10 Quick Tips For A Successful Interview

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PLAN AHEAD.

- Consider developing/maintaining a portfolio.
- Have extra copies of your resume and references.
- Practice. Practice. Practice!!!
- Prepare answers to typical interview questions.
- Be prepared to discuss salary if the subject is addressed.

RESEARCH THE COMPANY (AND THE INDUSTRY).

Researching the company demonstrates to the employer that you want to work for them (not just any employer). This demonstrates true initiative as well as interest in the organization.

- What does the company do?
- What is their product/service?
- What is their reputation?
- Who are their major competitors?
- Where are their offices located?
- What are the current industry trends (government relations, international competition, etc.)?

THINK OF 5 QUALITIES YOU POSSESS THAT DISTINGUISH YOU FROM OTHER CANDIDATES.

What are some assets and/or experiences you have that you want to mention during your interview? Find a way to "weave" these things into the interview questions.

DRESS PROFESSIONALLY AND CONSERVATIVELY.

It only takes 5-10 seconds to develop an impression of someone. Make sure the employer's initial impression of you is a positive one!

- Wear a suit
- The entire outfit should be wrinkle free
- Conceal tattoos and remove facial piercings (men: no earrings)
- Shoes should be polished/clean; comfortable; professional
- Women: stockings are mandatory
- Men: ties and long sleeved dress shirts are mandatory
- Make-up, accessories, and perfume/cologne should be minimal (if used at all)
- Turn off cellular telephones and all electronic communication devices (or leave in your vehicle)
- Remember: it's okay to be dressed more formally than your interviewer

SHOW UP ON TIME.

- "On time" means 10-15 minutes early.
- Assume the interview begins when you enter the parking lot.

GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL!

You have to **sell yourself** in an interview and be able to "carry" the conversation.
In an interview, you should be doing 70-80% of the talking (to help with this, **be prepared to talk about yourself** for 45 minutes.)

- Know your strengths and your weaknesses and be able to speak comfortably about both.
- Convey to the employer that you have researched the company.
- Demonstrate your competence. State your skills and back them up with examples.
- Don't interrupt. Listen to the question completely, before giving an answer.
- If you don't understand the question, ask for clarification.
- If you don't know the answer, don't lie or "wing it." Be honest.

DON'T USE "CANNED ANSWERS."

Most recruiters will ask "Why do you want to work for XYZ company?" Don't just say "You're the largest marketing consultants in the area, I've always wanted to work as a marketing consultant…" Your response should **include information that sets you apart**.

PREPARE A LIST OF 10-15 QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING YOUR INTERVIEWS.

You will be given the opportunity to ask questions. **NEVER say "I don't have any questions"** or "I think you've answered all the questions I had." Get creative – through your questions, demonstrate that you've researched the company. If you already asked one recruiter a question, you can ask another recruiter the same question, just modify it. For example "I asked Joe Smith what a typical day looks like at XYZ firm. Can you tell me what a typical day looks like for you?" Or, "What attracted you to XYZ firm and what keeps you here?"

- Be prepared to ask insightful questions that demonstrate your interest in that specific company. Convey to the employer "I want this job; not just any job."

THANK THE INTERVIEWER FOR HIS/HER TIME.

Express your interest in working for the company. Let them know you want the job!

FOLLOW-UP IS ESSENTIAL.

Thank you letters are probably one of the most important aspects of communication, but often the most overlooked.

- Personalize the letter. Remember to ask for a business card so you can address the letter to the appropriate individual (and you spell his/her name correctly).
- Reiterate your interest in the position