



The Job Interview

The interview is the final hurdle most people have to cross in getting a job. Being chosen for an interview means someone is interested in your skills, knowledge, and experience. However, a great application or resume can quickly find its way into the garbage if you do not come across well in an interview. You now must become a salesperson. The interviewer is the buyer, and they want to see if your talents meet their needs for the job. Sell yourself!

The interview is when you want to tell the employer or admissions representative about your strengths, skills, education, and work experience. Knowing yourself - positively selling your strong points - is what is going to get you the job or admission to the college.



Before The Interview

Do your homework! Learn as much as you can about the company before the interview.

Do some research: ask people who work there, go to the library, look on the internet, make an anonymous call to the secretary. Find out what services/products the company provides, how long they have been in business, whether the company is growing or downsizing, the company's reputation, etc. An interviewer will be impressed that you have made an effort to learn about the company or college. Read any material they send you after you apply!



Know where you are going. Drive by the site of the interview a day or two before the interview.

Arrive 5 - 15 minutes early.

Be prepared when you go to the interview. Bring extra copies of your resume, your portfolio, a notepad with some questions prepared for the interview, and a pen.



Dress for Success! Hair should be clean and combed. Fingernails must be clean with no gaudy polish. Keep perfume, cologne, and/or aftershave to a minimum. Brush your teeth and don't forget deodorant.



Do not wear loud clothes! Err on the side of caution and be conservative!

The Interview Begins



Inform the secretary/receptionist that you have an interview, whom it is with, and the time of the interview.

Treat all people you encounter with courtesy and respect. Administrative assistants and receptionists also have first impressions and frequently share their opinions with the interviewers.

When you meet the interviewer, look straight into his/her eyes, shake hands firmly, introduce yourself, smile, be confident, and wait until you are offered a seat.

Be positive in your communication (remember: you're selling yourself!), don't slouch, try not to be too bold or too shy. Let the interviewer lead the interview. Express that you are happy to have the opportunity to interview.



Don't go to extremes with your posture; don't slouch, and don't sit rigidly on the edge of your chair.

DO NOT chew gum, curse, slouch, fidget with items on the interviewer's desk or rings, pens, ties, change, or other things within your reach.

When all else fails: SMILE!!

The Interview



Always face the interviewer with good posture and body language.

Stay positive with your attitude and your answers. Let the interviewer know about the skills, knowledge, and experience that make you a qualified candidate.



Know your resume and portfolio well and be prepared to use them (show things from them to the interviewer) answer questions about them.

Be thorough and honest with your answers. Never answer with just a "yes" or "no," instead provide explanations and examples. And experienced interviewers can see right through "little white lies."

Don't be a know-it-all! Express your willingness to learn! Pay close attention to what the interviewer is saying, but if you don't understand a question, ask the interviewer to explain.

Organize your thoughts before speaking. Feel free to think for a moment about tough questions. Silence is not a bad thing as long as you do not take an excessive amount of time.

Don't make negative comments about previous employers or others.

Watch for illegal questions, such as information about your age, religion, race, ethnicity or marital status.

The Interview Ends



Ask the job-related questions you prepared for the interview.

You may be offered the job immediately. In that case, you should ask about specific salary, benefits, and work hours. You do not have to give them an immediate answer. Ask for a day to think about it.

If you are told you will be contacted, ask about how long it will be. Offer to call in a few days to find out the decision. This shows your continued interest.

Make sure the interviewer knows how best to contact you and that you are available for any additional information that may be needed.

Thank the person for the interview and their interest in you as a potential employee or student. Shake hands firmly on the way out.



The Follow-Up



Send the interviewer a thank-you letter soon after the interview.

If you have not heard from the company within a week, call them to find out if they have made a decision.

If they have not already told you, find out when they expect to make their decision.



DO's

Dress appropriately and conservatively and pay attention to your personal grooming and cleanliness.

Know the exact time and location for your interview.

Arrive early; at least 10 minutes prior to the interview start time.

Treat all people you encounter with courtesy and respect. Administrative assistants and receptionists also have first impressions and frequently share their opinions with the interviewers.

Offer a firm handshake, maintain good eye contact, and show a positive attitude during the interview.

DON'Ts

Don't arrive late.

Don't wear flashy or otherwise inappropriate clothing.

Don't make negative comments about previous employers or others.

Don't falsify application materials or answers to interview questions.

Don't act as though you would take any job or are desperate for employment.