you develop new skills and knowledge that might be helpful as you pursue new directions.

Making the most of career coaching and mentoring opportunities.

You may wish to approach a colleague in your workplace to ask for advice. Or alternatively contact AIFST to find out how they can assist. The section below provides some information about mentors and coaches and why /when you would benefit from working with them.

Coach vs Mentor

Coaching and mentoring are very similar and are often used as interchangeable terms. There are subtle differences.

What is Mentoring?

There are many different definitions of mentoring. In the literature, the terms mentoring and coaching are at times used interchangeably. However, many authors agree that mentoring comprises various roles including: advisor, sponsor, advocate, coach, protector, role model and guide. A mentoring relationship is a complex one in which two individuals of differing levels of experience and expertise are paired together for the purpose of growth, support and development. A mentor is usually a person of a more senior level who agrees to act as a guide, leader, role model... for a person of lesser experience or expertise. A mentor's role will be to demonstrate, explain, model, share and facilitate while the protégés observe, question and explore.

What is Coaching?

Coaching is a goal oriented, solution focused process in which a coach facilitates workplace or personal growth in an individual. Coaching is about moving people through change. It is different to mentoring, but may be a process that a mentor uses. Coaching is more about asking the right questions not telling the person what to do.

What does a Coach do?

- Provide direction, resources and support
- Guide and support another individual to achieve their goals
- Encourage learning
- Affirm achievements and progress
- Provide feedback and suggestions
- Build a positive environment

- Give ongoing support

A coach can provide support to others in a number of key areas:

- To achieve and fulfil their goals
- To help others reach their potential
- To support and assist others in attaining their career and learning aspirations

When would you access a mentor or a coach?

The scenarios below provide some ideas for when coaches and mentors can be useful.

Scenario 1:

Jim has been working in the food industry for approximately 20 years and has mainly worked in a product development laboratory, working with starch products. He is being encouraged to move into marketing and management and is feeling uncomfortable with this move. He is considering a complete change of job but has no idea how to do this.

Jim looks on the new AIFST website and finds the new Career Tools Package. He works through the Self Assessment Tools to help him think about his current skills and knowledge and to think about his strengths and his skill gaps. He arranges a meeting with a **career coach** to help him work through the **self assessment process**. The **career coach** helps him *set some goals*. Some of the initial goals are set around networking and meeting people who may be useful **mentors who will share their industry knowledge and experience**.

He plans to attend some AIFST events and meet some people from different sections of the food industry. He is particularly interested in meeting with some food engineers. He has identified this interest as a result of the self assessment process.

During a food engineering meeting, Jim meets **Ron, a very experienced engineer who offers to spend some time with Jim to talk about the role of the engineer in the food industry**. They form a good relationship and Ron offers to mentor Jim for the next 12 months to help make the transition from his current job into the engineering field and to help him find a job.

Jim's **career coach** checks in with him from time to time to check on his **progress towards achieving his goals**.

Scenario 2:

Rosario is a postgraduate student just completing a PhD in food microbiology/biotechnology. Her PhD supervisor has become a **mentor** for her and is advising her on her job options. She would like to continue as a researcher but wants to consider other options first. She decides to talk to a **career coach** about her **options** and by using the **AIFST Career tools** she identifies some possible job options in the industry. The **career coach** then works with Rosario to consider **her options, set some goals and develop an action plan** that will help her find her first job.

Job Sourcing Methods

If you have decided on the type of job you would like to apply for or if you would like to gather more information on the industry and the current employment opportunities there are many options available. The list below is not exhaustive but it covers a number of ways that you can access information about the current job market for the industry.

The Internet

- The internet is a great resource to find jobs. Some companies use the internet as the only method of advertising. Examples of sites include Seek, CareerOne, My Career. Company sites also advertise upcoming employment opportunities. AIFST is also a good site to search for job opportunities in the food industry.

Newspapers

- National newspapers hold the additional benefit of attracting larger employers, and having larger more varied recruitment sections.
- Local newspapers are a good source for finding jobs in your local area. They are usually the first place that smaller companies will advertise their jobs

Job Network Agencies and Private Recruitment Agencies

- Just register as looking for work and provide a copy of your resume as well as what type of job you are interested in doing

Hot and Cold Canvassing

- Cold canvassing is when you contact an employer by telephone, letter or door knocking regardless of whether a position has been advertised
- Hot canvassing is when you have a lead of some kind as the actual position exists

Industry Journals

- Food Australia is a good place to start.

Referrals

- Larger organisations sometimes offer bonuses to employees for suggesting a candidate for a job, do you know anyone that may be able to help you?

Networking

- Traditional networking involves developing a list of your personal and professional contacts, informing them that you are conducting a job search and asking your contacts to point you in the direction of anyone they know who may be able to help.

Professional Associates

- Membership with professional associations provides access to positions in that profession. It is also useful to visit professional associations web sites for a listing of current vacancies

Universities and Tafe Colleges and other Registered Training Organisations

- Student unions often provide employment services for students and access to career advisors.

Resume Writing

Whether you are starting out in the industry or you have been working for years, you need to be able to communicate your skills and knowledge to others in an informative and concise way. The best way to do this is with a resume. There is no wrong or right way to prepare this document but the resume' should be prepared as a sales and marketing document rather than a collection of your previous position descriptions.

You must engage the recruiter and differentiate your resume' from others.

Some tips to help you do this:

Do include the following information on your resume:

- Name, Address, Phone Number, Email, Key Skills / Competencies, Professional Qualifications, Education, Work Experience, Referees, Awards.

Do not include the following information on your resume:

- Date of Birth, Hobbies, Marital Status, Nationality, Religious or Political Orientation

Set out your resume as follows:

- Using a clear and easy to read format, lots of white space
- Using a combination of bullet points and short paragraphs
- Put name, address and telephone number on first page
- Tailor the resume to suit the requirements of the advertisement

Think about the following when writing the detail:

- Always emphasise your achievements for each job, use active verbs
- Be clear, concise and always refer back to the job ad to remain relevant
- Don't list every training course you have ever done – just list the good stuff
- Ensure there are no typos or spelling mistakes
- Don't use "I" statements – change "I developed a new ..." to "Developed new ..."
- Use a clear date format in your work experience section eg. July 2006 – Dec 2009
- Unless it is specified that you include the names of referees, do not include details but indicate that they are available on request. Do not include written references with your resume.

Preparing Your Resume

Use the headings below to draft relevant information for inclusion in your resume.

Name:

Address:

Contact Details:

Skills I need to include:

Work Experience (list the key achievements for each position held):

Education & Other Study:

Referees:

Resume Checklist

(You may wish to check an existing resume against the points below).

Does your resume ...

- Have your name, address and contact details on the first page
- Suit the requirements of the advertisement/ position
- Use active verbs to emphasise your achievements
- Contain clear, relevant information related to the position
- List your achievements
- Demonstrate your understanding of the position/ company
- Make sense & outline your work history in a clear and credible way
- Consider the needs of the employer
- Start with the areas most relevant for the position
- Use a clear and easy to read format with lots of white space
- Use a combination of bullet points and short paragraphs
- Contain spelling or grammatical mistakes
- Contain any potentially discriminating information eg. date of birth, nationality, marital status. ***If so remove these details from your resume!***

Please also refer to the Action words list to enhance your resume. These words are helpful for summarising your achievements.

Action Words to Enhance your Resume

Accelerated	Documented	Lobbied	Reduced
Accomplished	Earned	Located	Refined
Achieved	Edited	Maintained	Regulated
Adapted	Eliminated	Managed	Remodelled
Added	Enabled	Mapped	Reorganised
Adjusted	Encouraged	Marketed	Replaced
Administered	Endorsed	Maximised	Restructured
Adopted	Engineered	Measured	Resulted
Advanced	Enhanced	Mediated	Retained
Amended	Examined	Merged	Reviewed
Analysed	Exceeded	Modelled	Revised
Arbitrated	Exchanged	Moderated	Rewrote
Assisted	Expedited	Modified	Scheduled
Authored	Extended	Motivated	Secured
Balanced	Facilitated	Moved	Selected
Broadened	Financed	Multiplied	Serviced
Built	Focused	Negotiated	Signed
Calculated	Forecasted	Noticed	Simplified
Capitalised	Formalised	Nurtured	Sold
Carried out	Formed	Observed	Spearheaded
Centralised	Founded	Obtained	Specified
Chaired	Fulfilled	Opened	Stabilised
Challenged	Gained	Operated	Streamlined
Checked	Gathered	Operationalised	Strengthened
Circulated	Generated	Organised	Structured
Compared	Governed	Oversaw	Studied
Compiled	Graded	Participated	Suggested
Completed	Guided	Perceived	Supplied
Composed	Handled	Performed	Supervised
Computed	Identified	Permitted	Supported
Conducted	Illustrated	Persuaded	Tailored
Consolidated	Illuminated	Pioneered	Targeted
Created	Implemented	Planned	Taught
Critiqued	Improved	Presented	Terminated
Cultivated	Improvvised	Preserved	Tested
Cut	Inaugurated	Prioritised	Trained
Debugged	Influenced	Processed	Transferred
Decided	Informed	Produced	Transformed
Decentralised	Initiated	Programmed	Translated
Decreased	Innovated	Promoted	Undertook
Deferred	Instructed	Proposed	Unified
Defined	Interpreted	Provided	Updated
Delegated	Introduced	Published	Upgraded
Delivered	Invented	Quantified	Utilised
Demonstrated	Investigated	Quoted	Validated
Described	Joined	Raised	Verified
Designed	Launched	Rated	Witnessed
Developed	Lectured	Recommended	Won
Displayed	Led	Rectified	Worked
Diversified	Lightened	Redesigned	Wrote

Sample Resumes

A sample resume is shown below as a **possible way** of presenting your resume.

1st Floor, Big College
UNSW
Kensington NSW 2052

Mobile: 0403 000000
E-mail jsmith1234567@hotmail.com

Joan Smith

Education

1991–1995 North State University, North County, UK
B.Sc Food Science.
2009-Current
Currently completing a PhD in Biotechnology, UNSW

Summary of Skills

- Conceptual/ Analytical Thinking
- Strong Interpersonal & Communication skills
- Training Delivery & Presentation skills
- Business Acumen
- Project Management Skills
- Sales and Results Focus
- Consulting skills
- Research & Development skills
- Quality Assurance and quality control

Employment

Jan 2004– Dec 2011 Smith and Johns Sydney, NSW

District Sales Manager

- Increased regional sales from \$25 million to \$350 million.
- Managed 250 sales representatives in 3 Eastern states.
- Implemented training course for new recruits — speeding profitability.

April 2000– Dec 2004 New Vineyards Hunter Valley, NSW

Sales Representative

- Expanded sales team from 50 to 100 representatives.

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- Tripled division revenues for each sales associate.
- Expanded sales to include mass-market accounts

Dec 1995–Mar 2000 All Foods, Inc. Southport, QLD

Quality Assurance Technician

- Received company's quality award four years in a row.
- Developed Excellence in Quality Production training course.

R&D Technologist

- Worked as part of the company's most successful development team launching 2 products in a 12 month period

Details of referees are available on request.

References

Applying for new job opportunities

Once you have prepared your resume and you have found possible job opportunities it is essential that your application is complete and addresses the selection criteria. The best way to do this is to write a cover letter that you will send with your resume'.

A cover letter tells a potential employer why you are sending them your resume'. The cover letter is designed to introduce the resume' and interest that potential employer in reading your resume', just as the resume' is designed to interest that person in meeting you. The cover letter must be neat and clean in both content and production.

A cover letter should include the following information:

- Section 1: Your address
- Section 2: The date
- Section 3: The mailing address of the person and company to whom you are sending the resume'.
- Section 4: In reference to – Your highlighting an advertisement that has appeared in a newspaper, an industry journal, an internet site, etc. (e.g. RE: Applying for the position of store person that appeared on SEEK.COM.AU – reference number SE0001.)
- Section 5: The 1st paragraph should explain why you are writing this letter. Is it in response to an advertisement, the result of a previous meeting, or at the suggestion of someone who is helping you through your networking contacts?
- Section 6: The 2nd paragraph should address the ESSENTIAL & DESIRABLE CRITERIA that could appear in a job advertisement. You should present one or two highlights of your experience in terms of what you believe to be the requirements or needs of the company. You may wish to write this section as an attachment to the cover letter. The format is not important but it is absolutely essential to demonstrate how well you can meet the criteria. Attaching the resume' without linking your experience and expertise to the criteria means that the recruiter has to do the work to make the link between you and job. Your application is likely to be passed over!!
- Section 7: The final paragraph should close with a request for an interview and any pertinent information needed to schedule the interview. This might include hours during which you can be reached at a particular telephone number.
- Section 8: The correct closing should always be used, Sincerely, or Yours truly, followed by your signature, followed by your full name typed out.

Probably one of the most difficult aspects of writing cover letters is the addressing of criteria. How can you demonstrate that you can satisfy the criteria without writing a long essay about your past? Some people also find it difficult to write positively about their achievements and will tend to tone down what they have done or achieved resulting in boring and bland information.

You are very likely to have to address the following criteria when applying for a job:

1. Communication skills (written, verbal, presentation, negotiation etc.) The detail about the type of communication skills will vary from job to job.
2. Ability to work with others and work independently. Team work may be included with this skill set.
3. Problem solving, decision making and use of initiative
4. Adherence to and/or implementation of policies, procedures, legislation
5. Ability to manage time and prioritise and or organisational ability

These skills are sometimes referred to as generic skills and are transferrable from one job to another. You will also be required to address criteria that are specific to a job or role.

The table below shows short paragraphs written to address criteria. These examples are not exhaustive but demonstrate how to write your response in a personal way. You should make sure that your response aligns with your achievements as written in your resume'.

Addressing Essential and/or Desirable Skills:

- **Superior communication incorporating negotiation, liaison and consulting and presentation skills.**

The superiority of my communication skills is demonstrated in my current role in a number of ways:
I am required to give formal presentations, facilitate discussions, conduct training programs and preside over seminar programs on a daily basis. Last year I was invited to speak at a national Food Industry Conference. I also presented a paper at the national Technical Staff conference last year on the use of training packages to up skill technical staff in the workplace.

Liaison with staff at all levels of the organization including senior management is necessary on a continuous basis to ensure that development activities meet the needs of the client and gain approval at senior management level. Liaison with senior management over the past 5 years has resulted in establishment of several major training programs (Refer to my Resume for details) and increased participation of staff in these programs.

Development of workshops and seminars, organizing speakers and invited guests involves negotiation and consultation with staff both inside and outside the organisation. For example, I consult with Senior Staff to nominate speakers for a range of workshops and last month I negotiated the services of several external training providers for delivery of management development seminars and coaching training. I have also been invited to contribute to working parties set up for both operational and strategic purposes e.g. a Working Party to review promotion processes.

My written communication skills are demonstrated by my publication history – approximately 40 publications including journal articles, book chapters, review papers and poster presentation. In my current role I have also had extensive experience in writing research proposals and reports, discussion papers, marketing materials, magazine articles and speeches.

- **Excellent organisational and communication skills:**

I have excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, with highly developed organisational skills leading teams of diverse backgrounds in complex tasks. As part of my roles over the past 25 years I have written training manuals and conducted training courses, and prepared reports for General Management and regulatory bodies. At the Financial Institution I was responsible for the preparation of and maintenance of the Operations Procedures Manual. I was also required to give presentations and communicate to a variety of groups of people including stakeholders, staff, managers, and regulators both formally and informally.

- **Effective Communication**

I demonstrate effective communication by answering all product enquiry calls, providing information as appropriate to contribute to the organisation's effectiveness and responsiveness to customers. I am cheerful and pleasant to customers when rendering service or handling complaints and give proper advice as soon as possible. Effective communication skills, including clear and well- enunciated telephone voice, together with good interpersonal and organisational skills

- **Ability to develop systems, prioritise workloads and provide strong, sound leadership to the administration team:**

My roles as manager and leader in a range of organisations, have taught me to prioritise my workload, to identify and implement systems and processes to efficiently lead teams and achieve key business targets. In my roles as Manager at two financial institutions I had a range of responsibilities including people management, contract management, account control and I was successfully able to balance these roles and meet my personal targets through supporting my team to meet their targets and goals.

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- **Adaptable and Confident Approach to Decision Making and Problem Solving**

Having been in the workforce for over 2 years I am experienced at investigating issues and have well developed creative problem solving skills. I am able to use empathy and ask suitable questions to define a problem or an issue in way that enables me to solve the problem. If I cannot solve the issue I inform the client of what actions I will be taking to resolve the issue and give them a time when I, or someone else, will be contacting them. I am able to systematically analyse issues and identify where the short falls are.

- **Proven ability to work as part of a team, meet deadlines and complete duties without close supervision.**

I have worked in a team environment for the past five years, successfully moving in and out of the role of team leader. My resume makes reference to excellent feedback from the team on my people skills and management skills. My current position requires close adherence to deadlines, for example liaising with staff and management, preparation of training materials and activities for workshops, advertising workshops etc are activities requiring careful planning and often tight time frames. I have at all times in my current role worked independently.

- **Customer Service Ethos**

I have sound customer service skills. I always respond to customer enquires in a polite and helpful manner and provided appropriate information on departmental policies and procedures. I take appropriate action and ensure accurate information flow to relevant parties.

- **Human resources and industrial relations experience:**

I have had extensive experience in all aspects of people management including hiring and termination, salary negotiation and packaging, performance appraisal and counselling, and am very aware of OH&S and EEO requirements. At two financial institutions I was responsible for the human resource related functions for teams of up to 50 people in conjunction with the Head of Human Resources.

- **Demonstrated ability in identifying and acting on issues that affect the implementation of OH&S**

Discussion of OH&S issues is a regular item on staff meeting agendas in my unit. Regular OH&S audits are conducted within the unit to identify risks and uncover training needs. For example in May last year it was identified that staff required manual handling training to help prevent injuries occurring when moving furniture around our training room. Electrical testing of equipment was conducted in the latter half of last year and the set up of our training room now minimizes dangers such as tripping on electrical cords etc.

- **Demonstrated understanding of the principles of anti-discrimination, staff equity and other legislation, and the willingness and capacity to implement policies and programs.**

I have had recruitment experiences in my current and previous roles. At all times I applied the organisation's EEO principles by conducting a merit based selection process, applying the principles of assessment to the selection process, and ensuring that the successful candidate was provided with appropriate induction and orientation opportunities, career development opportunities. The work places in which I have supervised staff are free from harassment and discrimination, also in accordance to organisation policies.

I have attended information and training sessions for supervisors and have accordingly developed a comprehensive induction pack to assist all new staff in my area. Through the establishment of an induction pack I have ensured that all staff working in my unit become familiar with the organisation's Code of Conduct and other relevant policies and legislation. Discussion of ethical issues is also a regular item on staff meeting agendas in my unit.

Preparing for the interview

Interview Tips

Interviews can be nerve - wracking even for the experienced. They are an unnatural form of communication in an often, unfamiliar environment. However with good preparation and practice it is possible to perform well and do justice to our skills and experience.

Preparation and practice are the keys!

Interviews can be won or lost in the very first moments of meeting. It is not only the words that count, but also your whole sense of confidence, interest and enthusiasm.

The most common reason people fail in interviews is because they haven't prepared appropriately.

Let's start with what you are attempting to achieve in the interview.

What are your aims for the interview?

- Clearly outline your achievements?
- Get promoted?
- "Sell" yourself?
- Present yourself positively and professionally?
- Get the interviewer/ panel to like you?

People are far more likely to be employed because the interviewers like them than because they have the skills for the job. It is very important to present a warm and professional image. Relating to the interview panel and engaging them in the discussion is a critical component of the process.

Get prepared

Make sure you know details such as:

- Who is on the interview panel
- Where and when the interview will be held
- Some details about the organisation and position

Remember first impressions count. Choose your clothes carefully. Consider the image you want to present. Wear something you feel comfortable in – looking good can boost your confidence in yourself. The two principles below can help you choose what to wear:

1. Dress as you would expect the interviewers to dress – but neater
2. Dress in clothes that make you feel good about yourself.

Practice Possible Interview Questions

Practice your answers to the type of questions you may be asked in the interview. Be prepared to talk about yourself.

The interview gives you the chance to discuss what you wrote in your application and give it human flesh. The interview gives you the chance to sell yourself. Many people are not comfortable with this; however it is critical to interview success. “Selling” or promoting yourself is really about clearly stating your achievements and skills.

Tips for Dealing with Nerves

- Don't be late or too early. About 10 mins early is a good time to arrive. Then sit and relax.

- Breathe slowly and deeply before you go in. Take your cues from the interview panel. Use mirroring to calm your breathing. (i.e. Copy the pace of breathing of one of the interview panel members)

- Visualise your success. Imagine yourself doing well in the interview. Imagine yourself gaining the position. Picture yourself answering the questions confidently.

- Practice, practice, practice. Even though the questions you practice may not be the ones you are asked in the interview, practicing will help you prepare to talk about yourself in positive terms.

Things to Avoid in Interviews

1. **Never argue** - Avoid arguing even if you know you're right. Some interviewees will argue because they want to demonstrate their extensive knowledge or they want to show that they know better.

2. **Avoid eating and drinking** - If food or drink is offered politely decline (except for a glass of water). Interviews are fraught with stress. The last thing you want to be doing is eating under such circumstances. Also, you just don't want to risk getting crumbs down your shirt.

3. **Avoid being overly merry** - In an attempt to demonstrate what happy people they are some interviewees go into an interview and smile excessively, laugh too much, nod too much, agree too much and generally go out of their way to please. Unfortunately, they often come across as insincere or far too nervous and can easily grate upon the interviewer.

4. **Never interrupt the talkative interviewer** - Interviewees are often frustrated when they're confronted by a talkative interviewer who loves the sound of his/her voice. Interviewees worry about not being given the time to sell themselves, so in desperation they tend to interrupt the interviewer. Avoid this. On the whole, the more an interviewer talks the more he/she likes you.

5. **Avoid meandering answers** - Get to the point quickly - you'll be doing yourself a great favour.

Questions an Employer May Ask

It is wise to think about the kind of questions you may be asked at an interview and prepare some answers. Many interviews start with "Tell me about you?" Which translates to "What can you do for my business?"

Here are some other common questions:

- Why do you think you are suitable for this position?
 - Why would you like this job?
 - What qualifications do you have for this job?
 - Why have you been unemployed for so long?
 - Why have you applied for this job?
 - Why did you leave your last job?
 - What are your strengths?
 - What are your weaknesses?
 - Tell me about your skills in working with others
 - Can you work as part of a team?
 - What are your career plans?
 - How do you feel about further study/training?
 - Why do you think we should employ you?
 - In what ways are you fit to perform the duties required for this job?
 - Tell me why you are the best person for this job
 - Give me 3 things to remember you by
 - What were you hoping I wouldn't ask you?

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- Tell me about methods you use to plan your work
- Tell me about a mistake you have made in the workplace. What have you learnt from that mistake?

Interview Presentation - Dress for Success

- ✓ Interviews are a formal situation, so it's important to dress appropriately to the situation.
- ✓ Dress as though you are already working in the company.
- ✓ What does the existing staff wear?
- ✓ Whatever you wear, your clothes **must** be CLEAN and PRESSED!

Personal grooming

- Shower / washing – makes you look and feel fresh and clean.
- Deodorant – **a must**, makes you smell clean.
- Fingers and nails – clean and manicured. Discreet nail polish please.
- Feet – Be aware of foot odour.
- Hair – washed, clean and tidy.
- Make up – conservative lip stick / eye shadow
- Perfume – be subtle, nothing overpowering.
- Jewellery and accessories – minimum
- Conservative footwear – clean, comfortable, low heels

What to take with you to the interview:

Do take:

- Your resume – plus spare copies (at least 2).
- Your diary – in case you are asked when you are available or if asked back for a second interview.
- Your tax file number and bank details.
- Note pad and pens to take notes and fill in application forms.
- Tissues.
- Breath mints (especially for the coffee drinkers and smokers).

Do not take:

- Big bags or back packs
- Pets
- Shopping bags
- Children
- Friends
- Mobile phone – turn off
- Other electrical devices eg. iPods – turn off

Body Language

As humans we say a great deal without speaking a word. Body Language makes up for more than 50% of all communication, so it's important to be aware of what we are saying with our bodies.

Negative body language is often a reason for poor performance at interviews. The relevant skills, qualifications and experience may not be enough to get you that job if your **unspoken** body language lets you down.

Here are some hints to help you to be more aware of your body language – it relaxes everyone.

The Handshake

- Initiate the action to put the other person at ease. Let them know that you are ready and willing to take the initiative. Make the handshake firm; avoid the “*dead fish*” handshake common with some people. When women shake hands with a man, they should initiate the action because many men (particularly older men) will be unsure of what to do – things have really changed in this regard over the years. It is quite common for women to shake hands with both sexes in a business setting.

Eye Contact

- Keeping eye contact with the interviewer is very important and demonstrates openness and confidence. Avoiding people's eyes makes them think you have something to hide. Too much eye contact however, is interpreted as being too intense, so glance away occasionally.

Body Language

- Be careful not to fold your arms, as this can be seen as a defensive gesture. Try not to fidget. Use arm and hand movements if it is natural for you to do so, but don't make them big (large arm movements can be off putting). Exaggerated facial expressions need to be avoided as well. Try to keep your hands away from your face at all times.

Interview Practice Exercise

Ask a colleague or your mentor to help you practice for an interview. Alternatively AIFST can arrange a career coach to work with you to assist with your preparation.

Work Background

Please give me a brief overview of your work background?

Tell about the typical tasks you are comfortable performing.

What tasks are you not prepared to do?

Planning and Organising

Tell me about the methods you use to plan your tasks. Can you give me an example of a time when you used a plan to direct your work?

Adaptability

Tell me about a situation in which you had to adjust quickly to a change in priorities. What did you do? How did the change affect you?

Tell me about a time when you had to manage a difficult or crisis situation. For example something was broken, or an unexpected event occurred.

Work Standards

How do you define doing a good job? What standards do you set yourself? What feedback have you received regarding your job performance?

Working Independently

Tell me about the ways you maintain motivation when working independently.

Closing questions

What were you hoping I wouldn't ask you?

Tell me why you are the best person for the job