

## **Group Interviews.**

These can be a real surprise the first time you are faced with one. You walk into a room to find 15 to 30 people. Group interviews are commonly used by a variety of organisations, from part time jobs to major law or engineering firms. It gives them an opportunity to see how well you perform in leadership and team situations. More importantly how well you react and interact with other people under pressure.

Group interviews are what I call self-selection, because you succeed or knock yourself out, by the way you act and interact. You need to demonstrate good personal and interpersonal skills, all of which will be under review throughout the session.

In formal group activities, several different tasks, scenarios or role-plays may be set up. They're usually introduced and directed by one person, the facilitator, with a number of observers and can run from two hours to half a day. Their aim is to see how you present your opinions, react when you disagree with what's being said, receive criticism and if you help others to reach outcomes. They may also change the direction and complexity of the exercise, to see how you respond in a changing and uncontrolled environment.

You may start off in a solo exercise, which then turns into a group activity. You may be put in control of a group activity or asked to chair a meeting. Sometimes the group will not have a designated leader. You will be observed constantly as they assess you for the future, as well as for their immediate needs. This is a real-time dynamic interview!

### **Tips on handling group interviews:**

- Turn up early to ask questions about the process and introduce yourself to others.
- Be prepared for having to introduce yourself and make a positive 60/90 second pitch.
- Acknowledge others in your group and ideally know and use their names.
- Have a positive attitude, energy and body language.
- Be inclusive and supportive of others.
- It's good to sometimes help others reach the conclusion.
- Use active listening and follow instructions. Jot ideas down as you go, so that you can use them when you get to speak.
- Do not get a big shot of testosterone or be a wall flower, you'll be out on both counts.
- If no leader is nominated and little progress is being made, point this out and ask who would like to lead the group. Invariably they will nominate you.

Some group interviews can be more informal, where you sit around and have questions fired at you. Don't be embarrassed, just imagine you are in a one-on-one interview and answer positively. They might pair you up and ask you to find out about the other person, then introduce that person to the group. They could ask you to sell something on the spot.

Always research the company and the role, before you leave home!

Good luck in your next interview, James E Lynch