

Interview Tips

All that hard work sending out resumes has finally paid off and you have been called for an interview. Congratulations! This is an important next step in your job search. It is also your only chance to make a lasting first impression.

1. **Take the Interview Seriously.** Do not make the mistake of thinking the interview is just a formality. Even if all the preliminaries have gone well, do not be cavalier and start imagining how you will start spending your new salary. The biggest error you can make is to assume that, because you have gotten this far, the job is in the bag.
2. **Dress for Success.** How you present yourself during your initial meeting with a potential employer is very important, and your physical appearance can speak volumes to someone who is meeting you for the first time. Even if you know that the firm allows employees to wear jeans, do not sabotage yourself by showing up to the interview in casual clothing. Dress conservatively for interviews and avoid bright, flashy colors and patterns. Solid navy blue or medium to dark gray is usually best.
3. **Show why you are the best choice.** Be familiar with the job description of the position you are interviewing for so you can illustrate how your experience, abilities, and strengths are in line with the company's needs. Many potential employers want to know why they should hire you specifically. Make it clear to them.
4. **Do NOT Be Modest.** Failing to talk yourself up during an interview is one of the most self-defeating mistakes you can make. This is not the time for humility, so sing your praises! Do not be afraid to talk up everything you have accomplished, whether in school or in previous companies. This is your time to shine.
5. **Do NOT talk too much.** Be careful not to talk over the interviewer. This meeting should be a two-way conversation, and many interviewees cover up their nervousness by blathering on. Sit calmly and listen carefully, answering questions thoughtfully.

6. **Do NOT focus on the salary.** Do not start talking about money too soon into the interview. Focusing on your salary requirements and previous salary history right off the bat may cause you to reveal too much. While the topic of salary will certainly come up, follow the interviewer's lead. He or she may be saving that topic for a later conversation.
7. **Be professional.** Even if you hated your former boss or felt you were treated unfairly by your previous employer, a job interview is not the place to launch into a litany of complaints. If you were laid off or fired from a previous position, be prepared with an explanation that puts a positive spin on the circumstances.
8. **Ask questions.** Your resume may be impressive on paper, but employers also appreciate a candidate who can ask several intelligent questions during an interview. Prepare at least 3 or 4 questions in advance to ask the interviewer. Interviews are an exchange of information, and not having questions can reveal a lack of preparation.
9. **Be enthusiastic.** This is your first and sometimes only chance to showcase your personality. Do not walk in announcing how you are having a bad day. Be polite and upbeat. Show your enthusiasm for both the job and the opportunity to interview for it. And do not forget to thank the person at the end of the interview!
10. **Send a Thank You note.** Make sure to send a handwritten thank-you note or polite email to the interviewer expressing gratitude for his or her time and consideration. And while you do not want to start calling the company on a daily basis, a phone call checking in a week after the interview is perfectly acceptable.

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