



## Interview Tips

**Objective:** To impress the interviewer by projecting a professional image and demonstrating your suitability for the job.

Greet the interviewer with a smile and a firm handshake and wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. Be aware of your body language: sit up straight, maintain eye contact and avoid fidgeting or twiddling your thumbs. According to research, the interviewer will decide within just four to nine minutes whether to consider you seriously for the job. So making a good first impression is vital.

Show a real interest in the job. Speak clearly and confidently and make sure that everything you say is factual and sincere. During the interview, bear the following guidelines in mind:

Concentrate and listen very carefully to the questions. If you are not sure exactly what is being asked, don't say "Could you repeat the question?" This could make the interviewer feel that you haven't been paying attention. Rather, rephrase the key words and ask the interviewer to clarify: "Do you mean..."

Avoid answering with a simple yes or no. Support your answer with relevant information from your experience and relate everything you say to the job you are applying for. Cross reference their job description with examples of your own experience.

- Do not speak negatively of other people or companies. It makes you look unprofessional.
- Stay calm. Maintain a positive attitude throughout the interview, speak with energy and enthusiasm, and feel free to pause when you are thinking of appropriate replies.
- Keep your answers relevant and to the point.

A good interviewer will do more than just establish your competence: he will explore your compatibility with the company - your attitudes, beliefs, personality, response to pressure and so on.

To this end, he may ask you deliberately provocative or difficult questions. "Why haven't you found a new position before now?" "What do you think of your boss?" "Don't you think you're a bit overqualified for this role?" "Why should I employ you when I could fill this vacancy from within the company." "What was your biggest mistake or error of judgment?"

Ideally, you'll have anticipated and prepared for difficult questions relating to your experience and capabilities. If you are asked an unexpected question, pause and think before giving an answer and always offer a positive response that relates back to the position you are applying for. For example, "Am I over-qualified? I don't think so. Strong companies need strong people, and I believe that a growing and energetic company like yours will make the best possible use of my skills and experience. That's why I applied for this job."

Usually the interviewer will ask you if you have any questions. The worst response is "Can you tell me a little more about the job?" Be specific and ask questions that have not already been answered in the job description. For instance:

At the very least, ask the interviewer when he will be making a final decision and whether he needs any further clarification about your experience.

### Leaving the interview...

Don't let your guard down yet. You want the interviewer to remember you positively, so thank them for their time and consideration and tell them how much you enjoyed discussing the job with them.

It's important to convey that you really are interested in working for the company, because - all other things being equal - the job is likely to go to the more interested candidate. For example, you could say: "Mr Jones, I find this opportunity very interesting. Your company is clearly doing exciting things and I believe that with my background and experience I could make a significant contribution to your team."

Tell the interviewer that you look forward to seeing him again, shake his hand and leave.

## **10 Steps to a Successful Interview**

- Arrive on time.
- Introduce yourself in a courteous manner.
- Read company materials while you wait.
- Have a firm handshake.
- Listen.
- Use body language to show interest.
- Smile, nod, give nonverbal feedback to the interviewer.
- Ask about the next step in the process.
- Thank the interviewer.
- Write a thank-you letter to anyone you have spoken to.

## **Facts to Gather Before Interviewing**

- Key people in the organization
- Major products or services
- Size in terms of sales and employees
- Locations other than your community
- Organizational structure of the company
- Major competitors
- View of the company by clients, suppliers, and competition
- Latest news reports on the company or on local or national news that affects the company

## Questions you may be asked at the interview?

- What are your long-term goals and objectives?
- What are your short-term goals and objectives?
- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- What are your strengths, weaknesses, and interests?
- How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
- Describe a situation in which you had to work with a difficult person (another student, co-worker, customer, supervisor, etc.). How did you handle the situation? Is there anything you would have done differently in hindsight?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort? Describe a situation in which you did so.
- In what ways have your college experiences prepared you for a career?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- Describe a contribution you have made to a project on which you worked
- What qualities should a successful manager possess?
- Was there an occasion when you disagreed with a supervisor's decision or company policy? Describe how you handled the situation.
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why
- Describe your most rewarding college experience
- What interests you about our product or service?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- How do you work under pressure?
- Describe a situation in which you worked as part of a team. What role did you take on?
- What went well and what didn't?
- Why did you decide to seek a position with this organisation?
- What two or three things would be most important to you in your job?

## Questions to ask the interviewer?

The interview is a two-way process. The company interviewing you will want to find out whether you are suitable to the position and you will want to find out if the company and position are right for you. You should therefore ensure that you have enough information to make up your mind whether you want the job. For example:

- What will be my responsibilities?
- Where will I fit into the overall organisational structure?
- Who will I report to?
- Where does he/she fit in the structure?
- Who will report to me?
- How experienced are they?
- What do you expect me to do in the first 6 months?
- What level of performance do you expect from me?
- Who are your customers?
- Where is the company going? Upwards? Expansion plans?
- What are the chances of advancement/promotion in this position? When?
- What will be my salary, benefits and bonuses? [Do not bring this up too early in the interview - wait until they are sold on you.]
- Will travelling be required in this position?
- Will relocation be required now or in the future?
- What training do you provide?
- When will you decide on the appointment?
- What is the next step?
- Ask the interview how long they have been with the company and what keeps them there.
- Finally, ask the interviewer if they have any reservations about you and your ability to do the job.

**GOOD LUCK!!**