

Interviewing Tips

What to do Before, During, & After an Interview

Because the interview is the “make or break” moment for your effort to land a job, it is very important to be fully prepared.

Pre-Interview

- Be sure that you’ve researched the company. Know what their product or service is, who they serve, and who their competitors are.
- Look over typical interviewing questions and think about how you will answer them.
- Confirm your appointment within 24 hours.
- Be on time; plan to arrive 10-15 minutes early. Check your appearance before checking in with receptionist.
- Ask ahead to know the interviewer or interviewers names and how to pronounce them. If you don’t know, ask the scheduler of appointment or the recruiter.
- Bring extra copies of your resume. Also bring a copy of your transcripts, a list of references, and supporting materials that you want to showcase.
- Bring a portfolio and pen and paper for jotting down information during and after the interview.
- Be friendly with those you meet and politely show an interest in them, recognizing that they are at work and have other things to concentrate on.
- Dress appropriately and professionally; a business suit is appropriate for most interviews. Make sure your hair and nails are neat and clean. Polish your shoes. Go easy on the perfume/cologne and jewelry.

The Interview

- Pay attention to your posture, eye contact, and other non-verbals (watch out for those pesky “ums” and “ahs”).
- Think “inward” not “outward”. If you think “inward” you are concentrating on your qualifications, what you can offer the company, and what makes you qualified. If you think “outward” you are concentrating more on how you look or how nervous you are.
- Talk about the experiences and knowledge you have.
- Be sure you understand the question. If not, ask for clarification.
- Emphasize the positive and use examples to back up your statements.
- Let the interviewer bring up the subject of salary. This may not occur until after an offer is made. However, be prepared for the question, “What salary are you expecting?” (See negotiating salary, page 45)
- Emphasize what you can do for the organization.
- Never slight a former employer, teacher, or institution. If there were problems with previous experiences, try to make your answers positive.
- If you catch yourself making an error, correct it. Don’t try to cover up.
- Don’t expect an offer on the spot. However, do ask as a final question about when the team hopes to make a decision.
- Be yourself. You don’t want to get hired on the basis of something you are not or, worse, miss out on a great opportunity by being seen as inauthentic.
- Thank each person you meet and ask for a business card so that you can stay in touch.

Post-Interview

- Take a few moments to jot down notes about the meeting and how things went. Jot down things like deadlines, tricky questions, or points that you made that seemed to make an impact.
- Within 48 hours, send a thank you note or thank you email to those you have contact info from. Personalize the messages as best as you can based on things you said to them during your interview.
- If you promised additional information, be sure to follow through with it as soon as possible.
- Inform people who are your references that they may be contacted and to give them an idea of points that would be helpful for them to discuss and/or send the job description.
- If you do not receive a call or email about their next step or decision when it was supposed to happen, pick up the phone and follow-up with the key point of contact.
- Be prepared to discuss accepting the position if it is offered, including considering points of negotiation.
- If you are interviewing with other organizations, it is probably good to mention it if an offer has been made, because you may need to ask for time to fully consider multiple offers.
- If you receive news that you were not selected, follow-up with a call and ask for input that may help you to succeed in another role with the organization or with another employer.
- Finally, continue your job search full-speed until you have accepted an offer and signed an acceptance letter.
- Inform any person who has been helpful to you in your job search that you have accepted an offer and thank them for their support.