



In-Person Interview Tips

1. Conduct research on the employer, hiring manager, and job opportunity

Success in a job interview starts with a solid foundation of knowledge on the jobseeker's part. You should understand the employer, the requirements of the job, and the background of the person (or people) interviewing you. The more research you conduct, the more you'll understand the employer, and the better you'll be able to answer interview questions. Scour the organization's website and other published materials, search engines, research tools, and ask questions about the company in your network of contacts.

2. Review common interview questions and prepare your responses

Another key to interview success is preparing responses to expected interview questions. First, ask the hiring manager as to the type of interview to expect. Will it be one-on-one or in a group? Will it be with one person, or will you meet several members of the organization? Your goal is to try to determine what you'll be asked and to compose detailed yet concise responses that focus on specific examples and accomplishments. A good tool for remembering your responses is to put them into a story form that you can tell in the interview. No need to memorize responses, but do develop talking points.

3. Dress for success

Plan out a wardrobe that fits the organization and its culture, striving for the most professional appearance you can accomplish. Remember that it's always better to be overdressed than under, and to wear clothing that fits and is clean and pressed. Keep accessories and jewelry to a minimum. Try not to smoke or eat right before the interview, and if possible, brush your teeth or use mouthwash.

4. Arrive on time relaxed and prepared for the interview

There is no excuse ever for arriving late to an interview. Short of a disaster, strive to arrive about 15 minutes before your scheduled interview to complete additional paperwork and allow yourself time to get settled. Arriving a bit early is also a chance to observe the dynamics of the workplace.

The day before the interview, pack up extra copies of your resume and reference list. If you have a portfolio or samples of your work, bring those along too. Finally, remember to pack several pens and a pad of paper to jot notes. Finally, as you get to the offices, shut off your cell phone. (And if you were chewing gum, get rid of it.)

5. Make good first impressions

A cardinal rule of interviewing is to be polite and offer warm greetings to everyone you meet, from the parking attendant to the receptionist to the hiring manager. Employers often are curious how job applicants treat staff members, and your job offer could easily be derailed if you're rude or arrogant to any of the staff. When it's time for the interview, keep in mind that first impressions -- the impression interviewers get in the first few seconds of meeting you -- can make or break an interview.



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6. Be authentic, upbeat, focused and concise

Once the interview starts, the key to success is the quality and delivery of your responses. Your goal should always be authenticity, responding truthfully to interview questions. At the same time, your goal is to get to the next step, so you'll want to provide focused responses that showcase your skills, experience, and fit with the job and the employer. Provide solid examples of solutions and accomplishments but keep your responses short and to the point. Finally, no matter how much an interviewer might bait you, never badmouth a previous employer, boss, or co-worker. The interview is about you and making your case that you are the ideal candidate for the job.

7. Remember the importance of body language

While the content of your interview responses is paramount, poor body language can be a distraction at best, or a reason not to hire you at worst. Effective forms of body language include smiling, eye contact, solid posture, active listening, and nodding. Detrimental forms of body language include slouching, looking off in the distance, playing with a pen, fidgeting in a chair, brushing back your hair, touching your face, chewing gum, or mumbling.

8. Ask insightful questions

Studies continually show that employers make a judgment about an applicant's interest in the job by whether or not the interviewee asks questions. Thus, even if the hiring manager was thorough in his or her discussions about the job opening and what is expected, you must ask a few questions. This shows that you have done your research and that you are curious. The smart jobseeker prepares questions to ask days before the interview, adding any additional queries that might arise from the interview.

9. Sell yourself and then close the deal

The most qualified applicant is not always the one who is hired; the winning candidate is often the jobseeker who does the best job responding to interview questions and showcasing his or her fit with the job, department, and organization. You are selling the employer on your ability to fill the organization's needs, solve its problems, propel its success. Finally, as the interview winds down, ask about the next steps in the process and the timetable in which the employer expects to use to make a decision about the position.

10. Thank interviewer(s) in person and email

Common courtesy and politeness go far in interviewing; thus, the importance of thanking each person who interviews you should come as no surprise. Start the process while at the interview, thanking each person who interviewed you before you leave. Writing thank-you emails or notes shortly after the interview will not get you the job offer, but doing so will certainly give you an edge over any of the other finalists who didn't bother to send thank-you notes.