

How to get the job you want

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I remember when I finished my medical training and applied for my first job. I was incredibly excited to be getting started after six years of training, and I was also nervous about whether I would get a job in the location I wanted.

Since I graduated, back in 2003, it has become more competitive to get exactly what you want, so it is important that you use every tool available to you to ensure you stand out and make a good impression.

The recommendations that follow have been put together through our experience over the last decade in recruitment, placing over 10,000 doctors, and through speaking with hiring managers to understand what makes candidates stand out.

Doctors often believe that getting a role is all about their abilities as a doctor, or about their track record as a medical student, but the reality is that you are being interviewed by people who are influenced by many factors other than just your abilities. People make decisions on emotion and justify on logic, so this guide serves to help you shape those other factors to ensure you are seen in the best light.

Diagnose

Conduct Research on the Employer, Hiring Manager, Job Opportunity

It is important to take time to understand your potential new employer, the requirements of the job, and the background of the person (or people) interviewing you. The more research you conduct, the more you will understand them, and you will demonstrate your commitment for this role, which lowers the risk of hiring you in their eyes. Information sources include the hospital's website and any other published materials or web based resources. Also, if possible, you should ask friends and other people in your network about the hospital to get any further insights.

Prepare

Review Common Interview Questions and Map Responses

As a doctor, you are likely to be assessed on several different elements by the hiring team, from your academic prowess to team fit, bedside manner through to being able to answer challenging situational based questions to test out how you might respond in high stress situations.

Your goal is to deliver detailed yet concise responses, focusing on specific examples and accomplishments. A good tool for remembering your responses is to put them into story form that you can tell in the interview rather than trying to memorise dozens of different responses.

The web is full of different tools and techniques you can refer to in this area, however the one that stands out for the majority of hiring managers is the STAR interview technique:

- Situation; what was the situation you were in related to the example you are giving?
- Task (at hand); what did you have to achieve / what

were the challenges in front of you?

- Action; what did you do as either an individual or team? (Remembering to give examples of what your role was within that team)
- Results; what did you achieve as a result of the actions taken?

People love talking about themselves too, so take some time to prepare questions about the job you have applied for, such as;

- What is the culture like?
- What do you love about working here?
- What does a typical day or week look like?
- What are the main challenges that need to be addressed?
- What are you most proud of about working here?

Bedside Manner

Make Good First Impressions — to Everyone You Encounter

As a doctor, you are going to be pushed hard on how well the hiring manager thinks you will fit into their team (and how you will interact with their patients). The cardinal rule of interviewing is to be polite and offer warm greetings to everyone you meet — from the medical receptionist to the hiring manager. Employers are curious how job applicants treat staff members and your job offer could easily be derailed if there is an air of arrogance in the way you come across. Remember, having a positive attitude and expressing enthusiasm for the job and employer are vital in the initial stages of the interview; it is a well-known fact that hiring managers often make their decision about job applicants in the first 20 minutes of the interview.

Self-Awareness

Body Language and Bad Habits

You could give the best answers to every question thrown your way, but if there is something not quite right about how you are sitting or you have an annoying habit that you are unaware of, all of your hard work and preparation could amount to nothing.

There are so many resources out there on body language but to keep things simple focus on smiling, eye contact, alert posture, demonstrating active listening and nodding (in the right places).

If you have a good honest friend out there why not ask them if there is anything you do that could be perceived as a bad habit in an interview? If you do not want them to get too personal, maybe ask specifically if they have ever noticed you slouching, looking off in the distance, fidgeting, regularly using certain words more than others or whether you sometimes mumble. A true friend is an honest friend so if you do not like what you hear, remember you asked their opinion so it must be somewhat true!

Your CV

It will not get you hired, but it could get you not hired

Let us be honest, your CV is not going to get you a job. But if you make a real hash of it then it could get you put in the discard pile!

The key to a good CV is to deliver the information the employer requires in a concise way so they have a good experience reading it.

Here is a template we use, adjusted for you as a final year medical student, because it gets our doctors hired first. There is obviously draft information in there to demonstrate what we mean.

Personal / Registration Information

Nationality / Citizenship XXX
Languages XXX

Qualifications / Education

2011 – 2013 Bachelor of Biomedical Science (Exercise Physiology)

Note: These must be in reverse chronological order, with the most recent qualification first.

Work History

1 Dec 2016 – 1 Feb Oct 2017

- Job Title
- Employer
- Location

Any extra information about the role should be placed in bullet points.

01 Aug 2011 – 25 Oct 2016 Waitress

- ABC Restaurant
- Served patrons
- Managed the roster.

Note: While this will not be medical work, it is worth demonstrating that you have a work ethic. These must be in reverse chronological order, with the most recent role first.

Clinical / Procedural Skills

- Venepuncture
- Peripheral Venous Cannulation
- Emergency Airway Management

Publications / Citations

O'Connor P, Mu L, Keeffe J. Access and delivery issues in the use of a new model of low vision rehabilitation service provision. Clin Experiment Ophthalmol 2008; 36(6): 547-552

Note: If provided, this should be limited to 1-2 pages.

These can be bullet pointed. The order of text and dates in this section must be kept where the doctor has put them within the title of the publication. Formatting should be the same and consistent on each bullet point.

This section does not always need to be in chronological order. However, this is preferred for ease of reading.

Professional Development

- Advanced Life Support Course, (Nov 2016)
- BASIC Life Support Course, (Dec 2011)

Professional Memberships

- Member of XXX

Achievements

- Greatest person in the world award, 2016

Objectives / Goals / Personal Statement

- I am keen to pursue...

The Essentials

Finally, do not forget the critical things that need no explanation but must be adhered to if you are going to give yourself the best chance of success are:

- Dress professionally; if you are not sure where to start a plain ironed shirt or blouse, smart trousers or skirt and polished dark shoes are all good options to consider; whilst jeans, t-shirts, flowery summer dresses and open toe sandals can probably stay in the wardrobe.
- Arrive on time for the interview, maybe five minutes early, but not more. Give yourself time to compose yourself in your new surroundings so you can go into the meeting room with a clear and focussed mind.
- Be authentic, upbeat, focused, confident (after all you made it this far so you have got something they are interested in) and concise, and remember to thank the interviewer(s) for taking time to meet with you. You might also like to tell them at the end you are really excited about the opportunity and hope you will hear from them soon.

And remember, becoming a doctor is a major change. Do not underestimate just how hard it will be to suddenly have real responsibility. Do not forget about taking care of yourself.

There is an old paradigm in medical practice that we need to sacrifice ourselves to take care of our patients. My research has shown that in fact this is causing us to harm our patients.

You are part of the next generation of doctors. It is time to adopt a new paradigm; I take care of myself so I can provide care of the highest standard. Please visit www.MedWorld.org to access resources to help you achieve this.

It is a challenging adventure so enjoy this next step.

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