

How to Ace an Interview

Before the Interview

Do your homework:

- Research the company's website.
- Become familiar with the company's products/services and history.
- Be able to state why you would like to work specifically for this company.

Plan Questions in Advance:

- Prepare questions on the organization, the job itself and overall company structure. Be ready with paper to take notes on the answers.
- Try to draw parallels between the job description and your work experience and expertise. Be prepared to discuss this on the interview.

Dress Professionally:

- No jeans or casual wear even if the company has a "business casual" policy.
- Men should wear a suit and tie and be well groomed.
- Women should wear a suit with minimal make-up and perfume.

Be Early:

- Leave plenty of extra time to get to the interview, better still take a test drive prior to your interview.
- Arrive 5 minutes early and announce yourself.
- If you arrive with extra time, relax in your car or outside the building and collect your thoughts. Don't present yourself more than 15 minutes early as many managers have tight schedules and will feel pressured by your early arrival.

Bring Your Resume:

- Bring 3-5 copies of your resume.
- Resumes should be well organized and neat (see Write a Winning Resume).

During the Interview

No Cell Phone:

- Turn it off or leave it in the car.

Make a Strong Opening:

- Use good eye contact, smile, shake hands and sit up straight.
- Be enthusiastic, confident and energetic.

Be Professional:

- Treat everyone you encounter with professionalism.
- Don't let an employer's casual approach cause you to drop your manners.
- Don't complain or make negative comments about previous employers.

Keep the Dialogue Going

- Listen closely to questions and give thoughtful, to the point answers. Give details but don't talk too much. Be sure to let the interviewer lead the interview.
- Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered with a Yes or No to elicit discussion.
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question. Take a few moments to gather your thoughts before answering.
- Be prepared to discuss what you believe the job entails. Interviewers may want to see that you understand the position.

Sell Yourself

- Sell the interviewer on your skills and what you will bring to the job.
- Be prepared to explain how or why you moved from one position to another, clarify any gaps on your resume and give details of any skills you've listed.
- Be specific, such as explaining how you used a particular technology or the purpose of an individual project.
- Maintain a positive attitude and give it your best effort.

Avoid Discussing Salary and Hours

- These are "what's in it for me" questions that do not typically help you receive an offer.

Make a Strong Close

- Thank the interviewer for their time.
- Express interest in the position.
- Ask what the next step is in the hiring process. Know what action you are expected to take if any.
- Offer a firm handshake at the conclusion of the interview.

After the Interview

- After the interview, make notes so you don't forget critical details.
- Call your recruiter immediately while the facts of the interview are fresh in your mind. The recruiter will want to know your level of interest in the position, what went well and what you may have concerns about.
- Send a thank you to your recruiter to be forwarded on to the manager.