

An Interview Guide

Preparing for the Interview

The interview is the critical part of taking your career to a new level. You should spend time preparing for the interview and getting yourself into the correct state of mind.

Research

- Learn key facts about the company such as the history of the company, products/services they provide, annual sales revenue, principle lines of business and locations – the internet is a great resource for obtaining such information.
- If possible, talk to people currently working there to get an inside view and specifics on the company.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask the interviewers

Rehearsing

- Take time to practice for the interview – if possible hold mock interviews with a friend
- If the interview will be held at an unfamiliar location, drive/visit the location before the day of the interview to make sure you can find the location and also know how long it will take you to get there

Dressing for the part

- Dress in a manner that will convey an image of professionalism, authority and competence
- Dress conservatively – dark suit, white shirt/blouse, understated tie.
- Avoid wearing excessive perfume, jewelry, or 'loud' accessories and make up.

Types of interviews

Phone Interviews

- If you caught off guard, do not let the interviewer know it. Take time to gather your thoughts and be prepared – with note cards and your CV near the phone.
- Smile, you will be amazed at how this changes your tone of voice.
- Do not engage in other activities that will hinder your speech such as eating, smoking, or chewing.
- Studies show that people are more alert when they are on their feet – stand up during your interview if possible.

Panel Interviews

- Your primary goal during a panel interview is to make each member of the group feel totally involved in the interview and your responses.
- If possible, learn how many interviewers will be on the panel so that you know how many copies of your CV to bring.
- Be sure to make eye contact, look at each panel member in the eye as you speak, directing the most attention to the interviewer asking the question.

During The Interview

- Relax! – do not forget to smile and make eye contact with your interviewer/s
- Offer a firm handshake
- Show enthusiasm and create dialogue, a two way discussion
- Avoid the tendency to play the hero or heroine: do not send the message that you can single-handedly turn the company around
- Concisely repeat key points – this will give you a chance to touch on areas you may have overlooked

5 Interview Do's

1. Smile
2. Listen attentively
3. Make eye contact
4. Maintain an open posture, leaning forward slightly to show interest
5. Ask for the job

5 interview Don'ts

1. Look at your watch
2. Discuss remuneration unless the interviewer asks.
3. Speak negatively of past employers
4. Answer questions with a simple 'yes' or 'no'
5. Fold your arms

Asking Questions

- Always ask questions when the interviewer asks if you have any. This is critical – it's a further chance to interact, gather information and impress that you are the best person for the job.
- Many employers evaluate applicants by the questions they ask. Employers like specific questions about the nature of the job, the company's goals and plans and the abilities considered most important for the position.

Good Questions to Ask the Interviewer

1. What are some of the key success factors or your company?
2. Ask what a typical work day would be like
3. What would I be expected to accomplish in this position?
4. What would you like done differently by the next person who fills this position?
5. What are the greatest challenges in this position?
6. Describe how you see this company developing over the next few years.
7. What sort of traits or skills would your ideal candidate possess?

Be prepared to Answer Such Questions as:

1. Tell us about yourself.
2. Why should we hire you rather than anyone else?
3. What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
4. What are your three biggest accomplishments?
5. What is your short/long term goal?
6. What interests you the most about this position?
7. What interests you the least about this position?
8. Why do you want to work for us?
9. Why did you leave your last job?
10. What did you least/most like about your last job?

Concluding the Interview

Effectively Communicating Your Interest

- Ask for the job! The only thing more important than asking your own questions is to ask for the job. By asking for the job you increase your odds of being hired more than 50%.
- At the conclusion of the interview say, "I'm impressed by your company and the people I have met today, and this position definitely interests me. What is our next step?"

Clichés to Avoid

1. I am a quick learner
2. I'm a people person
3. If you will just give me a chance (this sounds desperate)
4. To be honest with you (you should already be honest)

Final Interview Tips

- When referring to past accomplishments, use the pronouns "we" and "us" to show that you are a team player capable of giving credit to others.
- If the topic of negative past job experiences comes up, do not panic! Stress your ability to learn from mistakes, and your ability to put unpleasant things behind you.
- Remember something most job seekers do not realize – when interviewing applicants; the interviewers usually end up weighing the applicant against others, rather than against the position itself.
- If possible, always get the business card of anyone you meet with when interviewing.
- Do not wait until you meet the interviewer to be on your best behavior, be professional as soon as you enter the company premises. Turn off your cell phone.
- Arrive five to ten minutes early to be safe and let the interviewer know you are there. Do not arrive too early as that will look desperate and may disrupt the interviewers' schedule.
- Never postpone an interview - it is a sign that you lack professionalism and cannot be depended upon. If you must postpone for any reason, make sure to do so well ahead of time.

Follow-up

- Immediately after the interview, contact the Career Connections recruitment team. The client is likely to be calling us, and we should talk to you first so that we know how to proceed on your behalf.
- Write down your thoughts. These impressions can help with the thank you letter.

- Check if your interviewer's business card contains an email address. If it does, you may wish to send your thank you letter electronically.

Thank You Letters

- Always send one within 24 hours of the interview.
- Be gracious. Express appreciation and enthusiasm.
- Add any important information in support of your application that you may have failed to mention or emphasize in the interview.

Resources

Books:

- Break the Rules: The Secret Code to Finding A Great Job Fast
by William Cohen
- Knock 'Em Dead 2005: The Ultimate Job Seeker's Guide
by Martin Yate
- Super Job Search: The Complete Manual for Job-Seekers & Career-Changers
by Peter Studner
- Don't Send A Resumé: And Other Contrarian Rules to Help Land a Great Job
by Jeffrey J. Fox
- What Colour Is Your Parachute? 2005: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers
by Richard Nelson Bolles, Mark Emery Bolles
- Killer Cover Letters and Resumes! The WetFeet Insider Guide
by WetFeet Staff, edited by Rosanne Lurie
- 101 Greatest Answers to the Toughest Interview Questions
by Ron Fry
- Boost Your Interview I.Q.
by Carole Martin
- The Everything Job Interview Book
by Bob Adams
- The Unofficial Guide to Acing the Interview
by Michelle Tullier

