

Tips for a Successful Interview

The impression you make on the interviewer often can outweigh your actual credentials. Your poise, attitude, basic social skills, and ability to communicate are evaluated along with your experience and education.

You and the interviewer must engage in a conversation - a mutual exchange of information and ideas. Only through such a dialogue can you both determine if you, the organization, and the job are well matched. Preparation is the key.

Be on time.

This often means 10-15 minutes early. Interviewers often are ready before the appointment.

Know the interviewer's name, its spelling, and pronunciation.

Use it during the interview. If you don't know the name, call beforehand and ask the secretary. Also, note the secretary's name in case you have to call back. Secretaries can influence the hiring decision!

Have some questions of your own prepared in advance.

There is nothing wrong with having a short list of questions and thoughts- it shows you have done your research and want to know more about the organization and the position.

Bring several copies of your resume.

Also, bring a copy of your transcript. Carry your papers in an organized manner.

Have a reliable pen and a small note pad with you.

But do not take notes during the interview. However, immediately afterward, write down as much as you can remember, including your impression of how well you did.

Greet the interviewer with a handshake and a smile.

Remember to maintain eye contact (which does not mean a stare down).

Expect to spend some time developing rapport.

Don't jump right in and get down to business. Follow the interviewer's lead.

Don't be embarrassed if you are nervous.

As you gain experience you'll become more at ease with the interviewing process.

Focus.

On your attributes, your transferable skills, and your willingness to learn; don't apologize for a lack of experience; describe your strengths in terms of what you can do for the organization.

Tell the truth.

Lies and exaggeration will come back to haunt you.

Listen carefully to the interviewer.

Be sure you understand the question; if not, ask for clarification, or restate it in your own words. Answer completely and concisely. Stick to the subject at hand.

Never slight a teacher, friend, employer, or your university.

Loyalty ranks high on the employer's list.

Watch your grammar.

Employers are interested in candidates who can express themselves properly. Even if you have to go slowly and correct yourself, accuracy is preferred over ungrammatical fluency.

Be prepared for personal questions.

Some interviewers may not know what they can and cannot ask legally. Anticipate how you will handle such questions without losing your composure.

Wait for the interviewer to mention salary and benefits.

To research pay scales, refer to salary surveys and information on the Career Services website on in the career library.

Don't expect a job offer at the first interview.

Often you will be invited to a second or even third interview before an offer is made several weeks later.

Close on a positive, enthusiastic note.

Ask what the next step will be. Thank the interviewer for his/her time and express your interest in the job. Leave quickly and courteously with a handshake and a smile.

No interview is complete until you follow up with a thank-you note.

Express your appreciation for the interview and, if true, reaffirm your interest. This last step can make a difference. Don't forget it.