

Prepare for your Interview

Be Prepared!

Wear conservative attire, minimal makeup, fragrance, and jewelry. Know yourself—strengths, weaknesses, and accomplishments. An interview is not a time to “wing it.” Prepare as much as you would for a presentation to the Board of Directors of your company.

Be Involved!

The most effective interviews are those where an active, two-way, conversation prevails, not the typical question and answer type.

Be Enthusiastic!

First impressions, positive or negative, dramatically affect the ultimate evaluation. You can make or break an interview in the first five minutes.

Be Well Groomed!

Wearing appropriate professional attire shows awareness and respect for the employer’s environment.

Establish Your Worth!

Be able to discuss specific accomplishments that demonstrate a pro-active attitude. For example, have you installed systems? ...did something not required?saved money?

Know Your Three Key Strengths!

Be prepared to discuss for one to two minutes each, in detail and with examples, your two or three main attributes. These should be the ultimate reason you should get the job over someone else.

Give One to Two Minute Responses!

Communication is the key to successful interviewing. A minimum of one or two minutes of well-prepared discussion provides insight into your intellect, and supports your contentions.

Provide Examples!

Support statements about yourself with specific examples. These “sinkers” provide legitimacy to your claims.

Research the Company!

Find out as much about the company as you can through annual reports, newspapers, and internet. Your effort will be evident and immediately brand you as pro-active, hardworking and astute.

Remain Attentive!

Stay alert during the interview. Maintain good eye contact. Sit forward in your chair. Be animated. Show high interest level. Stay enthusiastic.

Be Neat and Thorough!

If you are asked to fill out an application, fill it out neatly and as completely as possible. The application is an example of your work.

Reminders

- Take notes when your interviewer is supplying information about the company.
- Make sure you have proper directions to the location of the interview and the name of the person.
- Be on time, 10 minutes early preferably.
- Offer a firm handshake and maintain eye contact.
- Wait until a seat is offered before sitting down.
- Maintain good posture, lean slightly forward in your chair.
- No gum chewing or smoking
- Don't interrupt the interviewer when he/she is speaking.
- Have a polished conservative appearance.
- Have clean, well-cut hair, manicured nails, wear dark tailored suits, hosiery
- Bring a clean, professional copy of your resume and references
- Answer all questions in a positive manner. Never be negative.
- Rehearse a presentation (no more than 1 minute) about yourself, your prior jobs or education experience.
- Use action words to describe your accomplishments. Such as: I planned, created, coordinated, developed, initiated, and managed, etc.

Good Questions to Ask during an Interview

1. What characteristics must an individual possess to be successful in this position?
2. To whom would I report?
3. For how many people will I work?
4. What would an average work day be like?
5. What criteria are used to judge successful performance in this position?
6. What is the general corporate philosophy with respect to growth, change, and personal development?
7. How would you describe your personal management style?
8. Would it be possible to have a tour of the office?
9. Based on my background, how well do you think I would fit in?
10. In the future, what additional responsibilities might there be for me?

Frequently Asked Questions –And Answers

1. *Tell me about yourself.*
Just talk for 2 minutes. Be logical. Looking for communication skills, linear thinking, also try to score a point or two (describe a personal attribute.)
2. *Why are you leaving your current position?*
This is a very critical position. Don't "bad mouth" previous employers. Don't sound "too opportunistic". Best when major problems, or buy-out, or shut-down. Also good to state that after long personal consideration a chance to make a contribution is very low due to company changes.
3. *What do you consider you most significant accomplishment?*
This can get you the job. Prepare extensively. Score points. Tell a 2 minute story, with details and discuss personal involvement. Make the accomplishment worth achieving.
4. *Why do you believe you are qualified for this position?*
Pick two or three main factors about the job and about you that are most relevant. Discuss for two minutes with specific details. Select a technical skill, a specific management style and a personal success attitude to mention.
5. *Have you ever accomplished something you didn't think you could?*
Interviewer is trying to determine your goal orientation, work ethic, personal commitment, and integrity. Provide a good example where you overcame numerous difficulties to succeed. Prove you're not a quitter
6. *What do you like/dislike most about your current position?*
Interviewer is trying to determine compatibility with open position. If you have interest in position, be careful. Stating you dislike overtime or getting into the details, can cost you the position. There is nothing wrong with liking challenges, pressure situations, opportunity to grow, or disliking frustrating situations.

7. *How do you handle pressure?*

High achievers tend to perform well in high- pressure situations. Conversely, question also could imply that position is pressure packed and out of control. There is nothing wrong with this as long as you know what you're getting into. If you do perform well under stress, provide a good example with details.

8. *What are your career goals? Where do you see yourself in five years?*

"I see myself with the same company in five years. I hope to have received new responsibilities and have become more of an asset to the company."

9. *What do you consider your most significant strengths?*

Be prepared. Know your 4 or 5 key strengths. Be able to discuss each with a specific example. Select those attributes that are most compatible with the job opening. Most people say "management" or good "interpersonal skills" in answer to this. Don't unless you can describe the specific characteristics of management or how your relationship skills have proven critical to your success.

10. *What do you consider your most significant weakness?*

Don't reveal deep character flaws. Rather discuss tolerable faults that you are working towards improving.

11. *Deadlines, Frustrations, Difficult People, and silly rules can make a job difficult. How do you handle these types of situations?*

Most companies, unfortunately, face these types of problems daily. If you can't deal with petty frustrations, you'll be seen as a problem. You certainly can state your displeasure at the petty side of these issues, but how you overcome them is more important. Diplomacy, perseverance, and common sense often prevail even in difficult circumstances.

12. *One of our biggest problems is _____. What has your experience been with this? How would you deal with it?*

Think on your feet. Ask questions to get details. Break it into sub-parts. Highly likely you have some experience with the sub-sections. Answer these, and summarize the total. State how you would go about solving the problem, if you can't answer directly.

13. *Why do you want to work here?*

Avoid the obvious, e.g. good location. Compliment the interviewer on the company. "I'm familiar with your company's excellent reputation and would like to be a part of your organization."