10 Quick Tips For A Successful Interview

1) **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.

2) **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.)?

3) **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.

4) **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
5) **Show up on time.**
- “On time” means 10-15 minutes early.
- Assume the interview begins when you enter the parking lot.

6) **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.

7) **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.

8) **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.”

9) **Thank the interviewer for his/her time.**
Express your interest in working for the company. Let them know you want the job!

10) **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.