

Interview Tips

Before the interview

- * Get a haircut
- * Clean and press clothes
- * Wash hands and cut nails
- * Shower and use deodorant
- * Use a minimum of perfume/after-shave or do not use any at all
- * Shine shoes
- * Trim or shave beard/mustache
- * Brush teeth

Interview Checklist

I will wear my:

- _____ suit/dress
- _____ shirt/blouse
- _____ pants/slacks
- _____ tie
- _____ belt
- _____ socks/stockings
- _____ shoes/work boots
- _____ jacket/coat
- _____ jewelry (be very conservative)
- _____ purse or briefcase (not both)
- _____ make-up (be very conservative)

I will take:

- A note pad
- Two pens
- Extra copies of resume
- List of references
- Portfolio/work samples
- Necessary license (i.e. heavy equipment, limousine, bus, etc.)
- Datebook or daily planner
- Application
- Research
- Questions

At the interview

- Take only essential items to the interview (i.e. resume, references, portfolio, licenses, datebook, etc.)
Do not bring anything unrelated to the interview.
- Arrive 15 minutes early so you can relax and review what you want to say.
- Be pleasant and friendly but businesslike to everyone you meet.
- Shake hands firmly. Be yourself. Use natural gestures and movements.
- Stress your qualifications without exaggeration.
- Emphasize experience and training related to the job opening.
- If you know about the company's products and services, you should refer to them as you answer questions. It is impressive if you have positive knowledge about the company. If the company is involved in any kind of problem (i.e. lawsuits, layoffs, etc.), do not bring it up.
- After being asked a question, it is all right to pause and think about your answer. Answer questions with more than a "yes" or "no." On the other hand, do not ramble. A successful interview occurs if the interviewer talks fifty percent of the time.
- Speak positively of past employers and avoid discussing personal, domestic or financial problems.
- Know your salary range from your research. When asked "What are your ideas on salary?", answer with a question of the interviewer, i.e., "What do you pay people with my skills and experience?"
- Ask probing questions about the company plans, nature of the job, etc. Questions indicate interest and motivation. Questions are also helpful in getting the interviewer to talk.
- Be prepared if the interviewer says, "You're perfect for this job. When can you start?" Preparing for this question can prevent a snap decision. Most employers will allow you time to make this decision. But -- what if they ask, "Can you start tomorrow?" Be prepared to answer that one, too.
- Thank the interviewer even if they indicate that you are not right for the job. Ask about other companies that might be hiring. Get a name of someone to see.

- Send a brief thank you note immediately after the interview.
- Call a few days after the interview to see if a hiring decision has been made.

Questions that you might be asked

Think about how you will answer these questions. Then practice answering them aloud.

1. What do you know about our company? (Use company research)
2. What qualifications do you have for this job. (Match what you know about the job and the company to your experience.)
3. What is your greatest strength? (Relate to job description)
4. What is your greatest weakness? (Turn into a positive, i.e. perfectionist with high expectations. Admit a past problem and what you learned from it.)
5. Tell me about yourself. (Reveal something semi-personal but still professional.)
6. Why did you leave you previous job(s)? (Turn into a positive.)
7. If you were hired, what ideas/talents could you contribute to the position or to our company?
8. What would you do if...? (Imagine situations that test your knowledge of the job.)
9. Could you give me an example of how you have demonstrated _____ skill? (Think first. Be specific. Speak only long enough to answer the question.)
10. Give me an example of how you handled a difficult situation on a previous job.
11. Why are you interested in working for this company? (Relate your skills to what you know about the company.)
12. Tell me about your education. (Use examples that relate to the position.)
13. Why have you chosen this particular field?
14. Describe your best/worst boss. (Keep it positive. Don't be critical.)
15. In a job, what interests you most/least? (Relate to position.)
16. How do others describe you? (Keep it positive.)
17. What do you consider the single most important idea you contributed or your most noteworthy accomplishment in your last job?
18. Where do you see yourself in three years? (Demonstrate ambition and flexibility.)
19. How does this position fit into your future plans? (Demonstrate potential and ambition.)
20. What could you have done better on your last job? (Keep it positive.)
21. What have you done recently that shows your initiative and willingness to work?
22. How would you describe yourself to others? (Keep it positive and brief.)

Questions that you should ask

1. How do you feel about working in this organization?
2. Did I provide adequate answers to your questions?
3. As you think about the position, what aspects of this job could be performed better?
4. What are the key challenges or problems of this position?
5. Where can I go from here, assuming that I meet/exceed the job's responsibilities?
6. What are the company's short and long term objectives?
7. When will a decision be made about this position?
8. What do you see as my greatest strengths and weaknesses pertaining to this position?
9. What are the opportunities for personal growth?
10. What makes your firm different from its competitors?
11. What do you see as the company's strengths and weaknesses?
12. How would you describe your corporation's culture and management style?
13. What is the overall structure of the department where this position is located?
14. What characteristics does a successful person within your company possess?