

Wild's guide to...

GROUP ASSESSMENTS



The thought of a group assessment can seem a bit daunting but they are normally friendly and welcoming events. In many ways they are less pressurised than one to one interviews and they are, of course, a chance for you to impress.

INTRODUCTIONS

You will normally find that the day is kicked off with a representative from the company providing some background information and explaining what you can expect from the assessment. You will usually be asked to introduce yourself to the group- you may be asked to do this in a bit of a quirky way (by telling the group your "claim to fame" or what animal best represents you!). This sort of thing can work well as most assessors will want to break the ice and create a relaxed atmosphere.

If you are not used to standing up in front of people it's a great idea to practise either to friends and family or in front of the mirror. Be confident, project your voice and smile- take the opportunity to give them a feel for your personality.

GROUP EXERCISES

The assessment is likely to include group exercises for you to participate in. They might be more general or they might be role related. Whatever the task the assessors will be looking at your skills in the following areas:

- Team work – they will want to know if you work well in a team; do you listen and accommodate ideas as well as putting your own forward?
- Communication skills – can you put your ideas across to the team in a clear and inclusive way? What are your influencing skills like? Can you back your ideas up with sound arguments?
- Relationship building – people want to know how you fit in within the work place and in particular whether you have the ability to get on with others and build genuine trust.
- Creativity – can you think outside of the box and come up with ideas to put forward to the team? Can you back up your theories with sound arguments? Can you make sure your creativity is relevant to the end goal?

Although you cannot exactly prepare for a group exercise, it is important to remember that you are being observed. Make sure you strike a balance between putting your ideas across and also listening to others. If you do not participate and just watch others you will almost certainly fail the task. At the same time you need to be careful not to take over and be the only one talking!

You may sometimes find that there are one or two others in the group that are dominating the session and this can be tricky to handle especially if their input is a little "left field". It is important that you assert yourself and put your ideas across- try and stay calm but firm. You can also attempt to bring other quieter delegates into the discussion as this shows the assessors that you are a good team player and are aware of what goes on around you.

GROUP ASSESSMENTS

INDIVIDUAL TESTS

Despite the group assessment theme you may be asked to complete an individual role play. This could be anything from a computer test to a written test. Generally make sure you find out as much as possible before the day so you can prepare in advance.

ONE TO ONE INTERVIEWS

You will also probably be interviewed on a one to one basis which will help you strike up an individual relationship with the interviewer. This will give you the opportunity to emphasise how inclusive you try to be in group scenarios and it will give you the chance to project yourself positively as in any interview.

TOP TIPS

- Practise with a friend or colleague especially if they have experience of this format.
- Know where you are going. It's good to check out the route prior to the day so you know where to park and don't get flustered.
- Look the part – you are up against others on this day so make sure you are looking smart and professional as this will fill you with confidence.
- Volunteer without being overbearing – if someone is asked to present be prepared to put your hat in the ring for it.
- Be yourself, be confident and relax.
- Be open – even if you are competing with others on the day, you need to show you can get on with anyone easily.
- Make sure you are professional during breaks.
- Show your enthusiasm! Don't be cynical about the process and show interest in the role and the company.
- Enjoy it and make sure you get as much out of the assessment as you can. Like every part of the application process a group assessment should be a learning experience and helpful for your future.