



Ace the Interview

An Ultimate Guide to Job Interview Success for Job Seekers with Disabilities

www.untappedtalent.ca

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Introduction

Untapped Talent is an online job board that connects job seekers with disabilities to meaningful employment opportunities from disability confident employers across Canada. For this eBook and Untapped Talent, we would describe disability confident employers as those who have completed disability training, have experience hiring people with disabilities and/or are working closely with an organization who offers employment supports to people with disabilities. Job seekers will receive access to job postings from inclusive employers and free job search resources upon registering, while employers will gain a new channel to connect with qualified candidates and showcase their dedication to creating an inclusive workplace.

Did you know that in Canada, only 62% of people with disabilities have jobs, compared to 78% of people without disabilities. This difference is often due to barriers related to workplace accommodations and disability discrimination.

Untapped Talent was not just created to help disability confident employers fill positions. Our vision was to create a resource that can help change lives, build stronger, more diverse workplaces, and help reduce the 16% employment rate gap between persons with and without disabilities.



Untapped Talent is powered by CCRW, a national non-profit organization committed to supporting and promoting the meaningful and equitable employment of persons with disabilities. CCRW helps employers hire and onboard new team members from our stream of talent. When employers hire through Untapped Talent, they may qualify for benefits like funded training, wage support or assistance with implementing accommodations. CCRW also helps job seekers with disabilities find opportunities to use their talents by providing support and access to resources.

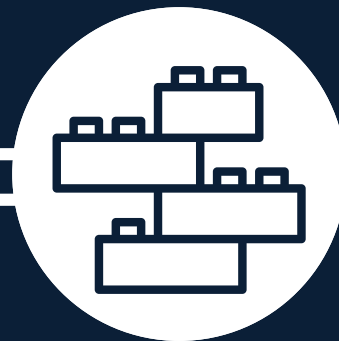




Available services and resources include:

- Access to Untapped Talent
- 1-on-1 employment goal planning and coaching
- Resume and cover letter support
- Interview skills practice
- Requesting accommodation and disclosing a disability
- Supportive job search
- Access to CCRW's robust Career Management Portal
- Ongoing follow-up after your services with CCRW
- Enhanced training including workshops, eLearning, and certifications
- Access to job opportunities from partnered employers
- Transitional support to a new job
- Pre-employment and workplace assessments

Understanding the Purpose of a Job Interview



The Purpose of a Job Interview



A job interview can be the most stressful and intimidating part of finding a job.

Candidates will want to make a good impression, show their best selves and highlight their skills. However, the interview is a great opportunity for both the candidate and employer to gather valuable information.

From the employer's perspective, the job interview is crucial in helping the employer decide if they want to hire you. It helps them evaluate a candidate's skills, experience, and personality to see if they fit the job and company culture.

Employers assess communication skills by listening to how candidates express their thoughts and engage in conversation.

They use behavioral questions to understand how candidates handled past situations, which shows their problem-solving, adaptability, and teamwork abilities.

For technical roles, employers might conduct practical tests to check if the candidate's skills meet their needs. Employers also look for enthusiasm, motivation, and passion, which are easier to spot in engaged candidates. They value qualities like empathy, leadership, and emotional intelligence, best assessed through face-to-face interactions.

These factors help determine if a candidate can work well with others. Recruiters can often assess your trustworthiness and determine if you are hireable within the first 90 seconds of your interview.





From the candidate's perspective, the job interview is a key part of getting hired and the opportunity for you to decide if this job is for you. It lets you highlight your skills and qualifications. By answering questions, you can show how your experiences fit the role and how you can contribute to the company. This helps the employer see your value and decide if you would be a good addition to their team.

Talking about your unique skills and experiences helps the employer picture you as part of their team and can make you stand out from other candidates. Showing a willingness to learn and grow, and expressing a passion for continuous learning, can also help you stand out.

Another purpose of the job interview for the candidate is to clarify the position details. This is a chance for you to ask the employer specific questions to understand the tasks, responsibilities, and goals of the job. Asking questions can also help calm your nerves, as many find the interview process daunting.

Additionally, you can assess if the role fits your values, skills, career goals, and interests. Use the interview to ask about the company's culture, as this can be important in deciding whether to accept the job if offered. You might be curious about the work environment and culture to see if it matches your preferences.





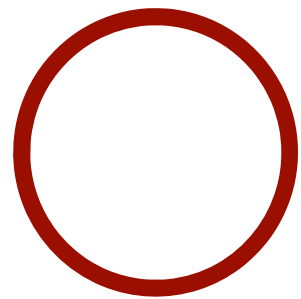
Lastly, a job interview is important for building rapport between the employer and the potential employee. Both parties can often establish a connection and working relationship in the first meeting which can subsequently impact team dynamics in the workplace.

In the next sections of this eBook, we will show you why being confident and prepared is key to a successful interview. We'll help you highlight your strengths and identify areas where you can improve. We'll also discuss barriers that may occur in the interview process and what accommodations can be implemented to aid.

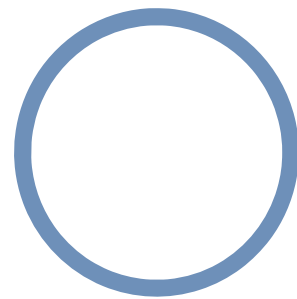
Remember, an interview is not just about the employer seeing if you are a good fit for the job. It's also your chance to showcase your skills and explain why you are the best candidate. It is an opportunity to make a great first impression and see if the company's values match yours.

Preparedness Question

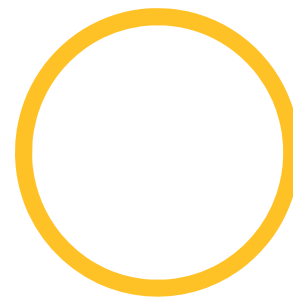
Before we dive in, how confident do you currently feel about interviewing for a job?



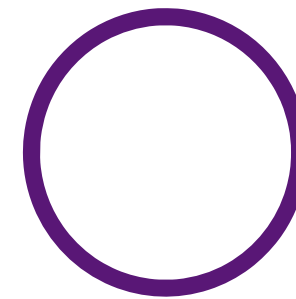
Not Confident at All



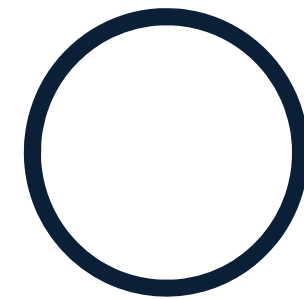
Not Very Confident



Somewhat Confident



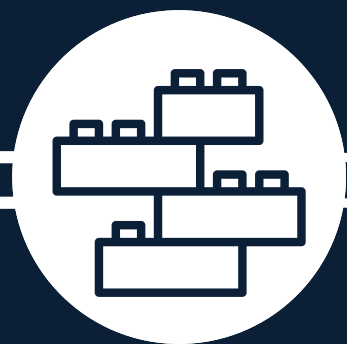
Very Confident



Completely Confident

Now, let's jump into all aspects of the interview process and learn how to ace your next interview!

Why Developing Strong Interview Skills is Important



The Importance of Strong Interview Skills

Interview skills are the abilities you use to communicate with an employer, showing them why you are the best person for the job. Developing strong interview skills can boost your chances of getting hired by helping you articulate your thoughts well and make a great first impression.

Because the interview is often your first face-to-face meeting with a potential employer, it is important to learn how to use these interview skills to present a professional image. Within the field of recruitment, it only takes seven seconds to make a lasting first impression. This impression can influence the rest of the hiring process. Remember, you do not get a second chance to make a great first impression!



Demonstrate Professionalism

Another way to make a good impression and demonstrate professionalism is to be punctual. By arriving on time or better yet, 15 minutes early to your interview shows you are reliable and that you respect the interviewer's time.

Dress appropriately to show you take the job opportunity seriously. Entering the interview with a positive attitude and confident body language can help you appear friendly and professional. This can include offering a firm handshake, if you feel is appropriate, and maintaining good posture and eye contact.

Different Ways to be Interviewed

Depending on the type of interview you are participating in preparation and how you present yourself may be different. For example, much of what we addressed above is ideal if you are having an in-person interview. But what about video interviews, or phone interviews?



Video Interviews

For a video interview, you will still want to be punctual and ensure your camera and microphone are working before the start of the interview. You would still dress professionally as you would an in-person interview. Ensure that your camera angle showcases the upper body from head to just under the shoulders.

You will want to make sure you have good lighting and are completing your interview in an area that is free from distractions. Aim to have a plain background and if that is not possible you can utilize many backgrounds associated with different meeting platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom's blurring background effect.

Phone Interviews

The only interview style where your clothing does not impact the employers decision of you would be a phone interview. Although it's been noted that dressing for the part helps you feel confident in your abilities to do the job, which may be linked to boosting self-esteem and confidence while speaking with the employer on the phone.





Remember, your first impression starts the moment you enter the building, join a video meeting or answer the phone. Be polite and respectful to everyone you meet. Your actions can have a lasting impact on the employer and influence their decisions.

How to Dress for a Job Interview



Start by researching the company with the aim of understanding their dress code. Look them up on social media for ideas on how their staff dress. This can help you align your outfit with their expectations.

Think about the role for which you are applying for. Corporate roles will require a formal business attire, which may include suits, ties, or a professional dress. While casual roles, such as those within retail or customer service will be business casual. You may opt to wear dress pants, a collared shirt, a blouse, skirt, or slacks. Footwear is also important to plan. Dress shoes are always an option, but for casual roles a plain black shoe will also pair appropriately with most outfits.

Hygiene and grooming are also important to think about. Many businesses are scent-free, so avoid strong perfumes and scented deodorants. A good practice is to wash your hands prior to your interview to remove any unwanted scents or odours. Your fingernails should be maintained and clean. Ensure your clothes are clean and free from harsh smells, stains and wrinkles. Have neatly combed hair including facial hair. Your goal in choosing your outfit should represent a polished version of yourself, which in turn exudes confidence and professionalism.

What to Avoid Wearing to a Job Interview

How you dress for your interview is dependent upon the role and the company you are interviewing with. This is why it is important to do your research and develop an idea of the work atmosphere so you can fit in during your interview. This visual also helps the employer envision you in the role at their company.

- Jeans, especially with rips
- Graphic t-shirts
- Dirty or scuffed sneakers
- Clothing that is revealing (Low Cut Shirts, Cropped Tops)
- Athletic Clothing (Gym Shorts, Leggings)



Identifying Skills

ACTIVITY

- 1 Complete the following activity by compiling a list of Transferable Skills to discuss during your interview.
- 2 Start by writing down, typing out, or if using speech to text, saying aloud your history (work, volunteer or education) that would be included on your resume.
- 3 Then, make a list of the skills acquired from your previous work, volunteer and education experiences.
- 4 Finally, determine what skills can be applied to the position you are going to be interviewing for. Write, type, or say all the skills that are transferable and work towards memorizing these as your talking points during your interview.



For Example...

Preparing for your interview, which will be covered later in this eBook, can boost your confidence, improve your communication and demonstrate professionalism. All of which, will allow you to perform at your best when under pressure in an interview.

Confidence and professionalism help the employer see your fit in the company and may result in you being hired. We will explore the importance of confidence in the next section of this eBook.

History

- Cashier at a local supermarket.
- Food hamper delivery for a food security organization.
- Certificate from an online time management course.

Acquired Skills

- Cash handling, operating a POS system (Point of Sale.)
- Restocking shelves, organizing storefront.
- Assisting customers with items they could not find.
- Planning and executing delivery routes.
- Interacting with recipients and sharing materials.
- Addressing recipient needs and overcoming challenges.
- Strategies for prioritizing tasks.
- Skills to breakdown larger tasks into manageable steps.
- Self-discipline in avoiding distractions.

Transferable Skills

- Operating a POS System.
- Customer Service Skills.
- Conflict Resolution.

Identifying Strengths & Areas of Improvement

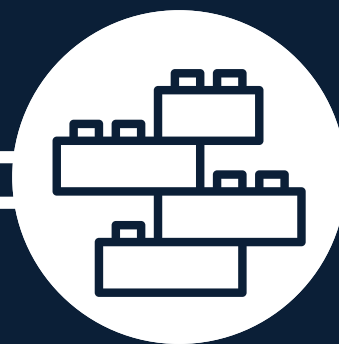
When identifying strengths and areas of improvement, try to imagine an employer asked you this question:

“What are your strengths and areas of improvement?”

How would you respond?



The Importance of Confidence During an Interview





Confidence: Why it Matters

Have you ever heard the saying “Confidence is preparation. Everything else is beyond your control”? This eBook will help you understand how this applies to interviewing for work. Being confident in yourself can make it easier to get hired.

Employers look for people who believe in their own skills and fit well with the company. Confidence shows that you trust your abilities, which makes you seem trustworthy to employers. It also helps you talk about your strengths and areas for improvement comfortably.

How Does One Become More Confident?

Let's review some basic confidence boosters.



Utilize Breathing Techniques

Taking slow deep breaths brings more oxygen into your lungs, which means more oxygen is getting to your brain cells to help you think clearly. By focusing on your breathing, you should be able to combat any nerves you may be feeling.

Practice Positive Affirmations

Consistently engaging in positive talk helps train your brain to think from a positive perspective. Affirmations will help to disrupt any negative thought patterns you experience and can, most importantly, reduce your stress response. When you are preparing for your interview and do not have anyone to tell you things are going to be okay, try giving yourself a positive pep talk and see how you feel.

Hit a Power Pose

Scientifically speaking, holding a power pose for about two minutes while focusing on your breathing can decrease cortisol levels in the body. Your body releases cortisol (hormone) in response to stress. Power poses can change your body's hormones and help you perform better under stress. Try holding a pose that you associate as being powerful for two minutes and see how you feel.

Confidence Increases with Experience

For example, the more job interviews you go to, the more confident you will feel. If you do not have interview experience, there are other proven ways to boost your confidence, all related to preparation.

At CCRW, we offer employment support using Virtual Reality to improve interview confidence. Job seekers can put on a VR headset and practice their interview skills with an AI Avatar and receive real time feedback on eye contact, body language and communication.

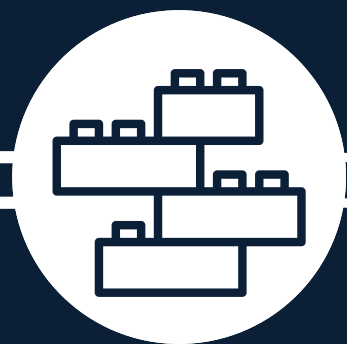
We have seen a significant increase in user confidence with the average post session score being a 4/5, with a score of 5 meaning completely confident.

If you are a job seeker looking to practice your interview skills, or just interested in trying out our employment supports using VR, contact an Employment Coach today by visiting the Contact Us page on the CCRW website.

CONTACT US

In the next section, we'll explore how to get ready for a job and share tips you can use for your next interview.

Interview Preparation



How to Prepare for An Interview

Before we begin this section, reflect on how you currently would prepare for an interview. At the end of this section, return to your list and see how many preparatory activities you take part in and what can be added to your list.

Preparation is a crucial step as it often lays the foundation for success. By learning how to prepare and practicing this skill over time, we will be able to use it more effectively. Preparing for a job interview can help set you up to be successful and to achieve a desired outcome; get the job. There are many ways in which you can prepare for a job interview, some of which you may already incorporate into your routine.



01 Plan Your Outfit

The night before your job interview, take some time to decide what you'll wear.

You want to make a great first impression, and dressing well can help with that. When you look good, you feel good, and that confidence can help you do better in your interview.

We review appropriate job interview attire in the section 'The Importance of Strong Interview Skills' which you can find on [page 11](#).



02 Plan Your Commute

Employers value good time management.

Whether you are driving or taking public transit to your interview, it is best to aim to arrive 10-15 minutes early.

Make sure you know your route, especially if you are using public transit, which can be unreliable. Give yourself extra time for unexpected delays like traffic. This can help reduce anxiety.

If you're not familiar with the area, try practicing your commute a few days before to be well-prepared. If you are experiencing an unanticipated turn of events that will cause you to be late to your interview, try contacting the employer to share your whereabouts and estimated time of arrival.

03 Research the Company

Doing your research will help you prepare to answer questions about the company during your interview and impress the employer with your knowledge and enthusiasm.

It shows you are interested in the job and can make you stand out from other candidates. You can learn more by doing a quick Google search, or by looking at the company's 'About Us' or 'Values and Mission' pages on their company website.



04

Review the Job Description

Spend some time reviewing the job description and be sure you meet most of the job requirements.

It is good practice if attending an in-person job interview, to print copies of your resume and bring them with you to the interview. This ensures you are prepared in case additional copies are needed by the interviewers and allows you to keep a copy of hand to glance at if needing to reference.

Be prepared to speak to any requirements you do not meet. Identify what strengths and experiences you want to highlight based on what is mentioned in the description and plan to discuss these further during your interview. Reviewing the job description can also help you ensure that any questions that you decide to ask the interviewer are not already answered.

At CCRW, your Employment Coach can help you review your job description and prepare for your interview by using Virtual Reality. Employment Coaches can enter the job description into the Virtual Reality space, and you can complete an interview with an AI Avatar who will ask you interview questions based on the entered job description.

05

Practice Answering Interview Questions

Practicing your responses to common interview questions is integral to feeling prepared for the real deal.

You can Google “common interview questions” or take it a step further and look up interview questions for a desired field.

Try having a family member or friend ask you the questions. Practicing your responses while looking in the mirror can also help you focus on your body language and eye contact.

AI Technology has become increasingly popular in interview preparation techniques. If you are tech savvy, try using AI prompts to generate potential interview questions.

06 Prepare Your Questions

At the end of the interview, the employer will ask if you have any questions, and you should always say yes.

This is your chance to ask clarifying questions about the job or the company.

Employers appreciate when you ask questions because it shows you are interested and prepared. It also helps you stand out.

Have 3-5 questions ready in case some get answered during the interview. You can ask about the role, the team and work culture, the company, how performance is evaluated, or what the next steps are in the interview process.



Question Preparation

Using these prompts, write the questions you would like to ask the employer during your interview that fit the category.

1. **Question about the specific role you are applying for.** These questions should provide information beyond what is included in the job description.
 2. **Question about performance metrics.** You can use the employers answer to your question to measure whether the expectations are manageable for you.
 3. **Question about the team.** Their answer will help you learn more about the team and dynamics.
 4. **Question for your boss.** Employers love to share about themselves. This is a good way to build rapport and show a genuine interest in their growth within the company.
 5. **Question about growth within the role.** These questions show the employer that you are serious about your professional development and potential long-term commitment to the company.
-



07 Accessibility Check

Consider the barriers you may have experienced in past interviews, one-on-one meetings, or in conversations with a coach or educator.

How did you successfully navigate those barriers? For in-person interviews, consider barriers you've experienced when visiting new places. You might consider asking 'Does the building have automatic doors?', 'Is there a wheelchair ramp to enter the building?' and 'Does the building have working elevators?', as these accessibility features are imperative to ensuring you have full use of the space with no limitations.

08 Format

Prior to your interview, you may want to inquire about the format of the interview to evaluate if any accommodations are needed.

For example, the employer may ask you to complete a timed assessment during your interview. Someone with a learning disability may struggle with timed tasks, therefore they will want to request an accommodation to help them demonstrate their knowledge without the pressure of doing so within a certain amount of time.



09 Post-Interview Tasks

Follow ups are so important and can make you stand out from the pool of candidates. After your interview it is good practice to send a thank you email to the interviewer within 24 hours.

The format should express your appreciation for their consideration, reiterate your interest in the role and briefly mention a key point from your interview.

E.g.: “Thank you so much for meeting with me today. I appreciate your consideration of me for the position of [insert job title]. I enjoyed our discussion about [insert specific topic] and am excited about the opportunity to contribute to your team at [insert company name].”

One week later, if you have not heard back from the interviewer, it is a good idea to send a polite follow up email to reinstate your interest and inquire about next steps in the hiring process. That email may sound something like this, “I hope this email finds you well. I am reaching out today to follow up on my application for the position of [job title] with [company name]. I remain very interested in this role and would appreciate any updates you can share about the hiring timeline.”

If in two weeks you still have not received any updates about your application, you can send another email to the interview inquiring if they need any additional information from you. This email may sound like, “I hope you are doing well. I am writing to follow up on my previous email regarding the position of [insert job title]. I am still very interested in the role and am wondering if there are any further steps I should take?”

Employers often have various factors that can delay their responses and hiring timeline but demonstrating patience and professionalism can positively reflect on you and help you stand out from other candidates who may not have sent a follow up.

10 Requesting Accommodations

You can request an accommodation without disclosing your disability. This means that you do not have to disclose your medical diagnosis when requesting an accommodation.

**What if the interviewer directly asks if you have a disability?
How should you respond?**

This is a very personal question and one you should be prepared for. For some, disclosing a disability is common practice while others may find it difficult to share the details.

Ultimately, it will come down to your comfort level. For those who choose to disclose, you will want to be direct and honest. For example, “Yes, I do identify with [name of disability]. I can manage it effectively with the help of [list accommodation strategies you use].” This can then help steer the conversation into discussions of accommodations.



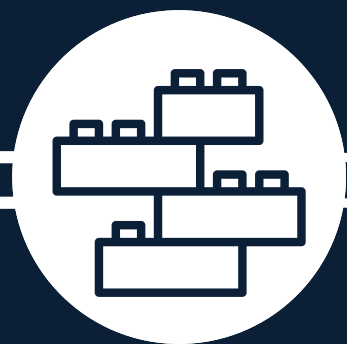


If you are not comfortable disclosing your disability, you can reframe the question to focus on your abilities. For example, “I do have a disability, but it does not hinder my ability to perform the tasks required for this role. I am proactive in managing my condition so that it does not impact my work.” This statement reiterates the importance of focusing on what you can do and confirms for the employer that you are confident in your abilities.

It is your choice in how, when and if you choose to disclose your disability. If you do not wish to disclose but are asked a question related to disabilities, you also have the power to redirect the question back onto your skills and experiences. For example, “I prefer not to disclose personal medical information, but I can assure you that I am qualified for this position and am confident in performing all of the required duties listed within the job description.”

Remember, no one can force you to disclose your disability. An employer should not discriminate based on disabilities.

Answering Interview Questions



Top Interview Questions

and How to Answer

In the previous section, we covered how to prepare for your interview and briefly discussed practicing your answers to common interview questions.

Let's take it one step further and divulge into breaking down some of the most anticipated interview questions!

01 “Tell me about yourself.”

Employers often ask this question in interviews. They want you to introduce yourself by talking about your career path and relevant experiences. Highlight the parts of your professional life that make you a good fit for the job. You can use the Present-Past-Future formula to structure your answer. This helps keep your response clear and easy to understand.

[Learn More](#)



- **Present:** Begin by discussing your current role, main responsibilities and any major accomplishments you have achieved within the position.
- **Past:** Explain how you got to your current role. Showcase your growth by discussing your education and training, relevant past employment and highlight any milestones you’ve accomplished.
- **Future:** End your response by explaining your next career goals and share why this position excites you. Help the interviewer picture you in the role by mentioning how you can contribute to the company.

If you have a gap in your employment history this is your opportunity to share what you have been doing to continue contributing to your professional experience.

You want to highlight that while you are not technically employed during this time frame, you are working on your goals that will help you further your professional career.

Example Response

“Currently, I work as a Customer Support Specialist at XYZ Bank and have been in this position for 3 years. I am responsible for connecting with customers and answer their questions, resolve complaints and provide guidance on our services. This past year, I earned the team leader role and am now also responsible for hosting weekly team meetings and training new hires.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Business Administration, I found myself working in a variety of customer facing positions, ranging from retail work to managing a restaurant, until I was hired for the position at XYZ Bank. Achieving employment within an office environment had been a goal of mine as I ultimately saw myself working within a more traditional business field, with room to climb the corporate ladder.

That is why the Business Advisor Management position intrigues me, as I am confident that with my education and experience, I would be of great value to your team. I am comfortable managing large teams, highly skilled in delivering exceptional customer service and eager to transition into a company that places emphasizes my personal development.”



02 Why are you interested in this position?

You can expect to hear this open-ended question during your interview. It helps the employer see how excited you are about the job and understand your reasons for wanting it.

To prepare, research the company and the position. Showing that you know about the company will impress the interviewer and demonstrate your interest. Understanding the job responsibilities will help you highlight your relevant skills and experiences.

Your answer should show that you reviewed the job description and thought about how it aligns with your personal values and goals.

[Learn More](#)



Example Response

“I have thoroughly enjoyed the last 4 years with my current employer but am ready to embark on a leadership role. I am well versed in financial services, customer relations and team management, which I believe is what truly makes me excited to be considered as a Team Lead at ABC Bank.

I would like to further explore my leadership responsibilities and am looking to grow with a company like ABC Bank. I noticed this position requires management of a small team of 10 employees – a challenge I am ready to take on.”



03 What are your strengths?

Employers ask this question to see if you have the qualities they need. They want to know how your strengths can help the company succeed.

Even if you have many strengths, they only want to hear about the ones that are relevant to the job. This shows you understand yourself and can communicate well. When you answer, be honest and give examples.

[Learn More](#)



Example Response

“Three strengths that I believe will help me succeed within the role of a Business Advisor Manager are communication, building relationships and having the ability to collaborate.

As a Customer Support Specialist, I hold the responsibility to train and mentor new hires, ensuring a positive onboarding experience, leading to the retention of employees. My four years in customer service have helped me achieve a level of excellence noted by many customers and patrons.

I enjoy working as a team and bringing my knowledge and experience to projects, while actively listening and engaging with coworkers to support their professional development. To date, I have successfully onboarded 30 employees, completed three professional team projects and delivered a panel talk at a conference for banks across Canada.”



04 What are your weaknesses?

Employers ask this question to see if you know your own weaknesses and can identify areas for growth. The best way to answer is to mention a weakness that does not affect your main job duties but is something you want to improve. Be sure to explain how you plan to work on this area, as employers are interested in your development plans.

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Example Response

“My greatest weakness is my time management. I sometimes spend longer than I would like on a task, as I am heavily focused on ensuring all details are correct.

While this is a highly desired skill, it also causes me to lose track of the time resulting in a late submission. To combat this weakness, I actively use my calendar to set aside additional editing hours where I can dedicate an hour to focus only on the fine details of a task.

I have found this to be very helpful and helps me to plan my time well in-advance and avoid any late submissions of reports.”



05 How do you deal with conflict in the workplace?

You can expect to have to answer this question during your interview as it helps the employer evaluate your conflict resolution skills, which are highly desired if working in a people-facing/customer service position. An employer is also likely gauging your response to see how you work with others and if you would be a good fit with their current team. To answer this question, utilize the **STAR Method**.

[Learn More](#)



S

Situation

Describe a situation where you faced a conflict in the workplace.

T

Task

Mentioned the task that you were responsible for in the situation.

A

Action

Share what actions did you take to resolve the conflict.

R

Result

Highlight the result of your actions.

You will want to share a time where the conflict you experienced was successfully handled by the actions you took. Avoid speaking negatively about others involved in the conflict.

Example Response

“While working as a Sales Associate, I had an interaction with a customer who was presenting very upset about their recent purchase of clothing. They reported that the item may have been used and was dirty and ripped. This customer entered our store during holiday hours and was speaking to me in a loud tone of voice, which began to draw the attention of shoppers.

I knew I had to deescalate the situation quickly. I was trying to avoid unnecessary attention or a bad review, while still ensuring that the customer left our store with a positive experience. I listened to the customer’s complaints without interrupting, showing empathy and understanding.

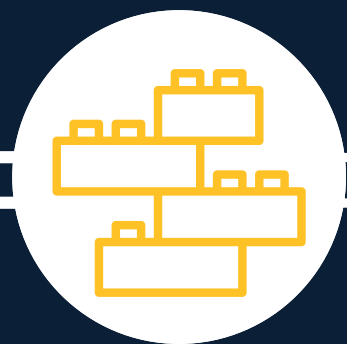
I responded in a calm manner by apologizing for the inconvenience and assured them we would find a solution.

I checked our portal and confirmed we had the item in stock at our warehouse but not in store. I offered to have the item replaced and shipped to their address at no extra cost. I also assured the customer this item would arrive within 2-3 business days.

The customer was grateful for this solution and accepted the offer. I provided the customer with a tracking number for the package and sent a confirmation of purchase to their email. The customer thanked me for a seamless fix and left the store in a much better mood than they entered.

My manager, who was on shift during this interaction, acknowledged my efforts and exceptional customer service at our monthly staff meeting. They offered me praise and made me Employee of the Month for how I handled myself during a stressful situation.”

Common Barriers in the Interview Process and Accommodations



Barriers and Accommodations for the Interview Process

This section will focus on identifying common barriers experienced by people with disabilities during the interview process and will address accommodations to help navigate these situations.

Accommodations help remove barriers experienced by people with disabilities, ensuring that everyone has equal access to opportunities and can fully participate. This also boosts productivity at work and supports a diverse and inclusive environment.

Accommodations can be provided during the application process, the interview, and on the job.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication can pose a significant barrier for people with disabilities during the interview process as most interviews are planned around verbal communication.

For some, verbal communication is not possible, or they may process information better in a written format. There are many roles that can be performed without verbal communication. Because of this, companies are often willing to accommodate individuals during the interview process based on the barriers they identify to verbal communication.

Here are some accommodations that job seekers might use when verbal communication is a barrier during the interview process.

- ASL Interpreter.
- Asking for a written version of the interview questions.
- If it is a virtual interview, ask to have the questions added to the chat after they are asked.
- Use a tablet for audio transcription that will provide live captions to the conversation, or speech-to-text assistive devices.

Interview Location

Post-pandemic employment trends have agreed that while virtual recruitment and interviews are a game changer in terms of flexibility and accessibility, there has been a push for 'return to work' which also flows in the hiring practices within a company.

In-person job interviews are becoming the norm again, but for people with disabilities this may bring on feelings of uncertainty due to inaccessible interview locations.

An inaccessible interview environment can pose a variety of barriers to a person with a disability, ultimately leaving them feeling excluded. Because of this, companies are willing to accommodate individuals during the interview process.





Here are some accommodations that job seekers might use when the interview location is inaccessible.

- Request to have the interview at a more accessible space within the company’s premises or a nearby location.
- Request a remote interview, removing the need to navigate an inaccessible environment.
 - Employment Coaches at CCRW can help job seekers prepare for a virtual interview by practicing on different platforms (i.e., Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc.) and will offer guidance for technology set up during an interview.
- Inform the interviewer you will require Assistive Technology to navigate to the interview location. (i.e., portable ramps, stair climbers)
- Request for someone to assist you in navigating to the interview location when confirming the details.
- Ask about accessible parking prior to your interview.
- Confirm if the building has accessible restrooms available for your use
- Request breaks if the interview is lengthy.

Technology

Many digital platforms that are used for recruitment and interviewing are not made with accessibility in mind. As a job seeker with a disability, it can be incredibly frustrating when you are trying to apply for a job and the careers page is not accessible or the virtual interview platform does not offer accessible integrations.

Complex user interfaces and accessibility inconsistencies can cause a sensory overload. But companies can deter these barriers by ensuring their recruitment and interviewing platforms are universally designed to meet the needs of everyone. By doing so, this creates a more inclusive and accessible digital world.

Here are some accommodations that job seekers might use when the technology used for recruitment and hiring is not accessible.

- Using a screen-reader to navigate digital documents and websites.
- Requesting a different format of documents if needed.
- Requesting Sign Language Interpreters.
- Requesting interview questions and interview format prior to the interview.
- Utilizing assistive devices such as speech-to-text when necessary.

What do I do if I receive push back from an interviewer about an accommodation?

This experience can be incredibly frustrating but is an opportunity to educate. The following are steps to take to handle this situation.

Remain calm and professional when communicating. The interviewers' concerns may cause frustration for you, but it is important to maintain your composure to keep the conversation productive.



Reiterate the importance of your requested accommodation, emphasizing it is essential for you to do the job/interview. Another strategy is to place focus on your skills and how the accommodation will help you excel within the role. Be open to discussing alternatives as the interviewer may feel more comfortable moving forward with a certain accommodation they have offered in the past.



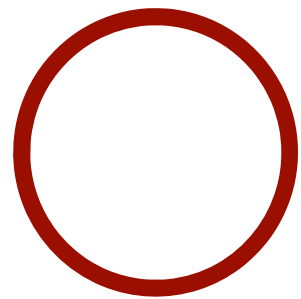
If the situation becomes uncomfortable to handle on your own, you may opt to connect with the human resources team to offer guidance and knowledge of how to move forward. The goal is to find a mutually beneficial solution that allows you to complete the interview to the best of your ability.



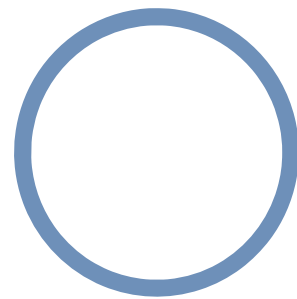
Accommodations like these make sure the interview process is fair and inclusive, letting each candidate showcase their skills and experiences. Remember to request your accommodation(s) as soon as you realize you need it and do not be afraid to express what you need. This helps ensure equal opportunity. Accommodations are more common than you think!

Preparedness Question

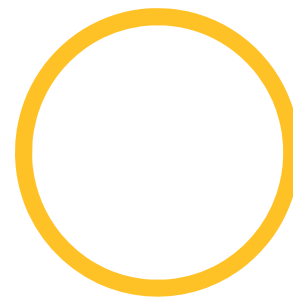
After this eBook, how confident do you currently feel about interviewing for a job?



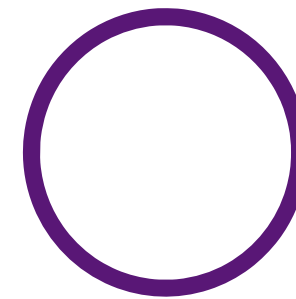
Not Confident at All



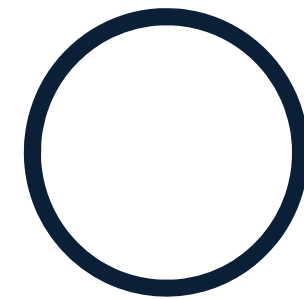
Not Very Confident



Somewhat Confident



Very Confident



Completely Confident

Conclusion

We hope this eBook has helped you understand the job interview and how to prepare for future interviews, acknowledge your level of confidence and recognize its ability to improve your performance, and identify barriers and ask for any necessary accommodations.

CCRW's mission is to promote and support meaningful and equitable employment for people with disabilities. We encourage job seekers to check out Untapped Talent as we believe everyone deserves the chance to shine in their career.

Untapped Talent will connect you with disability confident employers who are committed to creating accessible workplaces and providing equal opportunities for all.



www.untappedtalent.ca



Thank You

Thank you to all those who made this eBook possible.

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