

Interviewing Tips

Preparing for the Interview

1. Know the exact place and time of the interview, the interviewer's full name, the correct pronunciation and his or her title.
2. Learn pertinent facts about the company such as annual sales revenue, principal lines of business and locations.
3. Find out why the hiring manager and/or client representative is interested in your qualifications.
4. Determine how the opportunity will impact your immediate and long-term career development.
5. An interview is a "two-way street." Know what questions to ask during the interview. Your questions allow the hiring manager to evaluate your professional and personal needs. Insightful questions help both of you determine if your relationship will be mutually rewarding. Lastly, the better you understand the opportunity, the more you will be able to communicate your interest in the position.
6. Put your best foot forward. Always wear proper attire and greet your interviewer with a firm handshake and an enthusiastic smile.

The Interview

1. For hiring managers, the "right match" means they have identified individuals capable of performing the immediate challenges. More importantly, they hope the individuals have the potential to be future resources and assets to the firm.
2. The interviewer is the mechanism used to determine the "right match."
3. You are being interviewed by the hiring manager to determine whether you have the qualifications necessary to do the job and whether a mutually rewarding professional relationship can be formed.
4. Similarly, you must determine whether you can be successful in the available position and whether the company will give you the opportunity for growth and development.
5. Present yourself in the best possible light. However, be yourself; everyone has the same goal - the "right match."

Some "DOs" and "DON'Ts

1. Do plan to arrive on time or a few minutes early. Late arrival for a job interview is never excusable.
2. If presented with an application, do fill it out neatly and completely. Don't rely on your application or resume to do the selling for you. Interviewers will want you to speak for yourself.
3. Do greet the interviewer by last name if you are sure of the pronunciation. If not, ask the employer to repeat it. Give the appearance of energy as you walk. Smile! Shake hands firmly. Be genuinely glad to meet the interviewer.
4. Do wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright, look alert and interested at all times. Be a good listener as well as a good communicator.
5. Do look a prospective employer in the eye while speaking.
6. Do follow the interviewer's leads, but try to get the interviewer to describe the position and the duties to you early in the interview so that you can apply your background, skills and accomplishments to the position.
7. Do make sure that your good points come across to the interviewer in a factual, sincere manner. Stress achievements. For example: sales records, processes developed, savings achieved, systems installed, etc.
8. Do always conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are discussing. Never close the door on opportunity.
9. Do show enthusiasm. If you are interested in the opportunity, enthusiastic feedback can enhance your chances of being further considered. If you are not interested, your responsiveness will still demonstrate your professionalism.
10. Don't forget to bring a copy of your resume! Keep several copies in your briefcase if you are afraid you will forget.
11. Don't smoke, even if the interviewer does and offers you a cigarette. Do not chew gum.
12. Don't answer with a simple "yes" or "no." Explain whenever possible. Describe those things about yourself which relate to the situation.
13. Don't lie. Answer questions truthfully, frankly and succinctly.
14. Don't make unnecessary derogatory remarks about your present or former employers. Obviously, there were issues or else you would not have left a prior company or be looking to leave a present employer. However, when explaining your reasons for leaving, limit your comments to those necessary to adequately communicate your rationale.
15. Don't over-answer questions. And if the interviewer steers the conversation into politics or controversial issues, try to do more listening than speaking since this could be a sensitive situation.
16. Don't inquire about salary, vacations, bonuses, retirement, etc., on the initial interview unless you are sure the employer is interested in hiring you. If the interviewer asks what salary you want, indicate what you've earned but that you're more interested in opportunity than in a specific salary.

Be Prepared to Answer Such Questions As...

Tell me about yourself?

Tell me about your background, accomplishments?

What are your strengths? Weaknesses?

How would you describe your most recent job performance?

What interests you about our company?

What outside activities are most significant to your personal development?

And, be prepared to ASK questions, such as...

What would I be expected to accomplish in this position?

What are the greatest challenges in this position?

How do you think I fit the position?

Remember a lack of questions may be mistaken as a lack of interest.

Not letting these kinds of subjects catch you off-guard is a key factor in maintaining your composure during an interview. Rehearse these questions and answers in your mind (or even out loud, if you can) in the days before the interview.

Negative Factors Evaluated by An Interviewer

Personal appearance which is less than professional.

Overbearing, overaggressive or egotistical behavior.

Lack of interest and enthusiasm -- passive and indifferent.

Lack of confidence and poise; nervousness.

Overemphasis on compensation.

Evasiveness; making excuses for unfavorable factors in work history.

Lack of tact, maturity and courtesy.

Condemnation of past employers, managers, projects or technologies.

Inability to maintain a conversation; Lack of commitment to fill the position at hand.

Failure to ask questions about the position.

Persistent attitude of "What can you do for me?"

Lack of preparation for interview -- failure to get information about the company, resulting in inability to ask intelligent questions.

Closing the Interview

1. If you are interested in the position, let the interviewer know. If you feel the position is attractive and you want it, be a good salesperson and say something like: "I'm very impressed with what I've seen here today; your company, its products and the people I've met. I am confident I could do an excellent job in the position you've described to me." The interviewer will be impressed with your enthusiasm.
2. Don't be too discouraged if no immediate commitment is made. The interviewer will probably want to communicate with other people in the company or possibly interview more candidates before making a decision.
3. If you get the impression that the interview is not going well and that you have already been rejected, don't let your discouragement show. Once in a while an interviewer who is genuinely interested in you may seem to discourage you as a way of testing your reaction.
4. Thank the interviewer for his or her time and consideration. If you have answered the two questions-- "Why are you interested in this position?" and "What can you offer?"-- you have done all you can.