

Interviewing Tips

Here is some advice to help calm your nerves and get you prepared for your interview.

1. Be on time!!

Punctuality is very important when arriving to an interview. This is the first impression the employer gets, and if you're late, it gives the impression that you don't value the interviewer's time. Even arriving five minutes late can lose you the job. Arriving 10-15 minutes early, on the other hand, will give you time to prepare. Be sure you have directions and you know how to get to your interview location.

2. Dress up

Showing up in jeans and a T-shirt may be comfy but doesn't give the best impression, even if that's what you'd be wearing on the job. Khakis and a nice collared shirt with a tie, or a tailored top and (not mini) skirt are always a good choice. If you're applying for a retail clothing store, avoid wearing clothing with a competitor's logo.

3. Prepare, prepare, prepare

Know the company you are interviewing with and have questions ready for your interviewer. This shows the interviewer that you have an interest in the company. Make sure you know who you are and what skill set you possess. Always be yourself - you want them to hire the real you, not a fake version of you. Be sure to practice with friends and family beforehand.

4. Be aware of your body language

When you're nervous, do you tend to rub your arm? Jiggle your foot? Or click a pen? You are going to drive the interviewer crazy if you do any of those things! At the job interview, do your best to keep still, sit up straight and look the interviewer in the eyes. You want to appear calm and in control.

Preparing for an interview

1. Prepare a complete, attractive resume that stresses your qualifications in a positive manner; use it to fill out applications!
2. **Get permission** from people you plan to use as references
3. Write an effective cover letter that really sells "you"
4. Fill out the application completely, accurately, and legibly.
5. Go to the interview alone
6. **Bring resume, social security card, work permits and ID to the interview**
7. **Use relaxing strategies to let go of stress before you go into your interview.**
8. Arrive early, get a drink of water, go to the bathroom, and turn off your cell phone!
9. **Greet the receptionist and the interviewer courteously.**
10. Present yourself with confidence
11. **Research the company**
12. Be prepared to answer questions about yourself and your qualifications.
13. **Be prepared to ask questions about the company.**
14. Smile
15. Follow the interview with a thank-you letter.

Qualities that Employers are looking for

Ability to Listen and Learn
Adaptability
Assertiveness
Appearance
Communication
Collaboration

Courtesy
Dependability
Enthusiasm
Flexibility
Integrity
Initiative

Intelligence
Maturity
Personality
Poise
Professionalism
Self-Reliance

Interview Tips Continued

1. "Tell me a little about yourself."

This is always a tough one, because you ask yourself, "What do they want to know?" Focus on your skills, abilities and your interests. The interviewer wants to know about you and what your plans are for the present and the future. Definitely don't start talking about your childhood, the music you like, your soccer trophies or anything else that's not relevant to the job. Remember to keep the answer brief, because it can set the tone for the rest of the interview.

2. "Why do you want to work for us?"

Here's your chance to tell the interviewer why you chose to apply for the job. Don't say because of the pay. This is your opportunity to talk about why you think you'd fit in really well and what you could bring to the team.

3. "What extracurricular activities do you participate in? Or what work experiences have you had?"

This is your chance to talk about you and show your personality - but again, keep it short! Use your previous work experience or extracurricular activities to show your best traits and your interests.

4. "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"

Try to answer both categories in a positive way. Read the job description first and prepare 3 strengths that support the position and 3 weaknesses that do not impair your ability to work in the position. With your weakness show how you are working on it and how you are open to growth. Start with "One area that I am continually working on is _____, I constantly try to _____ and _____ in order to improve in this area."

Strengths: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Weaknesses: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

5. "Describe a time that you disagreed with a parent, teacher, coach or supervisor."

Pick an example before the interview that highlights your ability to take criticism and change your behavior. Pick a true time when you received negative feedback and worked hard to create a positive situation.

6. "Why should I hire you?"

Be honest. Let the interviewer know why you are the best for the job. This is your chance to sell yourself and set yourself apart from the other job candidates.

Worried about being Nervous?

Nervousness is a tricky emotion. A little nervousness keeps you in check so that you are focused and eager to do your best. Too much nervousness can cause you to rush through an interview or even blank out. Here are 10 ways to control your nervousness:

1. Practice answers to questions you probably face
2. Dress appropriately, bring extra copies of resumes and references
3. Arrive 15 minutes early, go to the bathroom, get a drink of water
4. Don't have caffeine or sugar before your interview (if you normally have it daily, choose a milder form, try tea!)
5. Eat something high in protein. This will keep your blood sugar balanced and help you focus. Try yogurt or cheese.
6. Take a few deep breaths. Inhale deeply and slowly through your nose and exhale through your mouth. Repeat a few times. Focus on positive thoughts.
7. Have a mint before your interview. You will smell good and peppermint has a calming effect. (You can also have gum if you REMOVE IT BEFORE THE INTERVIEW!!)
8. Wash your face with a little cold water to calm down.
9. Think of the interview as a conversation.
10. Don't dwell on mistakes you make and remember that there are other jobs out there!