

Interviewing Tips

Thoroughly research the employer and the position. *Learn about the company by visiting the website and, if possible, the company's physical location. What kinds of products or services does the company make or sell? What is the financial health of the company? What are some of the day-to-day tasks that the job involves? What are the typical hours this position requires? Make notes about things you might want to ask the employer.*

Practice answering in front of a mirror or record yourself; smile! *Practicing out loud for your interview will help you sound more polished and concise and less nervous in the actual interview. List a few key things you want the employer to know about you, and review common interview questions. Practice your answers in front of the mirror. This exercise prevents you from rambling in the interview and sounding unsure; it also helps you discover what really does make you the best candidate for the job!*

Prepare your self-introduction. *The very first question you might be asked is "Tell me about yourself." It is important to be prepared with your response. It should include your background; your skills, strengths, and accomplishments; and your job focus and career plans.*

Be prepared to discuss how your skills meet the employer's needs. *It is essential that you understand the job description for the position you interview for. Identify your transferable skills and be ready to demonstrate how they make you the best candidate for the job. Give concrete examples to back up your points.*

Be enthusiastic and confident; lean forward to show interest. *Keep the interview positive. Avoid making negative remarks about any previous jobs or employers. Also, refrain from complaining about any job-related responsibilities or tasks you were given in a previous position. Employers want to hire someone who is positive, enthusiastic, and able to meet and deal with challenges.*

Dress appropriately; neatness and cleanliness are a must. *First impressions do matter. If you are interviewing for a job in an office, it's best to wear a dark-colored, conservative suit. If it is a more casual environment (a factory or a construction site), then pay attention to what is appropriate for the industry. Avoid wearing excessive jewelry, perfume, or cologne. Good personal hygiene is also important.*

Prepare questions to ask the interviewer. *This is where your research comes in. Employers want to know if you are truly interested in the position. They also want to know that you have all the information you need to make a decision, if offered the job. Having several questions in mind is a good idea. This is your chance to ask additional questions about the business, the job, the requirements, and the expectations of the person who will fill the position. To go into an interview without a few questions in mind is a big mistake.*

Be aware of your posture and your non-verbal language. *Sit up straight and make good eye contact. If you tend to talk with your hands, try keeping them in your lap. Don't stare down at the floor; you will appear difficult to communicate with, possibly uninterested. Don't slouch in your chair; you might appear cocky or uninterested.*

Don't bring your cell phone to the interview. *If you leave the phone behind, you eliminate the possibility of an embarrassing interruption. Even having your phone on vibrate is a distraction.*

Be on time, or five to ten minutes early (no more than ten). *This is, perhaps, most important. Employers expect employees to arrive on time to work. They may see a person who is late to an interview, when one is supposed to be showing one's best side, as someone who will have difficulty arriving on time to work or meeting deadlines if hired.*

Send a thank you note within 24 hours. *Send the interviewer a handwritten or email thank you note immediately after the interview. This is not only proper etiquette and a common display of appreciation, but it also allows you to reaffirm one or two key points of the interview. In addition, it lets the interviewer know you are interested in working for the company. Being polite and professional always makes a good impression.*

Do's

- Drive to the location before the interview so you know how much travel time you will need, especially if you've never been there before.
- Be friendly and professional with everyone you meet.
- Make eye contact, especially when making key points.
- Be sure to ask questions that show you are interested in the job/company.
- Be confident and show enthusiasm and interest in the job.
- Identify positive aspects of your job, even if you had a negative experience.
- Bring extra copies of your resume to the interview.
- Be prepared to provide references if asked.
- Be able to answer questions and discuss any information represented in your resume.
- Thank the interviewer(s) for their time and for the interview before leaving.
- Contact Career Services at 360-992-2902 to schedule a practice interview to be well prepared.

Don'ts

- Take anyone with you to the interview.
- Grip too hard when shaking hands; a firm, confident grip is fine.
- Be misled by chit chat at the beginning of the interview; the interviewer is trying to make you comfortable.
- Act "desperate" or say you'll "take anything available."
- Evade questions or be afraid to ask questions.
- Volunteer too much personal information. Keep it about the professional you.
- Express concern about title, salary, or benefits during the interview...wait until a job offer is about to be made.
- Address the interviewer by their first name unless you're invited to do so.
- Take your cell phone with you to the interview. If you do, don't forget to turn it off.
- Go into too much detail or talk too much.
- Race through your answers...take your time.
- Express bitterness or bad mouth a former employer, supervisors, or others.
- Answer with just "yes" or "no"; instead, provide specific examples.