



Candidate Interviewing Tips



The basis of the interview is two parties seeking a mutual solution to each other's needs. The interview is not the beginning of your relationship. It is better seen as the mid-point. The beginning of the relationship was when you submitted your resume or were otherwise introduced and the company decided to bring you in for a closer look.

Job interviewing never seems to get any easier - even when you have gone on more interviews than you can count. You are meeting new people, selling yourself and your skills, and often getting the third degree about what you know or don't know.

Proper preparation will help alleviate some of the stress involved in job interviews. While the ultimate purpose of an interview is to get an offer for the position, the more immediate objective is for the company to get to know you better and for you to get to know it better. Everything you do with regard to an interview should have this as its dual objective.

“Get to know the organization” Prepare a response so you are ready for the question "What do you know about our company?" Know the interviewer's name and use it during the job interview. If you're not sure of the name, call and ask prior to the interview. Try to relate what you know about the company when answering questions and relate your career accomplishments to what the company is looking for when answering questions. Do your best to know something about the company. You may also want to contact your trusted network to find out more about the company.

“Always bring a resume” Sometimes the hiring manager may not have your resume in front of them. If this is the case, being prepared and providing one of your own helps, and it shows that you are prepared.

“Be on time” Fifteen minutes early is a good rule. This does not mean fifteen minutes early to the reception area, but to the building. The key is to be certain to be able to walk or take the elevator to the office without risk of being late because of public transportation or not being able to find a parking place. This will allow you to present yourself to the receptionist five minutes or so prior to the interview in a relaxed and composed manner.

“What to wear” Present yourself professionally and conservatively. However, it makes sense to dress your best for the interview, regardless of the dress code at the organization. If you're in doubt about how to dress an interview should err on the side of conservatism. It is much better to be overdressed than underdressed. According to the business consulting firm, Image Dynamics, 55% of another person's perception of you is based on how you look. The following are basics that may help you:

Women's Interview Attire

- Solid color, conservative suit
- Coordinated blouse
- Moderate shoes
- Limited jewelry
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Tan or light hosiery
- Sparse make-up & perfume
- Manicured nails
- Portfolio or briefcase

Men's Interview Attire

- Solid color, conservative suit, or sports jacket
- Long sleeve shirt
- Conservative tie (optional, but recommended)
- Dark socks, professional shoes
- Very limited jewelry
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Go easy on the aftershave
- Neatly trimmed nails
- Portfolio or briefcase

“Be pleasant and engaging” Good eye contact, a strong handshake and a confident smile will get everything off on the right foot. Remember: the interviewer is looking for someone to hire, they like your resume or you wouldn't be there. In short, the interviewer starts the interview looking to like you. Reinforce this from the beginning.

“THE BIG “THINGS”:

1. **Know the job** - Review the position description before you go in for the interview. Be certain, however, to avoid giving the impression that you think you know all about the position or the organization. Part of the interviewer's job is to provide you with information and you giving the appearance of knowing everything already might be offensive or irritating.
2. **Composure** It is natural to be nervous in anticipation of an interview. Remember, though, it is a meeting of those with a mutual interest. Interviewers are sometimes stern without intending to be. You are there at their invitation. A pleasant, engaging manner on your part will make it easier for the interviewer. The trick is to focus on why you are there; they invited you.
3. **Engage** Always concentrate on the fact that it is a "getting to know you" exercise. Maintain eye contact and be certain that your body language is natural and complementary to the discussion. Never seem to be reciting; look for opportunities for a two-way discussion. Be prepared to talk about yourself. Some interviewers will give you a chance to make an opening statement. Be prepared to take it; it allows you to lead the discussion. But never take more than five minutes, and don't waste it on recital of your resume. Focus on what you have done and how it relates to the position you are seeking.

“Their questions” Approach questions as further opportunities to present yourself. In practically every case you should avoid one word answers that seem to be "pat" or packaged. Remember, an interview is not only a test of your specific knowledge, but an introduction, an opportunity to engage. How you speak (your manner, approach, confidence,

comfort level) can be as important as what you might actually say. Another point -- always avoid leaving the burden of the discussion on the interviewer.

“Your questions” At the end of almost every interview, the interviewer will ask you “Do you have any questions?” Questions about the organization and the industry in which it operates and the issues facing it will not only encourage a sense of mutual interest with the interviewer, but will also help you to decide whether you want to work for the organization.

You will want to come to your interview with around three to five (...not 20 or all) of the following questions written out in your planner or binder and practiced before the meeting. There is almost nothing worse than saying “No, I believe you’ve answered them all.” ***Avoid questions about compensation.*** They already know how much you are making, but might want to know more about your current total compensation packet, vacation, bonus, etc. (but let them ask).

- *What are the primary responsibilities of this position, and which are the most important?*
- *What measurable results are expected of this position?*
- *What challenges and opportunities are associated with this position?*
- *In your opinion, what specific aspects of my background make me right or wrong for this position?*
- *What support is available to help me fulfill my charge here?*
- *What can you tell me about my direct superior and his or her leadership style?*
- *Are there any projects in motion for which I will inherit responsibility? What is their history and status?*
- *What are the quantifiable goals of this company and my department?*
- *What criteria will be used to evaluate my performance? When are evaluations scheduled?*
- *What can you tell me about my peers in this company?*
- *Why did my predecessor leave this position?*
- *Why did you personally come to work here, and why do you stay?*
- *What advancement can a person expect - in this company and in the industry at large - after doing this job well?*

Always end every interview with “Do you see me as a good candidate for the position based upon what you know so far and what is the next step in the process?”

“Express interest” If, at the completion of the interview, you are still interested in the position, be certain that the interviewer knows this. Indicate early that you want to pursue the opportunity and ask what the next step will be. As a general rule, a follow-up note indicating your interest is recommended.

Most Important! Relax, you are going to do fine and remember “if you were not qualified for the job you would not have made it to this point”. My advice, candidate coaching for 20 plus years, “just enjoy the process”.