

Preparing for an interview

The key to a successful interview is preparation. Researching the company, understanding the role and offering polished responses shows initiative, enthusiasm and a keen interest in the job. Researching the company will help you to better understand where your role fits and your knowledge will boost your credibility with the interviewer. The company website, newsletters and media releases can provide you with valuable information on the company's key products and services, target markets, recent events, structure, culture and future direction.

What to Do and Not To Do On an Interview

You should...

- Punctuality is a strong indicator of your professionalism and enthusiasm for the role. Confirm the time and address of the interview, research directions and parking, and aim to arrive 10 minutes early
- Good eye contact, good posture, a cheerful demeanor and a firm handshake will get you a long way in an interview.
- Dress appropriately. Make your first impression a professional one.
- Answer the interviewer's questions as specifically as possible.
- Give your qualifications. Focus on accomplishments that are most pertinent to the job.
- Anticipate tough questions.
- Ask questions. An interview should be a mutual exchange of information, not a one-sided conversation.
- Listen. Concentrate not only on the interviewer's words, but also on the tone of voice and body language. Try to pattern your answers accordingly and you will be able to establish a better rapport.
- If you're unsure how many people will be interviewing you, bring along surplus copies of your resume to hand out. It will show that you're highly prepared.

Do not....

- Bring up salary, benefits, time off.
- Answer vague questions. Ask the interviewer to clarify fuzzy questions.
- Interrupt the interviewer. If you don't listen, the interviewer won't either.
- Be disrespectful. Don't smoke, chew gum, drink, eat or place anything on the interviewer's desk.
- Place your cell phone on silent.
- Wear heavy perfume or cologne. The interviewer may not share your tastes.
- Ramble. Overlong answers may make you sound apologetic or indecisive.
- Lie or embellish. Answer questions truthfully. Anything written on your resume could be discussed at an interview and a fabrication about your work or education record could damage your reputation in the long run. Make sure the dates are accurate.
- Express bitterness. Avoid derogatory remarks about present or former employers.

After the interview...

If you feel that the interview went well, express your interest to the interviewer; don't be discouraged if an offer is not made or if salary is not discussed, the interviewer may want to communicate with colleagues or conduct other scheduled interviews before making a decision. Express appreciation for the interviewer's time and consideration. Ask for the interviewer's business card so you can write a thank you letter as soon as possible. This should be written within 24 hours after an interview.



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