

Ten Tips for a Successful Interview

1. Pre-Interview Preparation

Submit error-free resume and application materials in a timely manner. Bring examples of work or skills that you possess that will be beneficial in the role for which you are applying and use them to demonstrate your strengths in the interview. Be prepared to share a little about yourself and explain why you chose to apply for an internship or apprenticeship position in this specific area. Think about potential questions that will be asked, including strength areas and areas for improvement in your professional growth.

2. Do Your Research

Be prepared with questions to ask those who are interviewing you. Take the time to research the position in which you are interested, including the company or organization for which you would be working.

3. Brush up on Body Language

Be aware of what you are communicating through your posture and stance--and make sure it is good. For example, sitting with your arms and legs crossed sends a message that you are closed-off or feel defensive. If you keep your hands in your lap the entire interview, you could signal that you lack self-confidence. And, twirling your hair can make you look nervous or juvenile. Next, always stand up when someone else comes into the room. Professionally, you lose respect and credibility by staying seated--it sends a weak and powerless message. Think your movements through ahead of time so you are not distracted (or distracting) during the interview.

4. Dress the Part

An interview may be the only shot you have to impress the decision-maker. Make sure you dress appropriately for the position for which you are applying. Appropriate dress includes neatness and cleanliness. It is always better to overdress than underdress, but do some sleuthing to find out what the corporate dress culture is before you walk through the door. A dark suit (jacket and pants or skirt) and a crisp white shirt, manicured nails, simple make-up and clean, professional shoes will be perfect in most cases. And, definitely avoid dangling earrings, too much perfume, and multiple, clanking bracelets.

5. Personable Greeting

The proper, professional way to shake hands is using the entire hand, extending your arm (first if possible) for a firm, but not overbearing grip. If this does not come naturally, practice with a friend before your interview. Make sure that you introduce yourself using your full name and with a smile.

6. Turn Off Your Phone

No one wants to compete with your text messages and Snap Chat alerts. You need to be focused on the interview and not distracted by what is happening in the cyber universe. Also--Google yourself. What will your potential employer find out about you based on your social media presence on the Internet?

7. Accept the Water

If your interviewer offers you a glass of water, take it, even if you are not thirsty. This little prop can help buy you time to formulate an answer to a difficult question or just give you a moment to center yourself.

8. Be Confident

Smile, use good eye contact, speak up, and present yourself positively. Recognize this is a point in life where you need to brag about yourself and sell your skills and talents to the person(s) who are interviewing you.

9. Ask Questions

Keep in mind that the job interview is a two-way street. It is an opportunity for you to sell yourself to the company, but also to learn more about the workplace to see if the position and environment are a good fit for you. Go in with a few questions, such as details about the type of work that the position entails, the culture, and the typical career path of someone who holds the position. Don't be afraid to speak up: not asking questions can signal that you are uninformed or uninterested.

10. Send a Proper Thank You

Yes, even today, a handwritten note separates you from other candidates. Sending a thank you note, via email is fine when the decision must be made quickly, but always follow up with written correspondence. (A voicemail message does not take the place of a written note, either.) Express your thanks for the interviewer's time and for the chance to learn more about the company. No need to go overboard and -please-don't send a gift or flowers after the interview (yes, it's been done.)

When it comes to interviewing, practice makes perfect, and knowing the rules ahead of time is a great start. So be prepared, be confident, and be yourself, and you'll shine. Good luck!