



Solutions You Can Trust

Interviewing Successfully

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

1. Conduct basic interview research.

To prepare for an interview, find out as much as you can beforehand. Call the person who scheduled your interview and ask:

- Who will you be talking to?
- Will you meet the manager you'd work for, or will you just talk to HR? What are the interviewer's expectations?
- What's the dress code? Dress to IMPRESS. Plug in the IRON and make sure you give a great first impression – not rumpled, but crisp, neat and clean! If unsure of what to wear, ask.
- Get directions to the office. Plan to leave early. Keep a phone number to call if you get stuck in traffic. If you arrive late and stressed, the interview will not go well.
- If you don't have a detailed job description, ask for one.

2. Learn about the company online.

Do some research, which will give you something to talk about in addition to the job description.

- Go to the employer's website and study it.
- Google the company.
- Go to LinkedIn and review people who work there.
- Check out Glassdoor and other sites – what feedback is given about this company?
- How big is the company in terms of annual sales or employees?
- What does the company say about its products or services?
- What recent news (such as a new product, a press release, an interview with the CEO) can you discuss?

3. Compare your skills and qualifications to the job requirements.

- Look side-by-side. Compare what the employer is seeking to your qualifications.
- Prepare answers to questions. Go online and look up common questions. Write down your answers. Practice in front of a mirror. Make sure you look relaxed and confident.
- Be ready to answer typical interview questions with a story about yourself. To prepare, write down and memorize three achievement stories. Talk about times you've really felt proud of an achievement at work or school. These stories demonstrate all those hard-to-measure qualities like judgment, initiative, teamwork or leadership. Wherever possible, quantify what you've done, e.g., "increased sales by 20 percent," "cut customer call waiting time in half," "streamlined delivery so that most customers had their job done in two days."
- By the way, non-work achievement stories are good too; if you volunteer for the local food pantry, write down a time you overcame a big challenge or a crisis there.

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4. Plan what to bring.

- Extra copies of your resume on quality paper
- A notepad or professional binder and pen
- A list of references
- Information you might need to complete an application
- A portfolio with samples of your work, if relevant
- Get a good night sleep!

5. Pay attention to non-verbal communication.

- Be mindful. Nonverbal communication speaks volumes.
- Start ahead. Remember that parking lot and lobby behaviors could be noticed.
- Project confidence. Smile, establish eye contact and use a firm handshake.
- Posture counts. Sit up straight yet comfortably. Be aware of nervous gestures such as foot-tapping.
- Be attentive. Don't stare, but maintain good eye contact, while addressing all aspects of an interviewer's questions.
- Manage reactions. Facial expressions provide clues to your feelings. Manage how you react, and project a positive image.

6. Follow up.

Many interviews end with "Do you have any questions?"

- Bring a list. You may say, "In preparing for today's meeting, I took some time to jot down a few questions. Please allow me to review my notes."
- Be strategic. Cover information not discussed or clarify a previous topic — do not ask for information that can be found on the organization's website.
 - I. In your opinion, what makes this organization a great place to work?
 - II. What do you consider the most important criteria for success in this job?
 - III. Tell me about the organization's culture.
 - IV. How will my performance be evaluated?
 - V. What are the opportunities for advancement?
 - VI. What are the next steps in the hiring process?
 - VII. What will be the biggest challenge in the first 30 days of this job?

7. If interested in the position, let them know!

- Be sure to finish the interview with great eye contact and a firm handshake. Let them know that you have enjoyed meeting and are very interested in the position.
- Many times, interviewers are unaware if the candidate is actually interested in the position.
- Follow up with a thank you email. Keep this short and sweet, send it within 24 hours of the interview.