

EIP



National Careers Week: Breaking into your career – from application to offer by Grace Baker

In celebration of National Careers Week, Recruitment Coordinator at EIP, Grace Baker has produced a short guide to help young people navigate through an important stage in their lives, the start of their careers. This guide focuses on applying and interviewing for new roles and has three parts:

1. The power of a good cover letter.
2. Mastering virtual interviews.
3. EIP's top interview questions from candidates.

1. The power of a good cover letter

In addition to your job application, a good cover letter can help you stand out from other candidates, especially in a competitive market. Here are some tips to create an impactful cover letter:

It's in the details

Writing a cover letter can be time consuming and perhaps a little exasperating if you aren't sure where to start...Templates are useful but don't rely on these too heavily, the effort to include specificities won't go unnoticed!

Cut to the chase

You only have a page (ideally) to make your application stand out. Try to avoid obsessing over the first line and start structuring your thoughts in a succinct and logical way - point and evidence!

The use of 'I'

Of course this role needs to be the right opportunity for you, but I'd recommend using this initial step in the application process to reaffirm where you can add value (not the other way round).

Using your voice

Alongside the CV, which is largely factual, a cover letter provides a small window into you - the candidate, so don't fear a little honesty. It is not unprofessional to discuss, for example, the moment you realised this was the career pathway for you.

Read, re-read and read again

Don't let your efforts to stand out be scuppered by a 'there, their and they're' mishap!

2. Mastering virtual interviews

In the months that follow the easing of lockdown (hooray!) we are likely to continue seeing partially, if not fully virtual recruitment processes. Here are some hints and tips to help you ace that MS Teams interview:

Practice makes perfect

Whichever platform you are using, test your virtual meeting set up in advance! The surge of panic when you realise the sound doesn't work 5 minutes before you are due to meet, won't do you any favours.

No more distractions please...

Background noise is perfectly understandable, especially when the only space left in the house is your kitchen! It will, however, help you retain focus if you are able to limit this. Muting your microphone when you are listening to your interviewers, for example, can provide peace of mind here.

What is the WFH dress code?

It is perfectly reasonable to approve the dress code with your interviewers. Whilst it's fair to assume that the gym kit from your lunch time run is perhaps a little too casual, not all employees (including EIP) expect candidates to be suited and booted during a virtual meeting. To ensure you are comfortable on the day, it's probably worth checking.

Look up!

It might feel a little unnatural but making a conscious effort to look at the camera and not the video feed on screen will make a significant difference. This appears more engaging and can create the illusion of confidence.

'Leave Meeting'...What now?

Whilst it has its difficulties, our dependency on virtual meetings should not be viewed as a hinderance to open communication. I would recommend using this platform to follow up with your interviewers' post-interview, even a quick 'thank you for your time' IM is a nice way to leave the conversation. This isn't the be all and end all, but it demonstrates a conscientious approach to interview etiquette.

3. EIP's top interview questions from candidates

Interviews are a two-way street! Plus, thoughtful questions demonstrate that the opportunity has been carefully considered and prepared for, which is always a winner. To help here are some universally applicable questions to bring to your next interview:

- What attribute(s) do you feel is/are most important for this role?
- How do you support employees with professional development opportunities?
- How do you differentiate yourself from your competitors?
- What is the company culture?
- How does this role fit within the wider team and its dynamics?

With all that said, if you are considering your career options, please reach out to me or my colleague Chris Ball for a non-committal conversation about your future in IP at: careers@eip.com.