

How to Prepare for the Interview

What is the purpose of an interview?

An interview is an opportunity to share information between you and your potential employer to assess your suitability for a position. Your goal is to persuade the employer that you have the skills, background, and ability to do the job. At the time, you are gathering information about the job, future career opportunities and the organization, to determine if the job and work environment are right for you.

The primary objectives are to:

- Supply information about yourself that is not contained in your resume
- Show that you understand yourself and have a sense of direction in your career
- Enable the employer to evaluate your personality and attitudes in terms of the job
- Allow you to gain information about the organization and the job which is not available through other sources
- Give you and the employer an opportunity to discuss the desirability of further contact or an offer of employment

So, the better prepared you are, the more success you will experience if the job is a good fit for you.

Tips for Preparing

Do your Homework

- ☐ Get the details of the interview right - time and location
- ☐ Try to find out who or how many people will be interviewing you
- ☐ Try to find out what the type of interview
- ☐ Get as much information as you can about the career or organization
- ☐ Know about the job. What likely duties and responsibilities will go with the position?

What to Take to the Interview

- ☐ Make sure you have all the papers you need such as: business cards, several copies of your résumé, reference letters
- ☐ a portfolio or samples of your work, certificates and licences

- Pen and paper, so that you can note the name of the interviewer, times for future interviews and other pertinent information.

Know yourself

- Know what you have to offer -- what training you have had and what you have done that make you ideal for this position.
- Review your resume and portfolio before the interview.

Prepare for the obvious questions

- Be ready for the questions you will likely be asked. Think of the answers you want to give.
- If you have a chance, do a practice interview with someone you trust to give you honest and helpful feedback.
- The following are typical questions an employer may ask:
 - Tell me about yourself.
 - What are your short-term goals? What about in 2 and 5 years from now?
 - What do you think you will be looking for in the job following this position?
 - Why do you feel you will be successful in this work?
 - What was the toughest decision you had to make in the last year? Why was it difficult?
 - What supervisory or leadership roles have you had?
 - What experience have you had working on a team?
 - What have been your most satisfying/disappointing experiences?
 - What are your strengths/weaknesses? What kinds of problems do you handle the best?
 - What did you learn or gain from your part-time/summer/co-op/internship experiences?
 - What frustrates you the most?
 - How do you spend your spare time?
 - What are your plans for further studies?
 - If I asked your friends to describe you, what do you think they would say?

Prepare questions to ask them

- You should always ask at least one question at the end. Here are some sample questions:
 - Would you be able to describe a typical day on the job?

- What training programs do you have available for your employees?
- What level of responsibility could I expect in this position?
- Is there a typical career path for a person in this position?
- How are employees evaluated?
- What do you like most about your organization?

At the Interview

- ☐ Always wear clean and neat clothing; make sure it is pressed. Nothing will turn an interviewer off more than an outfit that looks like it's been sitting in your laundry hamper since your last job interview.
- ☐ Select proper clothing for the type of position for which you are applying.
- ☐ Wear deodorant or antiperspirant. 'Nuff said?
- ☐ Use little or no perfume or cologne. You want to smell good, but not overpowering. Also, more and more people find they are allergic to perfumes and colognes. You don't want to make the interviewer break out in a rash!
- ☐ Have fresh breath and clean teeth.
- ☐ Have clean, recently cut, and neatly brushed hair.
- ☐ Be positive
- ☐ Be prepared to give names, addresses and phone numbers of references.

General Tips:

- ☐ Let your references know you have an interview.
- ☐ Make sure you can get there on time. Know where you are going and how long it will take you to get there. Go there once before your interview if possible so you are sure of the route.
- ☐ Put together the things you'll need for the day: clothes, money, and interview information such as the name of interviewer, address, and directions on how to get there.
- ☐ Get enough sleep. Be clean and neat.
- ☐ Take one last time to review your résumé, what you know about the organization, and your prepared answers.
- ☐ If you smoke, do not smoke once you are dressed for your interview and don't drink coffee or eat odorous foods prior to your interview.
- ☐ Greet each person in the organization with respect and professionalism.
- ☐ Upon meeting the person interviewing you, give them the first opportunity to shake hands. When you shake hands, include eye contact and a smile. Handshakes should be firm but not aggressive; try to match the grip of the interviewer.

- ☐ Do not sit down until the interviewer invites you to do so.
- ☐ Don't worry about being nervous during the interview - this is normal and will be expected. Just remember, the interviewer wants to hire you if you are the right fit for the position.
- ☐ Listen intently to what is being asked.
- ☐ If you are not sure, ask clarifying questions to determine exactly what the interviewer is looking for.
- ☐ Sell yourself. The interview is your chance to shine, so now is not the time to be humble.

Resources:

Ten Tips on Preparing for a Job Interview Labor & Employment Human Resources & Personnel Management from AllBusiness_com.mht

Preparing for your interview - Human Resources - City of Vancouver.mht
Source: University of Waterloo's e-manual for Career Development

<http://www.nextsteps.org/interview/intprep4.html>