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**Get That Job!**

# How to Have a Successful Interview

A job interview is one of the most important parts of a job search because it is your chance to stand out as a friendly and helpful person. At this point, the employer already knows something about you from your application. More than likely, he or she was impressed by your application because you were chosen for an interview.

However, even if the employer invited you to the interview, you still have to do some preparation. A major goal should be to get the job you want. This means that you will need to go into the interview knowing what you want in a job, knowing you can do the job, and knowing how to get the information about the responsibilities and benefits that go with the job. This involves finding out exactly what the job requires from friends, relatives, or current employees before you go on an interview. The key is always to be prepared.

Job interviews can be very complicated if you are not properly prepared. This is when you will need to show that you have a pleasant attitude and a friendly personality. It will be important

to practice good hygiene and to dress properly for the interview. Be ready to talk with the interviewer about your goals. There are various ways to prepare for an interview. The easiest way is to take time to think through your own background, experiences, and talents.

## **Know your strengths.**

This involves looking at yourself and examining why you think you are qualified for the job. Write down the reasons and be prepared to tell them to the employer in the interview. Practice saying these things aloud to yourself.

## **Examine the responsibilities of the job you are seeking.**

What skills do you have that match the job? Practice saying these out loud so it sounds as if you know the skills needed. Let the employer know what skills you have without sounding as if you are bragging in the interview.

## **Learn what you can about the company from different people.**

Learn to pronounce the company's name and to talk intelligently about the company's products. For example: John received a call from Johnson's Construction Company to come for an interview. He wrote down all of his construction work experiences and what he did at each job. He remembered that he was applying for a job as a cement finisher, so he looked at his experiences and matched them with the job. He plans to tell them that he helped finish the cement drive for the new bank and the cement floor for an addition to the newspaper building. Finally, he contacted a friend who was working there and asked him about some of Johnson's construction jobs as well as general questions about the company.

Other important aspects of the job interview are a person's appearance and manners. First impressions are lasting impressions. Hiring decisions are often made in the first 10 minutes of the interview with the balance of the time being used to justify that opinion.

**Table 1.** Common Questions Asked at a Job Interview



Why are you here? \_\_\_\_\_

What can you do for my business? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to work here? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of work are you looking for? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know anyone who works here? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you like to work with others or by yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

What would you do if you did not agree with instructions you were given? \_\_\_\_\_

What interests you about our product or company? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you know about our company? \_\_\_\_\_

First impressions are almost always based on a reaction to your appearance. Remember that you cannot help whether or not you are tall or short, have sharp or soft features, have brown or black hair. You DO have control over how you wear your hair, the clothes you choose, and your personal cleanliness and neatness.

The way you treat people makes an impression. Practice good manners with everyone you come in contact with before, during, and after the interview. Show courtesy to others in everything you say and do.

One thing to remember is that employers usually ask the same types of questions. This means you can prepare easily by practicing answers in advance. Table 1 gives some common questions asked at a job inter-

view. Write your answers in the spaces provided and practice saying them in a happy, positive, confident way.

A question that is often troubling for people who are looking for a job is "Tell me about yourself." It can be answered many different ways. Below are some guidelines.

- Tell the interviewer about some of the things you enjoy doing and about some of your goals.
- Describe your work experiences. This involves providing details of your past jobs and duties.
- Talk about your personality, your likes, and your dislikes without seeming too rigid or without bragging.

You may ask several questions during an interview. Questions are not only helpful to you, but they also show the

employer that you have enough knowledge to ask when you are not quite sure. Here are some questions that you might ask.

- What are the duties and responsibilities of the job?
- How does the job fit into the organization?
- Who supervises this job or who is in charge?
- What training will the company give in the beginning?
- How much travel does the job involve?
- Does the company transfer people from one job to another?
- Does the job require special union cards or licenses?
- Do you need special work permits or proof of citizenship?

- How would you (the interviewer) describe a successful person who works in this job?

Always prepare at least three or four questions before you go to the interview. Do not pull out pieces of paper with questions on them during the interview. Have questions firmly in your mind before you leave for the interview.

You should avoid questions that make you seem unbusiness-like, unprofessional, or immature. Some questions you should NOT ask include

- When can I expect my first raise?
- I know it is already May, but will I get a vacation this summer?
- Do we work on holidays?
- Do we get a Christmas bonus?
- How many times can I be late for work after I am hired?
- How many sick days do we get each month?

In most cases, questions of this nature show the employer that you are more interested in money, benefits, and personal satisfaction than in helping the company. The employer wants you to be interested in getting a job done.

### *Tips for successful interviewing*

#### **DO**

- Act natural.
- Be prompt, neat, and courteous.
- Keep promises to return requested information, forms, or other papers.
- Ask questions about the job.

#### **DON'T**

- Criticize yourself or former employers.
- Be late for your interview.
- Freeze or become tense although it is normal to be a little nervous.
- Be impatient.
- Be emotional and start crying.
- Talk too much or too little.
- Arrive unprepared.
- Try to be funny.

After the interview is over, you still have some things to do. One thing is to telephone or write a short letter to the company thanking them for the interview. Also, you can let them know that

you are still very interested in the job. Before an interview is over, the employer usually tells you that you will be contacted within a certain length of time; however, you can contact him or her to show that you are interested in the job. Interviewing is a task that is even more important than filling out an application for a job. Being determined to get the job you really want will better prepare you for a winning interview.

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