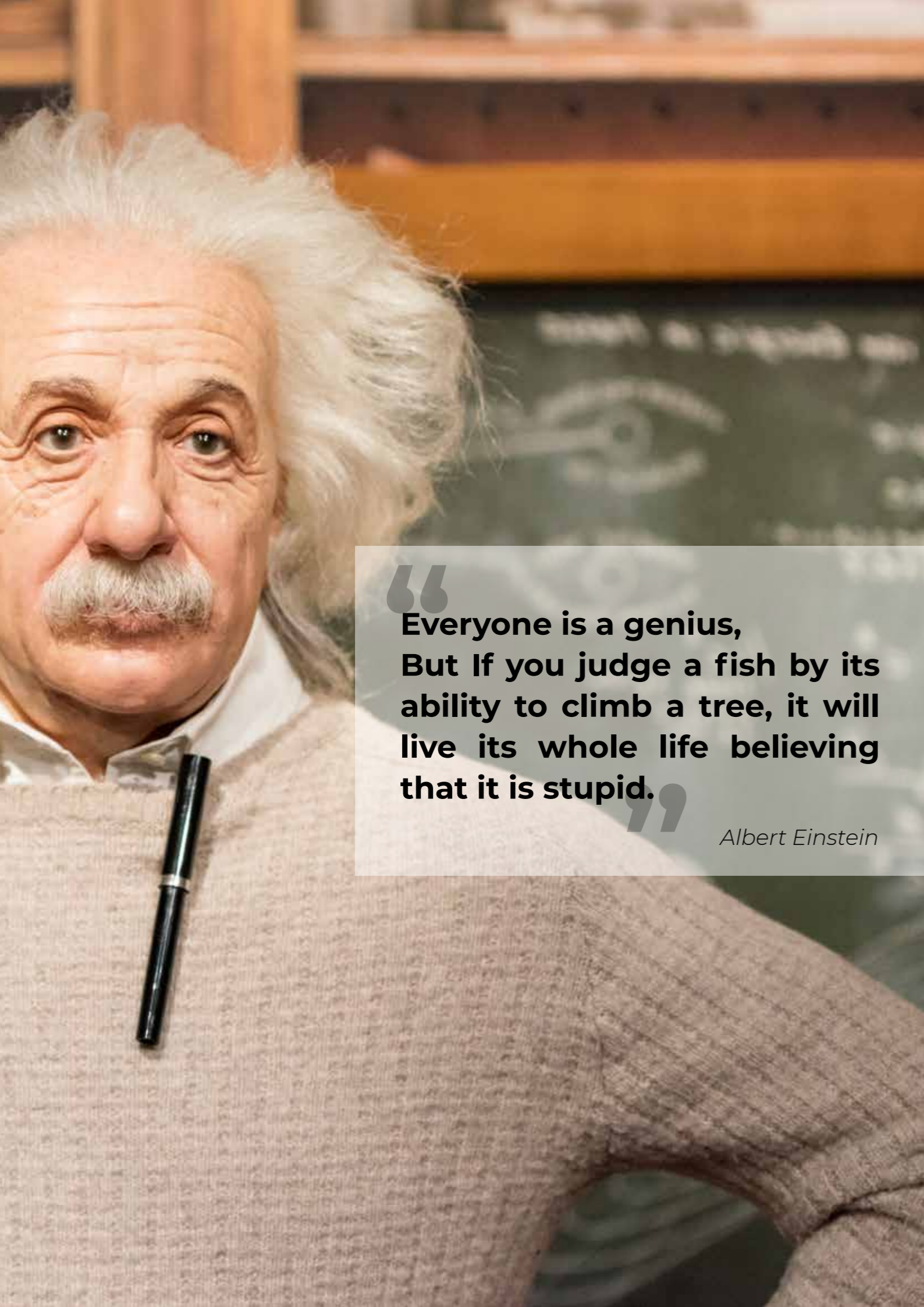


# CAREER

## DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK





“  
Everyone is a genius,  
But If you judge a fish by its  
ability to climb a tree, it will  
live its whole life believing  
that it is stupid.”

*Albert Einstein*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workplace**
  - A. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skillset..... 6
  - B. Attitudes, Ethics and Values..... 8
  - C. Work Smart..... 9
  - D. Job Search Tips for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century ..... 14
- 2. Networking**
  - Expanding your Network..... 15
  - Tips on Networking ..... 16
  - Networking Etiquettes..... 17
  - Networking Opportunities..... 17
- 3. Resume & Cover Letters**
  - Tips for an outstanding Resume..... 18
  - Tips for an impactful Cover Letter..... 19
  - Pitfalls ..... 19
  - Action Words ..... 20
  - Etiquettes and Simple Rules ..... 20
  - Email Addresses..... 20
- 4. Career Branding**
  - Creating your Brand Statement..... 21
  - Creating your Branding Tool kit ..... 21
  - Creating your Virtual Branding..... 21
  - Creating your Personal Branding..... 22
- 5. Interview**
  - Pre-interview assessments and test ..... 23
  - Different Types of Interviews..... 23
  - Interview Tips and Etiquettes ..... 25
  - Preparing for Interviews ..... 26
  - Post Interview Follow Up ..... 26
- 6. Negotiation**
  - Salary Negotiation ..... 27
  - Contract Negotiation ..... 27
  - Etiquettes and Ethic..... 27



# The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workplace

## A. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skillset



In addition to academic qualifications, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace actually requires that you are equipped with the following competencies:

- » **Solutions Fluency** is the ability to think creatively to solve problems in real time by clearly defining the problem, designing an appropriate solution, applying the solution then evaluating the process and the outcome.
- » **Creativity Fluency** is the use of innovative design, visual appeal, and storytelling towards the achievement of goals, and objectives.
- » **Information Fluency** refers to skills of digital literacy, integrating technology with domain (discipline) specific knowledge, critical thinking, presentation, participation and communication skills.
- » **Collaboration Fluency** is the ability to work well within a team. Collaboration with partners that are both real and digital is a hallmark of the modern workforce. Teamwork means power

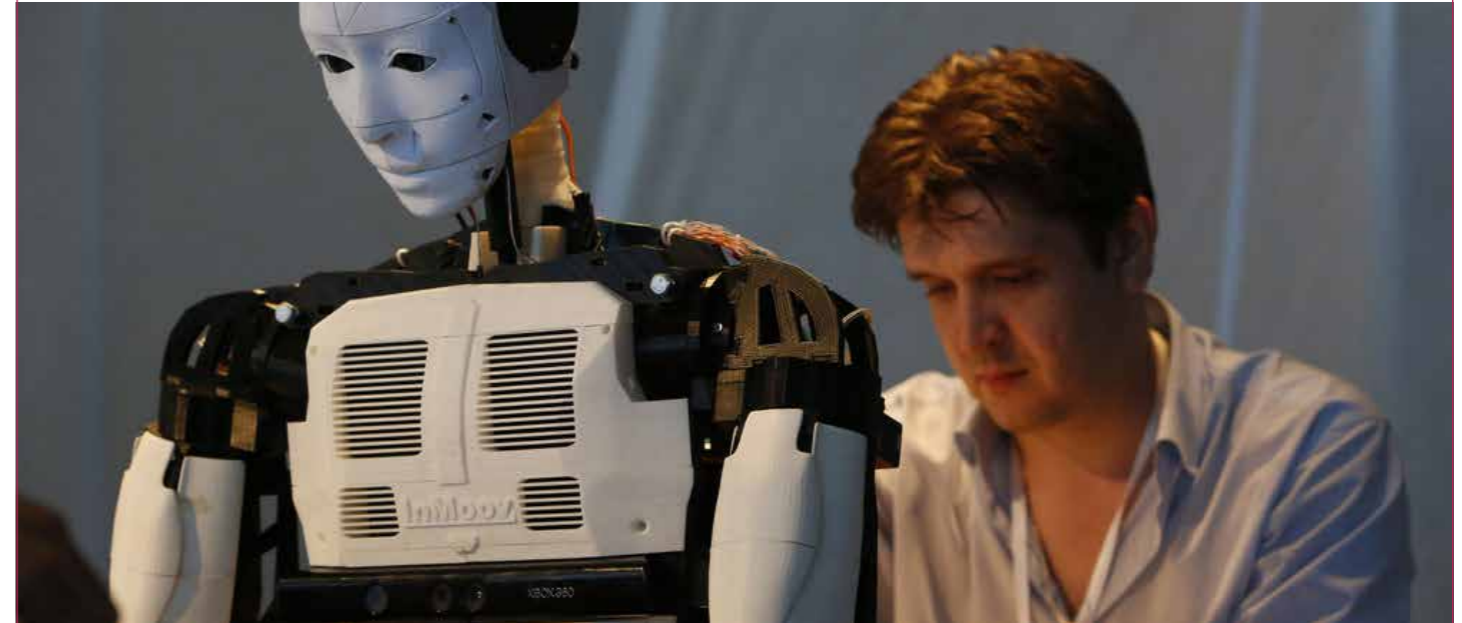
and support, and it's essential to success in any business environment. This is especially important in a work environment where remote working and cross-border teams are becoming increasingly prevalent

- » **Media Fluency** refers to the ability to unconsciously interpret the messages contained within media of all sorts, and the ability to communicate in multiple multimedia formats.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace, it is no longer enough to just "do your job". To be successful in your career development, you would need to demonstrate value-add in addition to meeting the basic requirements of the role you fill.

According to the Future of Jobs Report, by the World Economic Forum from 2016, by 2020, over 35% of the skills that we have considered important in today's workforce will have changed.

## Top 10 Skills



### In 2020

1. **Complex Problem Solving**
2. **Critical Thinking**
3. **Creativity**
4. **People Management**
5. **Coordinating with Others**
6. **Emotional intelligence**
7. **Judgment and Decision Making**
8. **Service Orientation**
9. **Negotiation**
10. **Cognitive Flexibility**

### In 2015

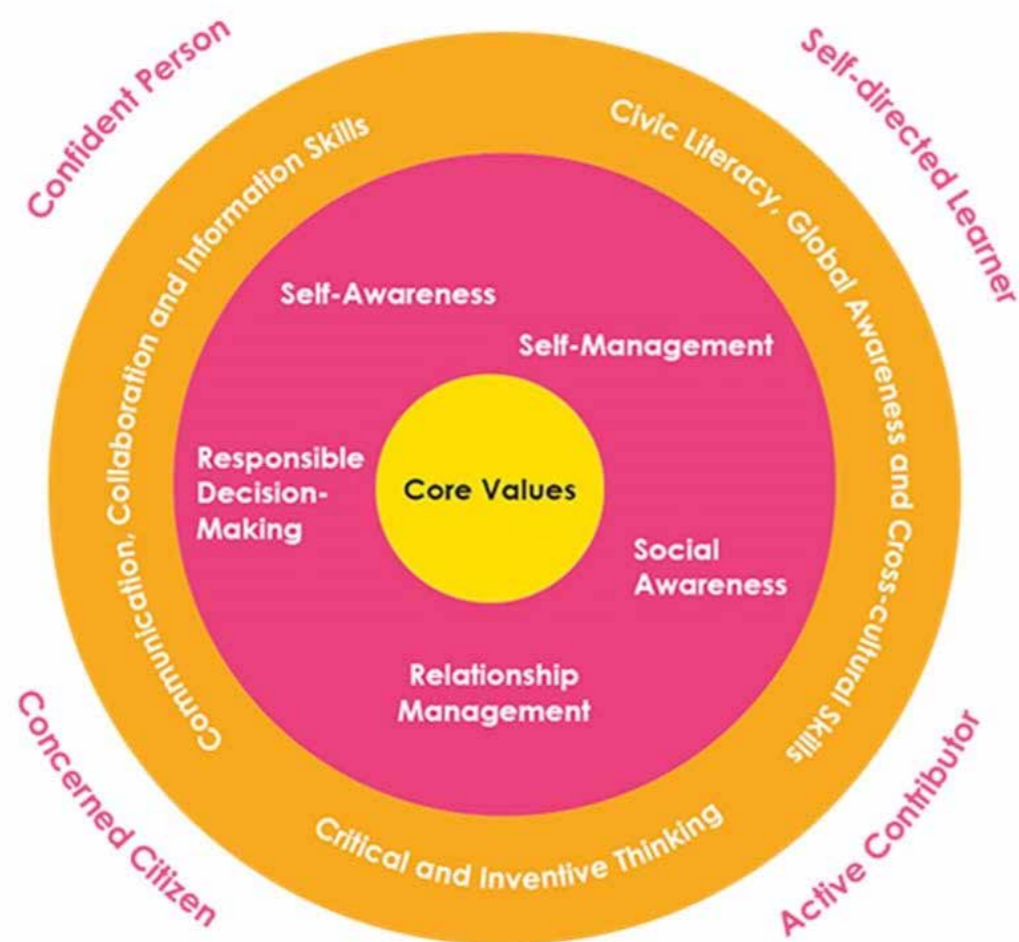
1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Coordinating with Others
3. People Management
4. Critical Thinking
5. Negotiation
6. Quality Control
7. Service Orientation
8. Judgment and Decision Making
9. Active Listening
10. Creativity

Breaking these skills down into the following three aspects during your student life:

Attainable in College	Attainable through Career	Attainable through Citizenship contribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex Problem Solving</li> <li>• Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Creativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Management</li> <li>• Coordinating with Others</li> <li>• Negotiation</li> <li>• Judgement and Decision Making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Orientation</li> <li>• Emotional Intelligence</li> <li>• Cognitive Flexibility</li> </ul>



## B. Attitudes, Ethics and Values



The following behaviours and mindset are most attractive to employers today:

- Being business focused. Ability to value-add towards productivity and profitability.
- Strong communication and listening skills. Ability to adopt positive feedback.
- Curiosity and willingness to continuously be learning and innovating.
- Client and Stakeholder focused, always seeking to add value for others.
- Adaptability and agility towards changes
- Positive thinker who sees opportunities instead of problems
- Focused on long-term relationship rather than transaction focused
- Strong self-initiative
- Results oriented and perseveres towards goal achievement
- Strong collaborator and team contributor

## C. Work Smart

In addition to working hard, you would need to work smart. There are some common workplace challenges that may need some diplomacy and management skills from your part to overcome. These would include:

- Sexual harassment**
- Discrimination**
- Stereotyping**
- Office Politics**
- Gossip**
- Poor job fit and lack of motivation**
- Workplace Stress**

### c.1. Sexual harassment



#### What is Sexual Harassment?

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that tends to create a hostile or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment is a form of Sex Discrimination that occurs in the workplace.

Dealing with Sexual Harassment at the Workplace:

- » Say no to the Harasser.
- » Making a complaint to a neutral party, for instance the Human Resource Department. If the company does not take action and does nothing to address the harassment issue, you have the option to seek alternative employment
- » If the Harasser is your direct supervisor, and you feel that it is inappropriate to do so, you have a choice to seek an alternative employment.

No job is not worth compromising your self-respect and dignity for.

- » Start recording the Harassment incidents. Be specific on time, date, location, acts and parties involved.
- » Maintain copies of your work records, to support the consistency of your performance, despite the harassments.
- » Talk to others at work, who may have also fallen victim to the Harasser.

Sexual Harassment is an offence in Singapore under the Protection from Harassment Act 2014. Under the Act, the Victim may seek a protection order.





### c.2. Discrimination

Individuals may encounter workplace discrimination (due to age, race, gender, religion, marital status, family responsibilities, or disability) and are prevented from equal employment rights and opportunities. Under such circumstances, the Victim may turn to the Tripartite Alliance for Fair (& Progressive) Employment and Practices (<https://www.tafep.sg/tripartite-standards>)

Alternatively, the best way to deal with such incidences would be to speak about the matter directly with the perpetrators to try to understand the source and reason for the discrimination. At times, this may be resolved easily, because of misunderstanding or mis-communication. But there are times, when the fundamentals for discrimination are more deeply rooted within an individual's values or cultural background.



In any case, understanding where the resistance is coming from, is always a useful approach towards resolving conflicts and problematic issues. Again, unless the issue is a firm-wide phenomena, the Victim may raise the issue with the Human Resources Team in the attempt to resolve the matter in a neutral manner.



### c.3. Stereotyping

This is a less severe form of discrimination. At times, this may be inconsequential, and may be corrected easily through the victim proving that the perpetrator's view is incorrect or invalid.

Such issues will usually resolved themselves, once the victim is able to prove themselves at the workplace.

### c.4. Office Politics

Being fully aware of the dynamics and the relationships of the stakeholders within the organisation is a very critical success factor in Career Development. The irony is that, the more we advance in technology, the less atoned our EQ (Emotional Quotient) instinct becomes.

Understanding and respecting the informal hierarchies and influencers will make your life way easier, when you are trying to get things done. Even if you are not a big fan nor believer in office politics, it would still be tactful for you to conduct yourself with a high degree of diplomacy



### c.5. Gossips



We cannot control what others would like to think and say about us. But we can control how we allow their gossips affect our response and behaviour. It is always ethical and professional to make sure that we talk to our co-workers and stakeholders, rather than to be found talking about them.

Gossips could cause a great deal of damage, if unchecked. The way to tackle uninvited gossips at the workplace would be to address and clarify misconceptions as soon as possible in a calm, polite and collected manner, especially directly with the individual(s) who has been initiating the gossip.

### c.6. Poor Job Fit and Lack of Motivation



Sometimes, the job we have agreed to, turns out to be quite different from the job that we are actually expected to be undertaking. In such cases, it is often useful to find the opportunity to speak with your supervisor/direct reporting boss to seek clarification again on expectations, from both parties, such that your expectations are also articulated.

At times, resolution of such issues could be straight forward and simple, through a negotiation and mutual agreement on the re-definition of the role.

At other times, it may be more complicated, owing to misunderstanding and miscommunication and that the misfit could not be fully eradicated. In which case, it may be possible for you to speak to Human Resource to seek internal transfer, or if you are up for a new challenge, take on the role but request for re-training, and finally, the last resort, would be to abandon ship. Part if you must, but please part on happy terms. Never burn your bridges, for you will never know when you need to cross them again.



## c.7. Workplace Stress



The working environment has quite different dynamics from the classroom environment. Timelines are stricter and shorter. Consequences become harsher and come quicker. Common sources of Work

Stress would include:

- » Low salaries.
- » Excessive workloads.
- » Few opportunities for growth or advancement.
- » Work that isn't engaging or challenging.
- » Lack of social support within the organisation.
- » Not having enough control over job-related decisions.
- » Conflicting demands or unclear performance expectations.

Workplace stress can take a toll on your health, even if you are not aware of it. In the short term, a stressful work environment can contribute to problems such as headache, stomach ache, sleep disturbances, short temper and difficulty concentrating. Chronic stress can result in anxiety, insomnia, high blood pressure and a weakened immune system. It can also contribute to health conditions such as depression, obesity and heart disease. Compounding the problem, people who experience excessive stress often deal with it in unhealthy ways such as overeating, eating unhealthy foods, smoking cigarettes or abusing drugs and alcohol.

The American Psychological Association made the following suggestions on managing workplace stress:

- » Track your stressors. Keep a journal for a week or two to identify which situations create the most stress and how you respond to them. Record your thoughts, feelings and information about the environment, including the people and circumstances involved, the physical setting and how you reacted. Did you raise your voice? Get a snack from the vending machine? Go for a walk? Taking notes can help you find patterns among your stressors and your reactions to them.
- » Develop healthy responses. Instead of attempting to fight stress with fast food or alcohol, do your best to make healthy choices

when you feel the tension rise. Exercise is a great stress buster. Yoga can be an excellent choice, but any form of physical activity is beneficial. Also make time for hobbies and favourite activities. Whether it's reading a novel, going to concerts or playing games with your family, make sure to set aside time for the things that bring you pleasure. Getting enough good-quality sleep is also important for effective stress management. Build healthy sleep habits by limiting your caffeine intake late in the day and minimizing stimulating activities, such as computer and television use, at night.

- » Establish boundaries. In today's digital world, it's easy to feel pressure to be available 24 hours a day. Establish some work-life boundaries for yourself. That might mean making a rule not to check email from home in the evening, or not answering the phone during dinner. Although people have different preferences when it comes to how much they blend their work and home life, creating some clear boundaries between these realms can reduce the potential for work life conflict and the stress that goes with it.
- » Take time to recharge. To avoid the negative effects of chronic stress and burnout, we need time to replenish and return to our pre-stress level of functioning. This recovery process requires "switching off" from work by having periods of time when you are neither engaging in work-related activities, nor thinking about work. That's why it's critical that you disconnect from time to time, in a way that fits your needs and preferences. Don't let your vacation days go to waste. When possible, take time off to relax and unwind, so you come back to work feeling reinvigorated and ready to perform at your best. When you're not able to take time off, get a quick boost by turning off your smartphone and focusing your attention on non-work activities for a while.
- » Learn how to relax. Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises and mindfulness (a state in which you actively observe present experiences and thoughts without judging them) can help melt away stress. Start by taking a few minutes each day



to focus on a simple activity like breathing, walking or enjoying a meal. The skill of being able to focus purposefully on a single activity without distraction will get stronger with practice and you'll find that you can apply it to many different aspects of your life.

- » Talk to your supervisor. Healthy employees are typically more productive, so your boss has an incentive to create a work environment that promotes employee well-being. Start by having an open conversation with your supervisor. The purpose of this isn't to lay out a list of complaints, but rather to come up with an effective plan for managing the stressors you've identified, so you can perform at your best on the job. While some parts of the plan may be designed to help you improve your skills in areas such as time management, other elements might include identifying employer-sponsored wellness resources you can tap into, clarifying what's expected of you, getting necessary resources or support from colleagues, enriching your job to include more challenging or meaningful tasks, or making changes to your physical workspace to make it more comfortable and reduce strain.
- » Get some support. Accepting help from trusted friends and family members can improve your ability to manage stress. Your employer may also have stress management resources available through an employee assistance program (EAP), including online information, available counselling and referral to mental health professionals, if needed.





## D. Job Search Tricks for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



Your Job Search strategy must commence from the day you complete your Career Preparatory Series during your Year 1 at SUSS! This is not to say that you need to look for a job immediately. But you should already be in possession of a Career Planner that will guide you during the next four years' journey at SUSS. To pave your way towards your first Job, you need to start with the following as early as possible:

### Networking

The “Guanxi” (or relationships) you build will help you uncover plentiful opportunities (business as well as employment) through referrals in your years to come.

Many employment opportunities these days are not openly advertised. Many employers in fact would already be sourcing for candidates through their on professional and personal network, only using the job portals, advertised media and company career pages as the last resort.

Hence, you would have won half the battle, if you actively networked within your desired industry, either physically or virtually from the day you enter SUSS! Conferences, trade seminars, networking events are great ways to meet professionals from your desired industry.

Having an effective and professional profile on LinkedIn, would be of great use for virtual networking purposes.

Watch this video to learn some Professional Networking Tips: <https://youtu.be/nUEjCS68AA>

### Creating Opportunities

Very often, opportunities simply arise out of ideas and creativity! Invest time to conduct

research on your potential and desired employers – to understand their business models, industry landscape, competitors, stakeholders and community. Find out what their competitors are doing, that your potential employers are not. Would you be able to fill that gap? If yes, this would be your big opportunity for creating that opportunity for yourself!

### Dealing with the Gig Economy

As businesses seek to optimise the deployment of resources, coupled with rapid changes in technology, many markets have adopted a shift in employment policies, shifting from the practice of permanent employment contracts to termed contractual employment. The 21st Century Employer now focuses more upon the positive impact and value add that an employee brings to the team. The “Permanent Employment” Model has now shifted towards “Consultant Engagement” Model. Once a permanent employee, the 21st Century talent resource is now a consultant, and the firm, is his or her project. Therefore, it is critical for career development within the 21st century that one thinks in terms of value add and impact created for each respective projects that the individual would come to undertake.

### Entrepreneurial Spirit

As a result of stiff global competition, uncertain economic conditions and the evolution of the Gig Economy employment practices, the 21st Century Professional will have to manage his/her career development pursuits with a curious mind and an entrepreneurial spirit.

# Networking

## 1. Expanding your Network



### A. Why is it important to expand your network?

- » Networking has become an extremely important way to keep in touch with the industry, and to create opportunities for yourself, ahead of your graduation.
- » It is very important that you start networking the moment you enter the university: with your student colleagues, with your lecturers, with your trainers, with your internship employers, with your potential employers, and with your alumni.

Networking gives you the following competitive edge:

- » Knowledge is KING
- » Advice from experienced professionals
- » Referrals to confirm that you are good!
- » Job Opportunities

### B. Where can you expand your network?

- » Creating both Virtual (on Social Media) and Physical Network
- » Don't restrict your network only to within your industry. Keep an open mind, and be receptive to advice and tips from professionals from outside your industry which may lead to opportunities for you too!
- » Networking happens in the most unexpected places, so always be prepared to share your smiles and your thoughts!
- » Participation in industry conferences and seminars, as well as informal gatherings, lunch meetings, group sessions are often a great way to start your networking pursuits.
- » Join groups on Social Media, follow thought leaders, signing up for relevant newsletters and websites, are great ways to penetrate markets and industries.





## 2. Tips on Networking QUICK TIPS!

### A. Setting goals

- » Networking is not about collecting name cards.
- » You should always go into a networking session with a specific goal.
- » It could be “I would like to meet 5 hiring managers by end of the event”, or “I would like to obtain 5 tips and insights about the industry” etc.



### B. Interrupting a conversation

- » When your “target” person is engaged in a conversation, there are ways to “edging” yourself into the conversation, without being seen as interrupting nor intruding.
- » First of all, make sure that this is not a one-to-one conversation, in which case, it could be about confidential matters, and you would be deemed rude intruding the conversation.
- » In the event that your “target” person is engaged in a group conversation, you may stand quietly at the first instance, at the edge of the group, to listen in on the conversation. If the conversation is something where you would be able to add value on through sharing your thoughts, you may interject the conversation with your comments at an appropriate “time of pause”, to share your thoughts. Otherwise you may interrupt a brief silence during the conversation with “May I join in?”.
- » Subsequently, you may remain in the group conversation for a while, before you politely thank the “target” for sharing his/her thoughts, and ask for his/her business card, through

offering yours, so that you would be able to follow up with further thoughts and questions in the near future. (And make sure you do actually follow up!)

### C. Introduction

- » The initial introduction should be an ice-breaker in a networking situation, rather than a formal introduction with your name and title.
- » Ideally you should try to form an invisible bond with the person you are speaking to. A great way to start a conversation would be to reflect on something about the event that you are both attending at that moment.
- » It would be useful to have an elevator pitch prepared for such instances, so that you are able to introduce yourself with an “impact” and leave an impression.
- » Networking would not be effective, if the person you have interacted with is not able to recall a single bit about you.

### D. Follow up

- » The day after effect: follow up with a brief email note, to thank the person for sharing his/her insights during the event. And if you do intend to continue the discussion you were having, propose a brief meeting to catch up. This would indicate your keen interest, and your commitment level.
- » If there is really no need for your to further meet up and further discuss anything, then simply drop a brief emailed thank you note, to thank the person for sharing his/her insights and experience, and to suggest that you would like to stay in touch. And make sure you DO stay in touch, and not only during instances where you need something from that person!

### E. Nurturing your Network

- » You need to make sure you maintain engagement with your network, through reaching out to them, once in a while, even if it is only to ask how the person is doing, congratulate them on their work anniversaries, promotion, new jobs etc. This would show that you are relationship focused, rather than transaction focused.



## 3. Networking Etiquettes

- » Stay professional – do not get too personal with a business contact you have just met – especially by asking personal questions about the person you have just met.
- » Exercise courtesy and respect. Say thank you, and request politely. Remain modest. Do not feel that you are entitled to anything.
- » Be genuine and be honest. Over-representing yourself and over-promising will only backfire.
- » Show interest in the person you are interacting with, and not only interest in the subject matter!
- » Don't abuse relationships. Base your relationships on trust and respect.



## 4. Networking Opportunities

- » Actively engage in your classes
- » Reach out to your faculty, career office, student services and trainers
- » Use LinkedIn
- » Reach out to Alumni and recent graduates
- » Get off the campus and take advantage of industry events
- » Take your internships and part-time jobs seriously
- » Ask for informal interviews and coffee chats
- » Connect with your potential employers on Social Media
- » Take advantage of your immediate social circle, including your friends' social circles! Start with your present contacts!

*Your Mentor at the Office of Career Development would be happy to share with you further tips and exchange experience on effective networking. Please feel free to reach out to your mentor to further discuss your networking strategies!*



# Resume & Cover Letters

In line with the Career Preparatory Series, we recommend that you follow the STAR format (Situation, Task, Activity and Result).

## 1. Tips for an outstanding Resume



- » Limit your brilliance and achievement statements to ONE page.
- » Include only your Name, your email address, your mobile number, and your LinkedIn Profile at the top of your Resume!
- » Use IMPACT words to describe your achievements, and quantify your claims to achievements as far as possible! Do not simply list your job description!
- » Include meaningful unpaid experience to showcase your commitment level, skills and competencies.
- » Prioritize your statements, make sure the most important achievements are listed at the top most position!
- » Make sure you customize your resume for different employers and roles. This is because, an activity that may be impactful for one employer, may be deemed less significant by another employer!
- » Highlight, use impact words, but do not brag nor exaggerate!
- » There is no need to include referees nor references. Employers will ask for references when they would like to have one.
- » There is no need to state reason for leaving a role.



- » Proof read your Resume from back to the top! Nothing creates a worse impression than bad and stark spelling and grammatical errors!
- » There's no need to include your secondary school and primary school qualifications.
- » Include interest especially if these are unique and special interest.
- » Include interesting skills (for instance programming or language skills or advanced office skills that you feel may add value for the particular employer/role.

## 2. Tips for an impactful Cover Letter



- » Use the cover letter to highlight specific value-add which you will bring to the potential employer's team instead of repeating what an employer can already read from your resume!
- » Keep it brief, to the point and create a sense of follow up!
- » Addressing the letter to "Dear Sir/Madam" is better than addressing it "To whom it may concern". As far as possible, try to find out to whom you should be specifically writing to.
- » Never begin your Cover Letter with "My name is XXX and I am a student from XXX." The potential employer would know your name and education through your resume.
- » Explain clearly in Paragraph 1 of your cover letter why you have reached out to the employer,

- stating clearly that you are keen to explore the role within their teams and how a potential working relationship would be a win-win situation for both the employer and yourself! For instance, mention/highlight where you and the Employer both share the same values, same market interest etc.
- » Elaborate with impact in Paragraph 2 of your cover letter what particular skills, personality traits and track records which you would bring into the team that will add value.
- » Propose in Paragraph 3 of your cover letter how you would like to follow up on the potential opportunity with their team.
- » Please make your cover letter concise, sharp and one-page.

## 3. Pitfalls



- » Typographical, grammatical and spelling errors are the worst first impression killers!
- » A resume that is too long, too cluttered, or uses fonts that are overly small and hard to read will also be ditched!
- » Using complex sentences instead of simple, straight to the point statements.
- » Providing irrelevant information that does not matter to the potential employer.

- » Too generic or too boring. You need to customise and create impact for your resume!
- » Over-bragging or being too modest could both back-fire on you.
- » Do not use too much jargons, in particular if these are company specific jargons.
- » Job-hopping and these are not internships!
- » Frequent changing of jobs may indicate your lack of commitment, or incompetence. Ideally these should be minimised. Hence as a general rule, unless the experience is an internship experience, try not to incorporate short-term employment periods. If you really must include these, perhaps showcase them as part of your engagements working as "free-lance contractor" for various employers.
- » Not being able to explain gaps in your resume.
- » By all means, take a sabbatical or a career break. But be prepared to explain these gaps sensibly. Otherwise, you may come across to the potential employer as having a poor level of commitment, or lack of focus.



## 4. Action Words

- » Replace plain, boring words with action words.
- » Throughout your resume and cover letter, start statements with a variety of powerful action words, followed by your results or accomplishments.
- » This gives the impression that you are ready to take action, and not just passively accept work. Every hiring manager wants to hire someone who will take initiative.
- » Use words that match your target job, career field or qualifications. For example, if you started a new process, substitute the word “started,” with action words like, “launched,” “initiated,” or “implemented.”
- » Avoid using the same verb over and over.

Instead, use Thesaurus.com to find synonyms (words with the same meanings). Just don't use any keywords that you cannot define or pronounce.

- » In your resume, use past tense verbs for past experience and accomplishments, and present tense verbs for current experience and accomplishments. Do not use passive tense.

Past tense - end in “ed” (organized, composed, expanded)

Present tense - in normal state (ex. direct, provide, prepare)

Passive tense - end in “ing” (planning, assisting, instructing)

## 5. Etiquettes and Simple Rules

- » Your resume should not look cluttered. Avoid too much formatting such as bold, italics, underline, and tabulation.
- » Your resume should look sleek and neat.
- » Ensure that you stick to conservative fonts, and remain between font sizes of 10.5 to 12. Anything smaller than font size 10.5 would be unpleasant to be reading.
- » Do not mention specific names of people/ individuals in the resume. Not even if this person has agreed to be your referee. If an employer would like a reference from you, they would request for the reference specifically.
- » List your track records and past experience in a reverse chronological order.

- » For a work experience that has more than 12 months duration, you may list up to 5 achievements (max.) otherwise, keep it to 3 achievements.
- » Avoid using technical, industrial or company jargons in your resume.
- » Make sure that your resume addresses culture fit with the potential employer. Hence customise each resume, highlighting your value-add for each employer specifically, as there is no one-size fits all kind of employer!
- » Leave personal judgments and political comments out of the Resume.

## 6. Email Addresses

- » Please make sure that the email address you use is professional and at the same time personalised. For instance, amos.kohtp@gmail.com would be a good email address, whereas hotbod6969@gmail.com would not be considered a professional email address.
- » Please make sure you use an email address that is simple, yet representative. For instance,

amoskohtp.suss@gmail.com would be a good email address, whereas amoskohtp6178@gmail.com would not be desirable to be used as an email address.

- » Whilst at SUSS, we recommend that you use the email address assigned to you by SUSS.

*Your Mentor at the Office of Career Development would be happy to share with you further tips and exchange experience on effective networking. Please feel free to reach out to your mentor to further discuss your networking strategies!*

# Career Branding

Before you start your Career Development Journey, you will need to create a career plan for yourself. With this career plan, you would then be able to identify and articulate the PAVES for yourself clearly:



Passion | Attributes | Values | Education | Skills

## 1. Creating your Brand Statement

### A. Your Elevator Pitch

- » A “brand” statement about yourself that should be maximum 30 seconds.
- » It is used to “leave” an impression about you with the person you have been interacting with.
- » The Elevator Pitch should articulate either a particular strength, or an outstanding track record, your aspiration, or an idea/opportunity you'd like to share.

### B. Your (Profile/Executive) Summary

- » The Summary should be a compelling summary of your achievements, special competencies and strengths.
- » You may also share your career goals and aspirations in your Summary, if you are quite convinced about the direction that you would be taking.

## 2. Creating your Branding Tool Kit

### A. Your Cover Letter and Resume

- » Your Cover Letter and Resume are your personal marketing collaterals about yourself. They are the very tools that will open doors to potential opportunities for you.

### B. Your Virtual Branding includes all your presence on social media

### C. Your “Business” Card

- » even though you are not really in business! It does not have to be fancy nor contain too much details!
- » All that need to be stated on your business card should be, Your Name, Your Major, Your University, Your Email and Your Mobile Number.

### D. Your Personal Grooming and Professional Image

- » Your attire, your grooming, your body language, the way you speak, your behaviour – all of which will make up your image.
- » Your image will motivate others to form opinions about you, based on what they see, and their interaction with you, regardless of how you would or would not try to portray yourself to others.

### E. Your Relationship Capital

- » Take stock of all your physical connections, as well as your virtual connections. This would include professional connections you already know, and connections you would potentially like to reach out to.
- » Who you know, very often means opportunities created, or opportunity costs.





### 3. Creating your Virtual Branding



#### A. Your LinkedIn Profile

- » You must have your LinkedIn Profile up and running from your first year onwards.
- » Your LinkedIn Profile will be very useful for your virtual networking and creation of opportunities by yourself.
- » Your LinkedIn Profile is a very powerful virtual marketing tool for yourself.

#### B. Your E-Portfolio

- » Your SUSS E-portfolio will chart your personal and professional growth, as well as learning journey for as long as you would maintain your E-Portfolio.
- » It could certainly also be used as a platform on which you would showcase your achievements, not only those which are academically, or professionally, but also personally – such that your readers would be able to form a holistic opinion about you.

#### C. Your Social Media and other Online Presence

- » When on Social Media, there are specific

etiquettes to follow, and rules to abide, for professionalism, and for your own cybersecurity.

- » What you would like to be kept confidential, should not even be listed and mentioned on any social media platform to begin within. The Internet as eternal memory, and what goes online never leaves the web.

#### D. Your Virtual Network

- » Your virtual professional network may be as valuable as your physical professional network. Very often, professionals are happy to help each other out, when parties are able to present “win-win” situations to each other.
- » This means that, do not simply ask to “Take” from your professional network, but start by offering to give to your professional network, and the opportunities will roll in!
- » Who you know virtually would also be attractive for other connections of yours, who may be looking to expand their network. Help each other out by introducing your connections to one another where necessary.



### 4. Creating your Personal Branding



#### a. Set-up to Standout

- » The purpose of creating your very own personal brand, is so that you will stand out, amongst the pool of candidates, and create a lasting impression with recruiters and other professional associate with whom you will come into contact.
- » Establish your very own unique selling point (USP).

#### b. Soar with your Strengths

- » Be clear about who you are, and maximise your value-add through your strengths. Capitalise on your Strengths!

#### c. Downplay / Overcome your weaknesses

- » Weaknesses come in many forms. They could be: i. Lack of interest ii. Lack of knowledge iii. Lack of Capacity iv. Overused Strengths for instance, being too flexible could be seen as being wishy-washy.
- » The objective here is to Mitigate your weaknesses by choosing roles and fields that don't lie in your weak zones.
- » Manage your weaknesses by focusing on those weaknesses that are holding you back from achievements and see how you could make positive changes to these.
- » Master your weaknesses through turning these into skill building opportunities.

#### d. Tap into your Values

- » Your values are your personal compass that direct you in the choices you make and the way you behave.
- » If you are able to pursue activities that are in line with your value, and those which are important to you at a core level, you will perform better and be less stressed.

- » This is most important than to aligning who you are with what you do and how you do it and spending your time on pursuits that have meaning to you.

#### e. Pursue your Passion

- » When you integrate your passion into what you do, you become more engaged, and create a power-house of enthusiasm and inspiration for those around you.
- » Passion play an extremely important and positive role, at work as well as at play. Passion:
- » Re-energizes you when another task or experience drains you
- » Allows your subconscious to work on a problem while you're focused on something else that you really enjoy
- » Creates connection and camaraderie with others
- » Provides a productive outlet for excess energy or stress
- » Improves your memory and your mental, emotional and
- » physical health

#### f. Define your purpose

- » Your purpose is your big picture, internal vision of what you would like to achieve. When you combine clear values, engage your passions and take “on-purpose” action, you can follow your personal road map to the destinations you choose.

#### g. Build your Brand and Make an Impact

- » Clarifying your unique strengths, values, passions and purpose gives you great direction and criteria for what to say “yes” to and what to say “no” to when faced with the many opportunities and requests you will encounter over a lifetime.
- » Focus your energy, strengths and competencies into building something that is meaningful to you, so that you will feel inspired and engaged through that activity.

If you would like to improve further on any of your Branding Toolkit, please reach out to your Mentors who would be able to guide you further in your branding strategy.

# Interview



Watch this video for Job Interview Tips – Top Ten Interview Tips to crush your interview: <https://youtu.be/5Z3uzFtFNcQ>

## 1. Pre-Interview Preparation

- » Prior to an interview, there is ground work that you will need to do to make sure that you are able to leave a deep impression with your interview. You will almost certainly have to rehearse your personal branding pitch, in answer to the question “tell me/us about yourself” to each individual employer perfectly.
- » You will also need to research into the company you will be attending the interview for. Find out as much about them as possible (remember, knowledge is king!). This would include their mission, businesses, values, culture, global presence etc. Some of this information you may find through public domains, some of this information, you may only be able to obtain through conversations with industry professionals, alumni, lecturers etc.
- » Knowing one thing or two about the person(s) who will be interviewing you will also help you position yourself better. Research on where your interviewer was educated, previously worked, or possibly published articles, would help you form an approximate “picture” about the seniority and personality of the person(s) interviewing you. This knowledge would also help you in selecting how you would “position” yourself in front of the person(s).
- » Nothing is worse, than going into the interview not knowing about the role you would be interviewing for. Research to find out about the requirements and expectations for the role, and

prepare pitch statements on how you would be the best candidate for the role.

- » Last but not least, prepare a list of questions, about the potential employer, about the role that you would like to fill, and possibly about the industry, which you would be able to ask towards the end of the interview, when you are asked “Do you have any questions for us”. This is an important tactical move in an interview to take, as asking questions would demonstrate that you are interested in the potential employer.

## 2. Pre-interview Assessments and Tests

- » Many local and international companies in both the private and public sector now rely on pre-employment tests, such as aptitude (e.g. numerical and verbal reasoning tests) and personality tests, to measure your ‘fit’, or match, for the position you apply for, or your ‘fit’ for the company’s culture.
- » The results of these tests tell employers what they need to know, not just what you want to share with them. The results of these test will help the employer pre-screen the candidates before they are further short-listed for the selection process.
- » With experience, one is able to answer the questions with deliberation, but in most instances, these assessments will bring out the true aptitude and personality in the candidate.

## 3. Different Types of Interviews

### a. Phone Interviews, Screening Interviews

- » Sometimes before a potential employer invites you in for formal interviews, they would put you through further screening exercises, such as screening interviews over the telephone. To further assess your behavioural, competency and cultural fit with the employer.
- » Tackling Phone interviews is quite challenging as you would not be able to create additional impressions with your interviewer through body language and eye contact.

- » During phone interviews, you will only have your articulation, your choice of words, as well as your tone to influence and create impact with your interviewers.
- » In these instances, it would be important to ensure that:
  - i. You maintain a high energy level throughout the telephone conversation.
  - ii. You speak with a clear, and deliberate tone of voice.
  - iii. You choose words that have positive and impactful effects.
  - iv. You need to listen extra carefully to your interview in order to interpret and distil for emotions and thoughts.
  - v. You take the call in a quiet location with little background noise, and no distractions. Do not attempt to multi-task during the phone interview.
  - vi. If the interview is with
- b. Face-to-face interviews can come in various forms.
  - » Sometimes candidates are interviewed individually, sometimes on a group basis.
  - » Sometimes candidates are interviewed by one or two representatives of the potential employer, sometimes the candidate would be placed in front of a panel. This largely depends on selection process of individual employers.
  - » Sometimes face-to-face interviews may come in the form of a video call, which is not uncommon these days, especially with Multinational Corporations, with matrix business models and where hiring managers reside in various locations globally.
  - » Whichever format the face-to-face interview takes, it is key that you attempt to build a rapport with the interviewer(s) as soon as possible. Which would mean that you ensure that all three modes of your communication (the words you use, the tones and body language you use, and the way you present yourself) win over the empathy and agreement of your interviewers.
  - » This is where you would be able to leave an impactful impression with your interviewers, through a well deliberated personal branding.

- » It is particularly important for you to make sure that you maintain eye contact with all interviewers throughout the face-to-face panel interview, and to engage with all interviewers.
- » Panel Interviews can be rather stressful. A “stay-calm” trick would be to listen to the questions carefully, paraphrase questions where appropriate, and to provide answers to questions slowly but surely.
- » Never rush into answering a question, as you would need time to structure your answer in your head.
- » Do not jump to defence when posed a criticism, or a negative observation. Always seek clarification on the reason for the criticism or negative observation. For instance, you may ask the question “why would you say that?” or “what makes you feel that way?”
- » Group interviews are intended to observe how candidates behave in a group, and their ability to lead and work in a group. Manage the group dynamics with your peers positively and constructively, while ensuring that you hold on to your own personal branding.
- » Assessment Centres and Case Interviews
  - » These interviews are intended to test candidates for competencies and skills that will be relevant for the role that they are being interviewed for, in particular competencies and skills in leadership, collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking, negotiation, and presentation amongst others.
  - » During these interviews, it is usually the thought process and how the candidates arrive at their recommendations, rather than the outcome and proposed solutions to the cases that really matter.
  - » These situations are also intended to observe how the candidates manage stress, and their abilities to work under tight timelines.
  - » Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner or Coffee Interviews
    - » Sometimes employers would conduct interviews through the use of social situations to observe the candidates’ abilities to interact and connect with others socially, as well as their effectiveness in multitasking (i.e. eating and thinking and communicating all at once!).





#### 4. Interview Tips and Etiquettes

- » Shake hands (firm but not squeezing) and greet and address all interviewers.
- » Maintain Eye Contact with interviewers, and smile.
- » Make sure that your mobile phone is entirely switched off, not even on vibrate.
- » Let the company take the lead during the interview. But bear in mind that you are in fact having a discussion with your potential employers, and the interview is not an inquisition. Your interviewer may in fact be as nervous as you are. If there are periods of silence, let the silence sit. Avoid rambling or talking too much just to fill the gaps. Share or communicate about matters that you feel would be important to help you position yourself better with the potential employer. It is really about sharing with your potential employer why you have chosen to join their organisation, and how you will add value for their organisation that really matter for them.
- » Listen out fully on your interviewer's questions. Do not interrupt their questions or sentences, nor "step" on their last words of a question or sentence.
- » Mind your posture – do not slouch. Sit up straight and lean slightly forward. Sitting towards the front edge of the chair would help you lean easier forward, thereby creating rapport through your body language by "closing the gap" between the interviewer(s) and you.

- » You may take notes during your interview. Bring with you a notepad to take down questions, or make notes during the interview as you may not be able to remind all that facts and information in the midst of your nervousness.
- » Arrive between 10-15 minutes earlier for the interview, not too early nor come late for the interview.
- » The interview is over only when you have left the premises. Do not make phone calls whilst on the premises discussing your interview.
- » Do not be disheartened even if the interview is not turning out the way you expect it to. Pursue the interview with sustained enthusiasm and positive attitude. You will be surprised by how the tables will turn in such cases!

#### 5. Types of Interview Questions

##### a. Credential Verification questions

- » These questions are intended to verify your claims made on your certifications, competencies and qualifications. They may be specifically related to the technical aspect of the role you have applied for.

##### b. Experience Verification questions

- » The intent of these questions are to cross-check upon your claims on your track records.
- » These are excellent opportunities and windows during the interviews which you may emphasise and showcase particularly value-adding achievements which you know will bring great contribution to the potential employer who is interviewing you!

#### c. Thought Process, Logic and Reasoning Questions

- » Opinion questions
- » Behavioural questions
- » Competency questions
- » Brainteaser questions
- » Case questions
- » Odd-ball questions
- » All these questions are intended to observe your thought process, and your analytical process. There is no right or wrong answer to any of these questions. However, the interview will form their opinion about you, based on how you derive to your conclusions and answers.

#### 6. Dress Code for Interviews

##### a. Gentlemen

- » Business attire with a tie. Ideally in a business suit, in particular if you are attending a panel interview, or an interview with C-Level executives of the potential employer firm.
- » Coordinated socks and dress shoes.
- » Avoid flashy colours, strong prints and loud ties. Pastel colours are fine.
- » Jacket, shirt and pants should be neatly pressed and not creased!
- » Make sure your breath is fresh. Avoid smoking before the interview as the cigarette smell will remain in your clothes, your hair and your breath.
- » Make sure your hair is clean, neat, and very much depending on the industry and the culture of your potential employer, conventional.
- » Piercings and other visible accessories earrings, should be removed.
- » Tattoos should ideally be concealed.

##### b. Ladies

- » Business suit with a skirt or a pair of pants, simple and classic in design. Skirts should be A-line and only two fingers' width above the knee. Pants need to cover the ankles.
- » Avoid flashy colours and loud prints. Pastel and dark colours are fine, but avoid the combination of black and white.
- » No lacy or sheer materials, nor revealing cuts and materials.

- » Wear light make up. A little make up is essential to make sure you are properly dressed up and polished. Nail polish and perfume may be worn, but nail polish should be understated (and not attention seeking) while perfume must be worn sparingly.
- » Keep jewellery and hair accessories to the minimum. Remove any piercings and conceal any tattoos.
- » Shoes should be conservative and slightly heeled.
- » Clothes should be neatly pressed, and not creased.
- » Make sure your breath is fresh, avoid smoking before the interview as the smell will remain in your hair, your clothes and your breath.
- » Your hair should be neat and conventionally styled.

#### 7. Post Interview Follow Up

- » Send a thank you note, within 24 hours of the interview, to the interviewers to thank them for their time, as well as to use the opportunity to highlight any significant value add or positioning statement that you may have not had the opportunity to mention during the interview, and to emphasise on your interest to join the organisation.
- » Send an invitation to connect on LinkedIn to your interviewers.
- » If you don't hear from them after two weeks, you may drop an email to politely enquire about the outcome and subsequent steps in the selection process.

*Your Mentor would be happy to support you in your interview preparations and guide you during a mock interview during a consultation appointment.*

## WHAT TO WEAR

# Interview Attire

**55%** of a person's first impression of you is based on your appearance.



## Ladies

Dark, solid color, conservative suit  
Coordinated blouse (modest neckline)  
Closed toe shoes (no extreme heels)  
Limited jewelry  
Neat, professional hairstyle  
Flesh-toned hosiery  
Sparse make-up  
Manicured nails  
No perfume

## Men

Dark, solid color, conservative suit  
White long-sleeved shirt  
Conservative tie  
Dark socks  
Polished shoes  
No earrings  
Neat, professional hairstyle  
No cologne  
Neatly trimmed nails  
Portfolio (no backpack)



  
JAMES W. STUCKERT  
CAREER CENTER

# Negotiation

## 1. Compensation Negotiation



- » Do your research on what your market rate would likely be, through asking around, or research on publicly available information.
- » When asked for expected salary, never say "Market Rate". But rather, mention a range that you would be comfortable with, and add that you are happy to negotiate.
- » Negotiation is about give and take. This means that you need to move your expectations accordingly, to take into consideration other

plus factors, that may not be easily quantifiable, or other benefits (including your annual leave, medical benefits, training and development benefits, bonus package, etc) that may come with the job, even if it means you need to receive a lower salary than you would have expected. iv. On the other hand, bear in mind that what you agree upon would set a precedent for yourself, in your next job or jobs to come. Hence, you should not hastily agree to an amount that you would not be comfortable with.

## 2. Contract Negotiation

- » The employment contract will regulate the terms and conditions of your employment with the employer.
- » Should there be any term or condition which you are uncomfortable with, you need to seek clarification and re-negotiate prior to signing the contract. Once you have signed the contract, you are committed to keeping to your

side of the bargain for the contract.

- » You need to make sure that all terms which you have verbally agreed during the interview, offer, and negotiation process have been duly included within the employment contract. iv. Make sure you do your research on industry standards and salary trends when you are negotiating your contract.

## 3. Etiquettes and Ethics

- » Verbal acceptances over the telephone, acceptances communicated over WhatsApp and other Messengers, are as good as acceptances communicated through emails.
- » Once you have accepted an offer, it would be unethical for you to rescind from the acceptance, even if another better offer was made to you. The only reason you would have

to not continue to take up the employment at the firm you have accepted the offer for, is for health reason.

- » Do not use the offer of one employer to negotiate for better terms with another employer as terms of offer and employment should be kept confidential between the two parties concerned.



Created and written by:

Office of Career Development, Center for Experiential Learning, College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning, Singapore University of Social Sciences