

Strategies for a **Successful Job Interview**



Job interviews

are becoming more and more sophisticated today. From psychological tests to role playing, evaluation of one's street smarts and quick mental reactions are often encountered. Here are a few tips to help you "win" that big interview.

Prepare in advance

Dress professionally and look polished. And plan your strategy in advance – know how you'll answer all the possible questions you may be asked. Practice, and role play, repeating your best responses until they are entirely natural, and sound completely spontaneous. Research the company ahead of time by visiting their facility or their website.

Know what you want to achieve

Know the facts on your resume inside and out. Have all facts memorized and thoroughly supported. Be clear on your job objective, as well as what you don't want. And tie your responses to questions into your comments but don't refer directly to your resume (assuming the interviewer has it in his or her possession). Be subtle.

Make a great impression in the interview

First impressions mean a lot. Greet the interviewer with a strong handshake and look them in the eye. Sit up straight and make continuous eye contact. Smile frequently, and never interrupt. Have questions to ask at the ready, and always thank the interviewer for their time.

Know your strengths

Count on being asked questions about your strengths and weaknesses. And know which of your strengths apply specifically to the position for which you're being considered – and emphasize those.

Present weaknesses as strengths

Interviewers want to know what you think your weaknesses are, and what you are doing to eliminate them. To leave a positive impression, show how you've turned a weakness into a strength – for example, how a past failure contributed to you choosing a path at which you now excel and which could benefit their company. Or state a weakness as a strength, such as noting that your "go-get-'em" style may alienate some in a low-key organization but helps growth oriented companies thrive.

If you've been fired, be forthright about it

There's no longer a stigma to having been fired--unless it was for justifiable cause – so be even-keeled and show that you can accept your past downsizing without bitterness.

Be clear where you want to go

Know where you want to be in five years and expect such a question to come up. Business is changing so fast that specificity with respect to the future is difficult. But be as specific as you can while conveying that you understand the complexities of the role you're applying for.

Establish your personal standards

Business today seeks individuals who have clear standards regarding their personal and professional lives, who can articulate them clearly, and who live by them. Be brief but be clear – such as "I delegate my weaknesses," or "I am committed to life-long learning."

Interview the company

Most interviewers will respect your efforts to assess the organization and the position in terms of whether or not it meets YOUR wants and needs. Define in advance what you want and what you are willing to accept and ask polite but direct questions to find out if this is the right job for you.

Know your worth

Salary should be a function of worth, and if the potential employer is willing to pay what you are worth -- a function of the job itself and your capability and willingness to perform it. Most jobs and organizations offer a range of salary adjustable to the market and the candidate's experience. So know the range of compensation for the job you're seeking, make your own realistic determination of what you're worth, and be prepared to stand your ground.

Follow Up

After your interview, send a handwritten note to the interviewer, along with a brief email as well. Follow up with a telephone call within one week to see if additional information is needed.

Sharpen Your Resume Writing Skills



A solid, well-organized, **professional resume** is within anyone's reach. All it takes is clear writing in proper English and an understanding of how a resume should be organized. But remember, resumes are business documents—they follow patterns that many English teachers would consider incorrect.

Here are some helpful hints.

A good resume presents, in two pages or less, a showcase of your professional endeavors and accomplishments. Make sure that it reflects positively on you by following these simple writing and organizational guidelines.

Avoid "I"

The pronoun I has no place in a resume — after all, of course you are talking about yourself. Use action verbs and crisp, clear statements like: Managed a department whose chief responsibility was to oversee safety audits. Wrote audit reports and conducted management briefings.

Keep sentences short

Resumes call for brief, hard-hitting statements -- not necessarily complete sentences. Feel free to leave out the articles like a, an, and the. Phrasing like "Spent five years working major accounts, generating leads and closing sales. Organized and managed territory and developed prospect databases.

Keep language simple

Go easy on adjectives. Don't overkill with big words to impress. Be succinct and to the point – using fewer words whenever possible.

Use bulleted statements

Bulleted information is more readable and tends to stand out more than the same information contained in a paragraph. But bulleted information also takes up more room. Your best bet is to combine the two. Bullet points should be kept brief and action-oriented.

Go from general to specific

Sequence information in a section by beginning with a general statement and following it with more specific ones. Think of a funnel: establish the broader platform first, then support it with specific evidence.

Have a clear objective

The objective should include the desire to use specific skills for a particular job. A good objective should be tailored for each position applied for and should be no more than two sentences in length.

Provide a snapshot

A Professional Profile section demonstrates, in a short paragraph, the experience received during a professional path. The profile should include information relevant to the position being applied for – experience, skills, accomplishments, and points of distinction.

Professionally package your experience

Include all employment since a diploma or degree was received, beginning with most recent positions first. List the organization, location, your title and dates of tenure, followed by responsibilities and accomplishments in that position.

Education is essential

Today, education is critical. List degrees or credentials earned throughout your working career, along with any specialized training or skill sets that you have developed.