

INTERVIEW SKILLS

In today's employment world, it is more important than ever to have strong interviewing skills. If you fail at your interview or fail to make a good impression it could cost you an opportunity.

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Dress For Interview Success



You've got the skills, right? So, who cares if your tongue is pierced and you've got tattoos down both arms? Will an employer be turned off by the tattoos? If you were an employer, which one of the two interviewees would you hire?

Dress For Success: Looking the Part



Source: <http://getyourtips.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/How-to-Dress-For-an-Interview.png>

Why Interviewing Skills are Important

With the amount of competition many face in the interview phase, employers have to scan through multitudes of applicants, many of which are fairly indistinguishable on paper because of similar course work and grade point averages. Doing well in your interview will make you stand out from the crowd. Here are a few tips based on how I prepare for an interview that might help you in the future:

Do your research!

By having a working knowledge of the company you are applying for, you can show that you have a genuine interest in working for them. This helps to let the employer know that you aren't just applying for a job for the sake of applying for a job, but that you aren't a flight risk (someone who, if hired, will leave the company or change jobs shortly after being hired). This also shows that you know what your interests are and that you've thought for a while about the company you're applying to.

Show up early!

This should go without saying, but here it is for added emphasis. Most people say to arrive around 15 minutes early. What I have naturally done in the past (and keep in mind that this varies depending on the situation) is arrive to the general area of the interview and find a nice place to stop and relax for about an hour prior to the interview. I usually like to stop in at a local coffee shop and bring flash cards of common answers and questions that might come up during the interview, as well as what I want to ask at the end. This way you have time to calm your nerves and ensure that you will be at the interview in perfect timing.

Act natural, yet professional!

This seems obvious, but it's a tough skill to master. Sometimes people get it stuck in their heads that as long as you're a sociable person, you'll do well in the interview. This is not always the case. Make sure to make eye contact to show that you are engaged in the conversation. You'd be surprised the things your eyes can give away during an interview. By looking away or failing to make eye contact you can give the impression that you're not interested in what the interviewer is saying, that you're lying/hiding something, or that you're not confident in yourself. It is also important to speak with a strong voice and to speak directly, especially when answering questions. Speaking directly and naturally may take practice, which you can do by speaking to yourself in a mirror or practicing with a friend.

Try and be as positive as possible!

This is the most challenging part of the interview in my opinion. Whenever a question comes up in an interview, it is important to try and put a positive spin on things. For example, if an

interviewer asks you a question along the lines of “tell me about a time in which you’ve had to deal with a difficult co-worker/supervisor.” This is not the time to vent about how much you despised your old boss or co-worker, this is your chance to express how you handled a difficult situation and made it better. It’s a lot easier to stay positive if you focus on yourself in the situation instead of others. Show what you learned and how that helped improve yourself professionally.

Hopefully this helps gain a perspective on the importance of interviewing. It’s an invaluable skill that can take you far if you practice and apply it. If you don’t put in the effort to make a good impression for yourself during an interview, then who else will?

Source: Why Interviewing Skills Are Important, <http://umdcareers.wordpress.com/2013/10/17/why-interviewing-skills-are-important/>

Ten Steps to Interview Success

Step 1 - Know the Company

Companies like candidates who know what they want. They are also impressed with someone who has done some digging before arriving at the interview. Make the effort to research your target organization, and you'll find yourself ahead of the competition. Given two equal candidates, the one who shows the most interest usually wins.

You can find out about larger organizations by using Web search engines or, even better, by going to your target organization's Web site. There are other Web-based sources, too. If your company is smaller or local, visit the library and ask the research librarian for help.

Step 2 - Know Yourself

In an interview, your job is to sell yourself . . . so you need to know precisely what you're selling. Once you define that, you can apply these insights to the needs of your target company. Connecting the two successfully is the best way to get yourself hired. Above all else, be authentic. Like a dog that can sniff fear on a person, an employer can intuit your sincerity and true level of interest and commitment.

You're "selling" your skills and yourself as a person. First: Your skills. An easy way to uncover yours is to list your accomplishments and then think of which skills it took to do them. Did baby-sitting require psychological sensitivity? Did selling kitchen knives require skills of persuasion? Review your list, and refine your skills into a "package" you can explain easily in a minute or two.

Next: You as a person. Most organizations want honest, smart, friendly, motivated, and responsible employees. Do you deal well with people? Are you flexible and open to learning? Did you, for example, show determination to get back on the slopes after you broke your leg skiing? Again, after you make your list, refine it so you can explain your personal "assets" in a minute or two.

Step 3 - Practice

You can make all the lists you want, but there's no substitute for rehearsing how you'd handle an interview. Ask your parent, sibling, or best friend to be the interviewer, and give her or him a list of questions to throw at you. There are ways to handle each of these. If you know what they are before

you're in the "hot seat," your confidence going into the interview will soar. And remember, if you get a question that you can't answer, simply say you don't know.

Then say the question is something to which you would like to give more thought and that you are willing to learn what it takes. Again, an employer will respect someone who is honest and open about his or her limitations.

Body language is the other thing to be well aware of. If you have a video camera, use it for the practice; otherwise a mirror will do. Hand and arm movements shouldn't be too large. Don't fiddle. Your posture should be relaxed, but alert. Don't slouch; if you look bored in the interview why wouldn't the recruiter presume that you'd then be bored in the job too? Communicate interest and energy. Be yourself.

Clichés aside, practice does make perfect; it works for interviewing too.

Step 4 - Dress the Part

You wouldn't wear a white suit to a funeral (unless you're in China, where it's expected), and you wouldn't wear cargo shorts to an interview. With any organization, the way to dress is the way you would dress if you got the job. If you don't know what that is, ask. If you can't get any information on the company's style of attire, dress a little more formally than you think you might need to.

Personal grooming is part of your "dress" too. A good haircut or trim will impress. So will clean fingernails, a fresh-scrubbed look, pleasant breath, and a white smile (a recent teeth-cleaning can't hurt). And please, no perfume or aftershave ... you might love how you smell with that scent, but others may not!

Step 5 - Get There Early

This may seem obvious, but if you're not on time for your interview, the game is over. Getting there early allows you to take a few deep breaths, organize your notes, refresh your memory on a few points that you've found difficult in your practices, and scan any company materials that may be available in the waiting room. It also allows you to answer the "call of nature" (if there is a call) and to make any last-minute appearance adjustments.

The result? You'll feel better about yourself, and you'll be more relaxed in the interview. So leave plenty of time, and get there early. It gives you a psychological edge.

Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What interests you about this position?
3. What do you know about our company so far?
4. What experiences and skills make you a good fit for this position?
5. What are your weaknesses?
6. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult customer.
7. Tell me about a time when you had to work with a team to complete a difficult project.
8. Tell me about a time when your boss or teacher gave you some critical feedback
9. How will you balance this position with your other responsibilities?
10. What questions do you have for me?