

HOW TO FACE AN INTERVIEW

PART- 1

1. Golden Rule: Speak
 - 1) Loudly
 - 2) Clearly
 - 3) Slowly
2. You need to make sure that you arrive and are ready to take the phone call about 15 minutes before the scheduled interview time. Please make sure the phone is not busy (or engaged) about 10 minutes before the scheduled interview time.
3. Have a pen and paper ready to take notes during the interview with your resume and verify the resume experience.
4. Be calm and composed before and during the interview.
5. Be enthusiastic during the interview. Smile. They can definitely hear it in your voice. Discuss hot buttons for client.
6. Provide direct and complete answers to all questions that are asked of you. Always research the client's website before the interview to get an idea of the client's business.
7. If this is an international call, there may be delay across the phone line. Wait for the interviewer to finish talking and then respond to the question.
8. The interviewer begins the conversation with "How are you doing?" You need to respond back with "Fine. How about you?"
9. You need to end the interview with. "Thanks for your time. It was nice talking to you and I look forward to being a part of your project".
10. Always call the interviewers by their first name only. For example, if the interviewer's name is John Smith, make sure you call him John. Do not call him Mr. John or Sir. Make sure that you write down the names of the interviewers so that you remember to address them by their name during the interview.
11. Find out from the sales representative and recruiter about the requirements of the project for which you are being interviewed prior to the interview. Tailor your answers to best suit the details of the project for which you are being interviewed. For example, if the project is an accounting system, make sure that you highlight any experience that you have with any accounting systems that you have worked in the past. Also, for example, if the project requires Sybase as the back-end database, make sure that you highlight your Sybase experience, if any.
12. Anticipate what the interviewer is looking for and provide intelligent answers to satisfy the interviewer's questions. If you have not worked on a particular software or version, do not answer saying "No". Say that you have worked on a similar product or that you are a quick learner and some of the other things you would bring to the table.
13. Never use the words "involved in". This implies that someone else did the work and that you were assisting them. Either say "I was responsible for", if you were in charge of the work, or "I carried out" if you were part of the team carrying out the work.

14. Never use the words “we”. Always say “I”. This clearly indicates that you did the work.
15. If the line is bad or you can't hear, never keep saying “Hello”. Simply say “I'm sorry, the line is bad, I cannot hear you. Would you please repeat the question?” Or simply “Would you please repeat your question?”
16. If you do not work for X but for the subcontractor, make sure that you never mention that you work for the subcontractor instead of X. Always indicate that you work for X directly, unless instructed otherwise by the recruiter/ sales representative. Never discuss rates or salary with the client.
17. Make sure that you check with the recruiter/sales representative as to what the interviewer's expectations are and make sure that you provide a suitable start date.
18. Highlight any special training or certifications you have.
19. Never discuss personal issues with the client.

Interview Questions

Q1. Describe your current project?

A1. Provide the following information in order: name/title of the project, the client name and location, a functional overview of the project, the environment (hardware and software) of the project, your specific role and responsibilities and technical features of the software that were used by you. However, if your most recent project does not fit the requirements of the project for which you are being interviewed for, and then provide a summary of your experience and highlight the project which best fits the requirements of the project for which you are being interviewed.

Q2. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the best) or 1 to 5 (5 being the best) on each area of expertise. Example: Rate yourself in PowerBuilder and Sybase.

A2. Typically, you should rate yourself between 8 and 10.

Q3. If you rated yourself less than a 10, what will it take for you to become a 10?

A3. One possible answer is “more experience in a wide range of applications and systems”.

Q4. Describe which part of software lifecycle you were a part of?

A4. The main phases in the software lifecycle are specification, design, coding, testing, and implementation. You need to indicate which areas you have worked in. For a programmer analyst, it is essential to have experience in design, coding and testing. It is always nice to tell the interviewer that you at least have some experience in specification (interacting with users) and implementation (installation at the client site).

Q5. What percentage of the time do you spend in analysis/design, coding and testing?

A5. The industry average is 35% in analysis/design, 35% in coding and 30% in testing. Make sure that your answer does not grossly violate the industry standard.

Q6. How do you estimate time durations for your tasks?

A6. You should break down your tasks into smaller pieces, which help you accurately estimate the tasks. You should use your experience to estimate the durations for the individual pieces as

well as any integration time for joining these pieces. If necessary, you should ask your supervisors and peers to review your estimates. Typically, programming tasks need to have time assigned for design, coding, unit testing and if appropriate, system testing (or integrated testing).

Q7. Did you have to prepare the spec or did you program from the spec?

A7. It is a plus if you have prepared a spec (or specification) but if you are a junior programmer, it is acceptable to have programmed from a spec.

Q8. Did you interact with the end users?

A8. It is a plus if you have interacted extensively with the end users of the software. It may be acceptable to state that you have interacted occasionally as the need arose.

Q9. Explain any debugging tools that you have used?

A9. Make sure that you are familiar with the debugging tools in your area of expertise. You should be able to view values of variable, set breakpoint, change variable values in the debugger. Debugging using print statements to the screens is not acceptable method of debugging and should never be mentioned in the normal cases.

Q10. Explain any CASE tools that you have used?

A10. If you are not familiar with any CASE tools, make sure that you at least read up or find out about any suitable CASE tools in your area of expertise. ERWIN SQL is a popular data-modeling CASE tool on the PC.

Q11. Explain any version control tools that you have used?

A11. Any significant software project will have version control tools to allow concurrent development and so to provide a development trail. Popular version control tools are PVCS on PC and sccs on Unix. It is not acceptable to indicate that you have not used any version control tools. Make sure that you are familiar with version control tools in your environment prior to the interview.

Q12. What are the differences between versions of the software in your area of expertise?

A12. Make sure that you find out about the differences between the software versions. This is most important when the software changes from character mode to GUI mode (such as Oracle Forms 3.0 to Oracle Developer 2000) or from mainframe to client server (such as SAP R2 to SAP R3) between versions.

Q13. What do you do when you are running late on your assignments?

A13. You should keep the project manager or supervisor informed about your progress at all times. When your tasks are running late, you should work longer hours to try to catch up. If appropriate, you should ask your supervisors and peers for their advice and help.

Q14. How do you handle problems with peers?

A14. First, you should talk to your peer and see if you can resolve the problem between the two of you. If not, then you should talk to your manager about the situation.

Q15. Do you work long hours?

A15. Definitely, say yes. You should state that you will do what it takes to get the job done successfully on time and within budget.

Q16. When are you available to start?

A16. Make sure that you check with the recruiter/sales representative as to what the interviewer's expectations are and make sure that you provide a suitable start date. Typically, a start date can be a week or two from the interview date.

Q17. What is your visa status?

A17. If your visa has already been approved and you have a valid work visa for GTRAS, Inc., then state the visa details. If you do not know about the exact status of your visa, check with recruiter/sales representatives as to the status of your visa so that you can appropriately answer this question.

Q18. How long can you stay in the United States?

A18. Typically, the H-1B visa is valid for 3 years and can be extended for 3 more years. In most cases, GTRAS, Inc. will sponsor your permanent residency for the United States, in which case you can work indefinitely in the United States.

General Questions (prepare on your own)

Q1. What is the team size of your project?

Q2. What lifecycle methodology tools do you use?

Q3. How do you handle problems with your manager?

Q4. What do you do when the user/manager is wrong and you are right?

Q5. Have you done anything to enhance your performance? What?

Q6. Describe the most challenging person you've had to work with?

Q7. Describe the most difficult person you've had to work with?

Q8. What is the most challenging project you've had to work on?

Q9. What was the most difficult technical problem you've had to solve?

PART- 2

Research the Employer

Learn as much as possible about the position, the company, and the interviewers themselves. The more detailed information you have about the company and the position, the better prepared and more comfortable you will appear to the employer. Talk to former employees or people close to the company to get additional information. The internet and library are excellent resources for information.

Prepare Questions

No matter how thorough the employer is in the interview, you should be prepared to ask questions. You are interviewing the employer as much as they are interviewing you. You will want to find out as much in-depth information as possible, especially if they are going to be your future employer.

Emphasize Areas of Your Background

Think of specific examples that demonstrate your positives. Be prepared to talk about specific events that might demonstrate your personality traits. Be comfortable talking about your past and present experiences. Practice with another person prior to the interview. This is your time to showcase your talents. Try not to be too long winded. Remember, short and precise answers are appreciated.

Tips for an Interview

- Go alone.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early.
- Have a good handshake.
- Maintain eye contact with the speaker.
- Dress neatly.
- Do not waste the employer's time.
- Do not plead for the job you want.
- Do not interrupt.
- Listen well.
- Do not bring up salary issue.
- Leave when the interview is over.
- Thank interviewer for their time.
- Send follow-up letter.

Do not burn any bridges; you never know when an opportunity could present itself in the future.

Commonly Asked Questions

Below is a list of commonly asked questions in an interview. Consider how you might want to answer:

1. Why are you willing to leave your current employer?
2. What do you know about this company? Why are you interested?
3. What are your short-term and long-term goals?
4. How do you feel about your current supervisor?
5. What are your strengths?
6. What are your weaknesses?
7. What are you currently looking for in salary?
8. What information is important to you in making a decision about this job change?
9. What questions do you plan to ask the employer either about the job, company, or other things?
10. Who have you learned the most from? What was it? Why was it important?
11. What could be improved in your boss?
12. What do you like and dislike about your current boss?
13. When are you available to start?
14. What are your plans for the future?

Communicating

The key is feeling comfortable and familiar with the material covered during an interview. The more familiar you are with information on the company and the position, the more confidence you will reflect in your interview. Likewise, the more familiar you are speaking of your background and experience, the more comfortable the employer will be. Therefore, preparation is the key to a successful interview and communicating effectively.

Questions for the Interviewer

Some samples of questions which you might want to find out from a potential employer:

1. What are the company's goals? Future projections? Direction?
2. What skills are important for this position? What experience is necessary?
3. What opportunities are there for professional growth? Company growth?
4. Why is this particular position available? Is this a new position?
5. What are some frustrations of this position? Whom do you report to?
6. Why did you join this company? Why did you pick this career/industry?
7. What criteria do you use for performance evaluation?

PART- 3

Fifty Questions Employers May Ask You

Outlined below are various traditional questions you might be asked during an interview.

1. What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives? When and why did you establish these goals and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
2. What professional goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself for the next 10 years?
3. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
4. What would you like most of all to accomplish in your career?
5. What are your long-range career objectives?
6. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
7. What are the most important rewards you expect in your business career?
8. What do you expect to be earning in five years?
9. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
10. Which is more important to you, the money or the type of job?
11. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
12. How would you describe yourself?
13. How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
14. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
15. How has your college experience prepared you for a business career?
16. Why should I hire you?
17. What qualifications do you have that make you think that you will be successful in business?
18. How do you determine or evaluate success?
19. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
20. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
21. What qualities should a successful manager possess?
22. Describe the relationship that you think should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her.
23. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
24. Describe your most rewarding college experience.
25. If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you look for?
26. Why did you select your college or university?

27. What led you to choose your field of major study?
28. What college subjects did you like best? Why?
29. What college subjects did you like least? Why?
30. If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
31. What changes would you make in your college or university? Why?
32. Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
33. Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
34. What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
35. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
36. How do you work under pressure?
37. In what part-time or summer jobs have you been most interested? Why?
38. Who would you describe the ideal job?
39. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
40. What do you know about our company?
41. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
42. Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?
43. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
44. Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
45. Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?
46. Are you willing to travel?
47. Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?
48. Why do you think you might like to live in the community in which your company is located?
49. What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
50. What have you learned from your mistakes?

PART- 4

Interviewing can be an anxious and stressful experience, but it doesn't have to be. If you're well prepared, and you understand how to make a solid, positive first impression, you can turn any interview into a pleasant and fruitful experience. To help make that task a little easier, we offer you a few bits of practical advice based on what works in the real world.

BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW

Do Your Research

Learn as much as possible about the company you'll be interviewing with, and know as much about the position as you can. You need to do your homework, too. If the company has retail outlets in your area, visit one. If they produce software products, look them over. Talk to people who know the company, explore the business section of the library to get information about the industry, the company and its management. Look over annual and quarterly reports and check the trade publications for the latest information available. The more you know going in, the more informed and intelligent you will seem.

Prepare a List of Questions to ask them

It's only natural for you to have some questions about the position for which you are being interviewed. Be ready to ask them. Put together a list of 10-15 questions. You won't likely need to ask every one of them, since much of the information may be covered in the interview process itself. But you should be prepared to find out the specifics, like why the last person left, or what are the daily, weekly, monthly and yearly expectations of the job, or what are the significant challenges you would face in the position.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Much of what will be asked in your interview will be fairly obvious ahead of time. Practice your answers to tough questions you're likely to be asked. Practice your responses, either alone or with someone you can trust to give you an honest and candid reaction. You need to make an honest assessment of your experience and employment history and be prepared to deal directly with both your strengths and weaknesses.

Dress Professionally

Make sure your first impression is a good one by looking professional and confident. Even when the corporate culture is more casual, it doesn't hurt to be the best dressed person in the room during an interview. This is the time to be conservative in dress, not trendy or hip. For a man, it's best to wear a dark suit with a white shirt and a contrasting tie, polished shoes and dark socks. For a woman, the best choice is a dark, skirted suit or tailored dress with a matching jacket, with neutral hose and simple pumps. A conservative hair style, with clean, neat fingernails is most appropriate, and makeup and jewelry should be minimal.

Arrive Fashionably Early

You should be at your destination and have reported to the receptionist well before the interview. Fifteen minutes early is a good rule of thumb. To make sure you don't arrive at the last minute, go over your travel route in advance, and even drive it once to test the route so you are absolutely confident you know how long it will take.

Smile at Everyone

A pleasant demeanor can go a long way toward making a good impression, and it will probably release a little of the tension for you as well. By the time you arrive for your interview, you will likely have spoken to the receptionist at least twice, and now is the time to reinforce any rapport you have with him or her. In any case, this is your opportunity to put your best face forward. Remember, every person you meet here is a potential co-worker.

DURING YOUR INTERVIEW

Make the First 10 Minutes Count

The first ten minutes sets the tone of the entire interview. You can help make sure it's a tone that works to your advantage. State everything as a positive, and display genuine enthusiasm. That shows you are interested, energetic and confident.

Maintain a Friendly and Professional Demeanor

Be accessible and open, but always professional. Listen carefully to the questions being asked, and make relevant and concise responses. Stay on course with your answers, and provide specific examples whenever appropriate to reinforce the points you are making.

Bring Resumes

Bring along some extra resumes, in a folder, with your name on the label. They will have use for them if and when the process goes to the next step, and it makes the point that you're organized and prepared.

Ask Permission to Take Notes

It implies that you are very interested in the position and the company, and it shows clearly that you are well organized, detail oriented and thorough.

Answer Questions Confidently

Even the toughest questions can be handled with poise and confidence. Don't try to hide weaknesses in your experience or difficult relationships in your work history. Never dwell on the negative, and put a positive, but honest spin on things. In describing even the worst experience you've had, you can emphasize what you have learned from it, as opposed to that awful things happened. Remember no one is perfect, and that goes for job candidates too. You need to make the most of what you have, and a positive approach will help immeasurably.

Tell Your Story

The most effective way to relate your experience and expertise is to tell it in a story form. Try to create a picture of your experience, your abilities in working with others and your focus on teamwork, results, problem-solving -- whatever qualities the job you're interviewing for requires. Talk about your experience and expectations in terms of what you "feel" and what you "think." The more your interviewers feel they are dealing with a person, instead of facts on a resume, the better.

Interview them

Ask key questions. By asking them to describe the position you're applying for, you'll learn their priorities, and you'll have some clues about which points on your resume to emphasize. Ask them about the first two or three projects you'll be involved with. Ask about their goals for the person in this position. This is what you prepared your list of questions for.

Closing the Interview

Now is the time to be candid, but polite. If you like what you heard in the interview, let them know that. Reiterate how you can contribute to their organization and how you can help them meet their stated goals. Let them know how you think you would fit in with the corporate culture, and how interested you are in the position, now that you know more about it. Ask them what's next. This let's them know that you're interested enough to want a second interview, or to go to the next step. Leave the room on an upbeat, friendly and comfortable note. You may have just made some new friends and colleagues.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Call Your Recruiter

Let them know how the interview went. They will be in contact with the company you interviewed with, and they'll want to know your reaction. Also, they can help you decide what your next step ought to be, and help you evaluate the interview, since they're always a bit more objective than you can be.

Write a Follow-up Note

A simple thank-you letter is appropriate and reinforces your interest in the company and the position. It also gives you the opportunity to provide a paragraph on anything you might have forgotten to say during the interview, or to mention ideas you might have thought of since that will help your case and reinforce your enthusiasm for the job.

Continue to Follow the Company

If they are interested in you, you're likely to be called back for further interviews. Stay prepared. Keep up with your research on the company.

PART- 5

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Know the company and their products. Do your own due diligence so that the first interview doesn't turn into a fact-finding mission that shows the employer your lack of preparation. Being well prepared will show the employer that you've given the opportunity some thought, and are not wasting anybody's time.
- Approach the interview as a meeting between two people who are both trying to solve a problem, and share the motivation to find out how you can work together to get the job done successfully. Relax. Realize that the person you're meeting with may be someone that you will work with and get to know for several years should you decide to go to work for the company.
- Never enter an interview without the full intent of winning a job offer. Obviously you can decide whether or not to accept the job at a later date, but the first order of business is to win the offer.
- Interviews are about showing a potential employer how you can do the job he needs done. Interviews are not an exercise in sitting and answering questions.
- Do not discuss compensation during your first interview unless the employer specifically wants to address it. You don't want to give the impression that your main concern is about the compensation and not the company or the opportunity you're interviewing for. If money is your main concern, please inform your recruiter, as he will be happy to explain why this job is not the right one for you! You should know what the compensation range is before entering the process, but if you're pressed on the issue, it can be wise to respond with something that puts the matter off for later discussion. An example would be, "Obviously money is important in evaluating the position, but my main focus is on the opportunity, and I feel confident that you would offer a fair compensation for somebody with my background".
- If this is your second interview, bring a business plan. Show the employer that you've really considered the goal, and have already begun to strategize how you'll be effective in the position.

ON THE INTERVIEW

- Let the employer define the position, the problem, and the goals.
- Show your enthusiasm and understanding of the goals.
- Show the employer how you can help achieve the goals through your industry knowledge, skills and relationships.
- Suggest a strategy, or expand on his. Devising the perfect strategy on the spot isn't crucial, but showing him that you're already thinking about how to solve his problem is!
- Find out if the employer has any concerns about your background, skill set, etc. If so, address all concerns directly until you feel that they are no longer an issue.
- Get feedback on what you've discussed and your skills that relate to the job.
- Get a commitment. Assuming the job feels right to you; tell the employer you want the job. Do not assume that the employer has interpreted anything from your actions during the interview. You must make sure there is not doubt in his mind that you are interested.
- Get his business card. Sounds funny, but people forget to do this all the time.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Call your recruiter. After your interview, the employer will be contacting the recruiter to give him feedback on how he thought the meeting went, and also to find out what your

- thoughts are. Just as you should expect your recruiter to keep you up-to-date on the process (good or bad), you need to do the same.
- Follow up. Make sure that you follow up with the employer within 2 days of the interview with a thank you note. These days a letter, fax or email is acceptable.
 - If you want to go the extra mile and really impress the manager, after your interview, search out and talk to some of his existing clients about the company's product. In your thank you letter, you can then mention your conversation with "Mr. X" about the products, what you think about Mr. X's comments, and reiterate your excitement about the opportunity.
 - How many people do you think will take that extra step, and what impression do you think it will leave with the manager about you?

PART- 6

An interview offers you and the employer an opportunity to exchange information, meet one another and come to a conclusion about whether the job is right for you and you are right for the company.

The Evaluation Process

Most interviewers make up their mind about a candidate based on the first 5-10 minutes of meeting the candidate. In those first few minutes, you have to make a good first impression. Give a firm handshake, smile, display lots of energy and confidence, make eye contact with interviewer and be friendly. Making a good first impression and listening skills are very important in the interview process. Interviewers evaluate you on your appearance, communications skills, attitude, enthusiasm, technical knowledge, knowledge about their company as well as your ability to do the job.

You should know the size of the organization, product line or service, types of clients, present price of stock, who the competition is and any recent items in the news about the company. Go online and visit the company's website to gain information about their current needs. Tell the interviewer what skills and education you have that relate to the company's current needs.

Develop a rapport with the interviewer. Offer a firm handshake at the beginning and at the end of the interview. Jobs are not always won by having the right skills. Often they are won because one candidate has established a rapport with the interviewer.

What Do I Bring to The Interview?

Bring a portfolio with at least two copies of your resume, including a reference page, along with documentation of your performance, awards and achievements, often called a "brag book." You should also bring a professional looking pen and notepad to write down information the interviewer is discussing with you. Be careful not to write down too much during the interview process, as this will decrease the amount of eye contact you have with the interviewer.

- Ask about the job duties, company and its products or services.
- Ask about the importance of the job, your responsibility, authority and the career potential.
- Avoid questions about salary and benefits until the job is offered.

What Should I Wear To The Interview?

The first impression is a lasting one. When you walk in the room, the interviewer will form an opinion of you through non-verbal visual cues. Therefore, wardrobe is very important.

Men and women should wear a conservative two-piece business suit, preferably dark blue or gray. In addition to this, a conservative white or pastel colored long-sleeve shirt or blouse and clean, well-polished dark dress shoes are best. Men's neckties should be with a conservative pattern. When in doubt, be professional and conservative. You are selling yourself. Dress for success. Be conservative with your hairstyle, makeup and jewelry.

Close the Interview

This is the most important step, especially for sales professional. Always ask at the end of the interview, when the hiring decision will be made. Ask what the next step is and if you will have a second or third interview. Tell the interviewer you are very interested in the job.

Things to Avoid:

- Try to avoid giving out too much personal information (i.e., financial problems, marital status, children, etc.)
- Avoid questions about salary and benefits until the job is offered.
- Don't talk too much. Bring a few pointed, well thought out questions regarding the position (i.e., duties, responsibilities, territory size, commission structure, potential for advancement.)
- Don't be late. If at all possible, be early at least 5-10 minutes prior to the interview.
- Don't brag. It is fine to bring a "brag book" with you to the interview that lists your accomplishments. However, try not to rely on it. Use it as a guide to show the interviewer what you can do for their company.

Most Important Tip

Show enthusiasm and excitement about the position! Research shows that interviewers often make decisions based on who they "feel" will do the best job. Decisions are not always based on qualifications or past performance. Use good eye contact, ask for the position and let the interviewer know you will work hard if the position is given.

Hiring decisions are not always based on someone's qualifications or education. Most decisions are made on a "gut" level instinct. These decisions are opinions based on your ability to communicate your past accomplishments. They are also based on the interviewer's perception of what they feel you will be able to accomplish in the future if given the opportunity with their company.

Many times an interviewer makes a decision about your abilities based on the first 5-10 minutes of the interview. Preparation is essential!

Follow-up

Send the interviewer a handwritten thank you note the next day. It has also become acceptable to email a thank you message to the interviewer. If the interviewer has given you a business card, you may also leave them one follow-up message indicating your interest level and enthusiasm about the position.

PART - 7

Going on a job interview can very nerve racking if you're not properly prepared or sure how to effectively market your background and skill set. You only get one chance to make a first impression.

Whether you're seeking your first corporate position, looking to "make a move", or even change your career path, consider the following.

- Write an attention-grabbing resume
- Gather the references that will best serve you in your job search
- Interview with the confidence you need while making that all-important "impression"
- Determine if your career goals are worthy of your skill set
- Leverage your strengths and ask for an offer

General Suggestions

Be Prompt and Know Where you're Going

It may sound cliché but you'd be surprised how often it happens. Ask for directions, reconfirm the date and time of your appointment, plan for traffic, parking and possibly getting lost. Arriving late not only makes a bad impression, it prevents from having a few extra minutes to relax and collect your thoughts.

Dress Professionally

Again, what sounds cliché is so important in making a first impression. Dress to what is appropriate for the job, company and industry culture. Avoid heavy makeup, perfume or cologne.

Writing Your Resume

Get your resume and cover letter written by professionals which will be more enticing to the eye and "reader-friendly" to hiring managers.

Introducing Yourself

While your resume explains your skills and experience, the personal introduction you make of yourself is equally, if not more important. Be confident! Start with a firm handshake, a smile and look the interviewer in the eye. Be prepared to answer questions about yourself but remember - Be concise! Listen attentively, don't interrupt and be sure to answer the question.

Relate Your Own Experience

Find out as much as you can about the position and the company's philosophy. Relate that with specific examples to your own work experience. Focus on results. Share your knowledge of the industry, whether it's personal contacts or knowledge of the latest news in the field.

Ask Relevant Questions

It's important to remember that while you're the one being interviewed, an interview is also your opportunity to find out if the job or company is right for you, too. Ask relevant questions regarding the company and position, what the responsibilities are, management practices, etc. Don't bring up salary information in the first interview unless you are specifically asked. Don't ask about vacation time or personal days, etc.

Telephone Interview

A company may wish to meet you for the first time over the telephone. This type of interview is just as important as a personal interview, if not more important, because if it doesn't go well, you won't get a chance to meet face-to-face with the company. Try to find a quiet place where you can speak freely and without interruption. Don't interrupt for call waiting! If the interview is coming to a close and the employer has not scheduled a personal meeting, ask politely "What is the next step?" or "Where do we go from here?" Send a thank you note.

Personal Interview

Be enthusiastic, confident and build your case. Start by briefly introducing yourself and your background, link your abilities with the company's needs, and let them know how interested you are in the position.

Interview Questions

Tell Me about Yourself

Make sure your first words impress favorably. Speak slowly, clearly and concisely. Answer the question and don't ramble. Relay your education and work experience honestly.

Why Are You On The Job Market?

Be honest - even if you were fired. Don't say negative things about your former employer.

What Are Your Strengths?

Team player? Enthusiasm? Assertiveness? Decisive? Flexible? Adaptive?

What Are Your Weaknesses?

Overuse of strength is best, for example, "Some people mistake my decisiveness for impatience. I've learned to watch how I express things."

What Are Your Most Significant Accomplishments?

Be prepared and be specific.

Closing the Interview

Let them know how interested you are in the job. Better to get a job offer that you may choose to decline than no offer at all. Get a commitment on the next step - where do we go from here, etc. Let them know that you are happy to provide references at their request. Finally, thank the interviewer for their time in meeting with you. Always send a prompt thank you note and follow up with your recruiter.

Suggested Reading

How to Turn an Interview into a Job

By Jeffrey G. Allen, J.D., C.P.C.

Power Interviews: Job-Winning Tactics from Fortune 500 Recruiters

By Neil M. Yeager and Lee Hough

Sweaty Palms: The Neglected Art of Being Interviewed

By Anthony H. Medley