

Interviews- Tips for Success

Before your Interview:

Days-Weeks Before your interview:

- **Do your homework!** Learn as much as you can about the role and responsibilities of the position before your interview. An interviewer will be impressed that you have made an effort to learn about the role. Read any material they send you!
- **Take inventory of your strengths prior to the interview.** Be prepared to describe situations where you have used your assets to get things done. Draw upon academics, school activities, sports and volunteer work for examples, especially if you haven't held any or many jobs.
- **Review common interview questions** (Found at the end of this document). Practice answering questions with a friend or family member so you can speak confidently during your interview. Don't be intimidated if you don't have all the qualifications for a job. Express a genuine eagerness to learn the job.
- **Write an elevator pitch.** An elevator pitch is a 30-second blurb about you: who you are, what you offer, what you can bring to the business. It's self-promotional, yes, and it's a pain to write one that captures the important stuff without sounding egotistical. You can do it, though, and you should do it. It helps you to focus on your own strengths and skills, which is important.
- **Be prepared to say why the job interests you.** You can reference things like the tasks, work environment, what you would learn and the people with whom you would interact. Everything being equal in terms of qualifications, employers will often pick the candidate who seems most interested.
- **Be prepared to ask a few questions about the job** (Found at the end of this document). Focus on issues like the nature of the work, training, supervision, and when you might expect to hear from them.
- **Practice.** Have a friend, mentor or parent sit down with you for a practice interview. Give them your elevator pitch. Have them ask you some typical interview questions and give your best answer. You can ask for feedback, but it's more important that you just practice the process of interviewing so that you are more comfortable with it.
- **Know where you are going.** If needed, drive by the site before the day of the interview, find your parking options and make sure you know the right building or wing.

Day of the interview:

- **Dress for Success!** Did you know it takes just seven seconds for a first impression to form? Making the best possible first impression starts before you even leave for your job interview. Take time getting ready so that you look your best.
 - Dress nicely in clean, wrinkle-free clothes without rips or stains.
 - For most jobs, business casual will be suitable. That means a nice pair of pants or skirt and a collared shirt or blouse.
 - Avoid wearing shorts or tank tops.
 - Skirts and dresses are okay if they are not too short or flashy.
 - Hair should be clean and combed. Fingernails must be clean with no gaudy polish.
 - Avoid excessive perfume, cologne, jewelry and make-up.
- **Arrive Early.** Make sure you leave in plenty of time to get there. Arrive 5-15 minutes early. A late arrival can negatively impact your chances of landing a job.
- **Bring the items you have prepared ahead of time:** extra copies of your application and/or your resume, a notepad with some questions prepared for the interview, and a pen. You may not need these, but you'll be prepared if you do.
- **Review your application and/or resume.** Read it through one more time and think about possible interview questions that might arise. They can't ask you a question on every point you include but you will better be prepared for each, with more than just a story
- **Turn your cell phone off or to vibrate,** and resist the temptation to take a peek at any time before, during or after the meeting, when you are in view of the interviewer.

The Interview:

- **When you meet the interviewer**, look straight into their 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!! **SMILE!!** Express your willingness to learn!
- **DON'T:** chew gum, use inappropriate language, slouch, put your hands on items on the interviewer's desk, fidget with rings, pens, ties, change, or other things in your reach.
- **Always face the interviewer with good posture and body language.** When sitting, avoid slouching and lean slightly forward, like you are eager to hear the next thing that the interviewer has to say.
- **Answering Questions:**
 - Be thorough with your answers. Never answer with just a "yes" or "no." Always provide explanations and examples.
 - If you don't understand the 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.
- **At the end of the interview ask a few questions about the job.** If the job seems like a good fit, look the interviewer in the eye and tell them that you would really like the job.
- **Thank the person for the interview** and their interest in you as a potential for the role.
- **Shake hands on the way out.**

The Follow Up

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

How will I be evaluated on my Interview?

- **Professionalism:**
 - Dress
 - Formality
 - Greeting
 - Body language
 - Seriousness
- **Maturity:**
 - Age level dialogue
 - Able to give appropriate examples
 - Demonstrates responsibility
 - Demonstrates capability.
- **Self-Awareness**
 - Able to identify strengths and areas for improvement
 - Shows self insight
 - Exhibits confidence
- **Creativity/Energy/Humor**
 - Engaging
 - High energy
 - Creativity
 - Thinks outside the box
 - Energetic
 - Smiles, laughs, shows humor when appropriate

Sample Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your short-term and long-term goals, and how are you preparing to achieve them?
3. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
4. How would you describe yourself? How would a friend or professor describe you?
5. Why should you be hired for this role?
6. How do you think you would personally benefit from being in this role?
7. Tell me about a time you worked in a group. What difficulties did you encounter? What made it successful?
8. What type of training do you feel you would need to be comfortable in this role?
9. Who do you look up to and why?
10. Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a peer. How did you handle it? What did you learn?
11. What unique qualities make you the right person for this job?
12. Sometimes doing the RIGHT thing is not always the easiest or most popular thing. Tell me about a time when you did the right thing, even though it wasn't easy or popular.
13. What is most challenging for you when dealing with someone who may not share your same beliefs? How do you deal with it?
14. How have you changed and/or grown in the last year?
15. Tell me about a time you felt stressed out but had a job to complete anyway. How did you handle it?
16. Tell me about a time you worked in a group. What difficulties did you encounter?
17. When selecting candidates for this job, what do you think is the most important thing we should remember about you?

Sample Questions to ask an Interviewer

1. Can you tell me more about the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
2. What do you think are the most important qualities for someone to excel in this role?
3. What are the skills and experiences you're looking for in an ideal candidate?
4. What do you like best about working for this organization/company?
5. What does a typical day look like?
6. What attributes does someone need to have in order to be really successful in this position?
7. What are the biggest challenges that someone in this position would face?
8. How will I be trained?
9. What's your favorite tradition at this organization/company?
10. What are the next steps in the interview process?