

Interview Day Tips

The Big Day

Here's some helpful information for the day of the interview.

Take With You

Take a briefcase or folder to hold and protect papers. Some of the important papers you should include are copies of your resume, a list of questions you want answered during the interview and a writing pad to jot down important information or to schedule the next interview.

Don't take extensive notes during the interview. This prevents good eye contact and distracts attention.

How To Dress

- Dress appropriately for the job you are applying for; if in doubt, dress on the conservative side
- Clothes should be clean and pressed, shoes polished
- Your hair and nails should be clean and cared for
- Use only a very small amount of fragrance
- Use an antiperspirant and a breath freshener

Arrival

Remember that the interview starts as soon as you walk in the door!

Arrive 5 to 10 minutes early. There is nothing worse than beginning an interview by apologizing for being late. Upon arrival, speak to the secretary or receptionist. This will help to relax you and give you confidence. Getting there too early may cause inconvenience to the interviewer.

While waiting, sit up straight and look confident. Look for any materials in the waiting area you can read that might provide you with valuable information about the department and allow you to converse with the interviewer more knowledgeably. Observe others around you. How are associates dressed? Is the atmosphere tense, lighthearted, and professional? As Yogi Berra once said, "You can observe a lot just by watching."

The First Meeting

First impressions are important! When the interviewer comes out, stand and give them a firm handshake, establish eye contact and SMILE as you would when greeting anyone for the first time.

The Interview

- Relax
- Smile
- Always be truthful
- Maintain eye contact without staring at the interviewer Speak with animation, but don't rush your words
- Try to determine what the interviewer wants to know before answering

- Think before answering
- Relate your work experience, education, training and personality characteristics to the particular job for which you are applying. Stress what value you can contribute to the job. Don't oversell.
- Expect an explanation of the job and the qualifications needed
- Ask your prepared questions when appropriate

Wrapping Up

When wrapping up make sure you understand what happens next. Ask: Is there any other information you can provide to help the interviewer? Ask the interviewer for a business card if they have not already given you one. This will make addressing the follow-up letter easier. Leave with a handshake, a smile and a "Thank you".

Evaluate

Promptly after the interview, summarize your performance and what you learned from the interview. Think through what seemed to go well and what didn't. Reflect on whether there is still some unfinished business such as important information you need about the job. While the interview is still fresh on your mind, write down some of the questions you were asked-especially the ones for which you felt unprepared. Practice responses so you'll be prepared when they come up again in future interviews.

Follow-up

What you do after the interview is as important as what you do before and during the interview.

Sending a thank you letter is an absolute must after an interview. The letter should be sent out the same day that you completed the interview. Most people know this is proper, but very few actually do it because they are not sure what to say or just don't think it is important.

IT IS IMPORTANT!

A manager may interview many qualified candidates for a position. A thank you letter is one of the little distinguishing things that can give you the competitive advantage.

Your letter should be short, upbeat, neat and error free. Consider including the five R's:

1. Remember to thank the interviewer for their time
2. Reinforce, in a sentence or two, your skills, accomplishments and experience that make you right for the job. Reinforce your interest in the job
3. Recoup. If there is something you wish you had made clearer or forgot to say in the interview, you can add it to your letter
4. References. This can be a good occasion to use your list of references proactively
5. Remind the interviewer of a promise or agreement on next steps