

Best Interview Tips

When you have successfully created a resume and cover letter, and begin receiving requests for interviews, it's time to understand how to succeed in the job interview so that you are ever closer to your goal of obtaining one or more job offers

1. Conduct research on the employer, hiring manager, and job opportunity

Success in a job interview starts with a solid foundation of knowledge on the jobseeker's part. You should understand the employer, the requirements of the job, and the background of the person (or people) interviewing you if possible. The more research you conduct, the more you'll understand the employer, and the better you'll be able to answer interview questions. Check the organization's website and other published materials, search engines, research tools, and ask questions about the company in your network of contacts.

2. Review common interview questions and prepare your responses

Another key to interview success is preparing responses to expected interview questions. A good tool for remembering your responses is to put them into a story form that you can tell in the interview. No need to memorize responses (in fact, it's best not to), but do develop talking points.

3. Dress for success

Plan out a wardrobe that fits the organization and its culture, striving for the most professional appearance you can accomplish. Remember that it's always better to be overdressed than under. Keep accessories and jewelry to a minimum.

4. Arrive on time relaxed and prepared for the interview

There is no excuse ever for arriving late to an interview. Short of a disaster, strive to arrive about 10-15 minutes before your scheduled interview to complete additional paperwork and allow yourself time to get settled. Arriving a bit early is also a chance to observe the dynamics of the workplace.

The day before the interview, pack up extra copies of your resume or CV and reference list. If you have a portfolio or samples of your work, bring those along too. Finally, remember to pack several pens and a pad of paper to jot notes. Finally, as you get to the offices, shut off your cell phone. (And if you were chewing gum, get rid of it.)

5. Make good first impressions

A fundamental rule of interviewing is to be polite and offer warm greetings to everyone you meet, from the parking attendant to the receptionist to the hiring manager. Employers often are curious how job applicants treat staff members, and your job offer could easily be disrupted if you're rude or arrogant to any of the staff. When it's time for the interview, keep in mind that first impressions can make or break an interview.

Make a strong first impression by dressing well, arriving early, and when greeting your interviewer, stand, smile, make eye contact, and offer a firm but not bone-crushing handshake.

Remember that having a positive attitude and expressing enthusiasm for the job and employer are vital in the initial stages of the interview.

6. Be authentic, focused and concise

Once the interview starts, the key to success is the quality and delivery of your responses. Your goal should always be authenticity, responding truthfully to interview questions. At the same time, your goal is to get to the next step, so you'll want to provide focused responses that showcase your skills, experience, and fit with the job and the employer. Provide solid examples of solutions and accomplishments, but keep your responses short and to the point.

By preparing responses to common interview questions, you'll ideally avoid long, rambling responses that bore interviewers. Always attempt to keep your interview responses short and to the point. Finally, never badmouth a previous employer, boss, or co-worker. The interview is about you and making your case that you are the ideal candidate for the job.

7. Remember the importance of body language

While the content of your interview responses is vital, poor body language can be a distraction, or a reason not to hire you. Effective forms of body language include smiling, eye contact, solid posture, active listening, and nodding. Detrimental forms of body language include slouching, looking off in the distance, playing with a pen, fidgeting in a chair, brushing back your hair, touching your face, chewing gum, or mumbling.

8. Ask insightful questions

Even if the hiring manager was thorough in his or her discussions about the job opening and what is expected, you must ask a few questions. This shows that you have done your research and that you are curious. The smart jobseeker prepares questions to ask before the interview.

9. Sell yourself and then close the deal

The most qualified applicant is not always the one who is hired; the winning candidate is often the jobseeker who does the best job responding to interview questions and showcasing his or her fit with the job, department, and organization. You are the salesperson, and the product you are selling to the employer is your ability to fill the organization's needs, solve its problems, propel its success.

Finally, as the interview winds down, ask about the next steps in the process and the timetable in which the employer expects to use to make a decision about the position.

10. Thank interviewer(s) in person and email

Common courtesy and politeness go far in interviewing; thus, the importance of thanking each person who interviews you should come as no surprise before you leave.

Final thoughts on job interview success

Succeeding in job interviews takes research, practice, and persistence. The more effort you put into your interview preparation, the more success you'll see in obtaining job offers, especially if you remember and follow these ten job interviewing tips.