

How To Improve Your Performance At Interviews



The approach you take at your interview could have a dramatic effect on your career prospects.

No matter how good your career record is, the employment interview remains a key step in the process of achieving career ambitions.

These suggestions will help you perform confidently and effectively when you meet your prospective employer for that all important first interview.

Prepare For The Interview

Preparation is the key to a successful interview. First impressions count.

You only get ONE chance at a first impression.

- Know the exact time and place of the interview, and the interviewer's name and title.
- Find out all you can about the company. There are research publications in the Library and elsewhere that can supply you with information.
- Refresh your memory regarding details of present and past employers and your work history in their companies. Pay particular attention to how you will describe your most important achievements.
- Prepare the questions YOU will ask in your interview.
- Pay close attention to grooming and dress. Standard business attire is normally appropriate, however, find out what is expected.

The Interview

You are being interviewed because the interviewer wants to hire somebody - not because he/she wants to trip you up or embarrass you.

Through the interaction which will take place during the interview he/she will be searching out your strong and weak points, evaluating you on your qualifications, skills and intellectual qualities and he/she will probably probe deeply to determine your attitudes, aptitudes, stability, motivation and maturity.

- Arrive on time or a few minutes early. Late is NEVER excusable.
- Wait to be OFFERED a chair before sitting. Look alert and interested, never let your attention waver.
- Be a good listener as well as talker. Smile when appropriate but never to excess.
- If presented with an application, fill it out neatly and HONESTLY.
- Make sure you get your good points across in a sincere, factual manner.
- Be concise, but never abrupt.
- If you have the impression all is not going well, don't let your discouragement show. You may be wrong, and spoil your chances.
- Never enquire about salary, holidays, bonuses, etc at your initial interview.
- Conduct yourself with confidence, but not complacency. A positive attitude is acceptable, arrogance is not.

Be prepared with answers and supporting examples to questions such as:

- What are your career aspirations?
- Why do you want to work for our company?
- Of your previous jobs which did you enjoy most and why?
- How have you managed conflict in the past?
- Describe what you have done in your career that shows your initiative?
- What are your weaknesses? Your strengths?
- What does teamwork mean to you?
- Can you re-locate if requested?

Things We Like To See Evidence Of During An Interview

During your interview, the employer will be evaluating your total performance. Listed below are some factors that will usually produce a positive reaction from a prospective employer.

- Interested balanced approach.
- Ability to express thoughts clearly.
- Career planning and objectives.
- Confidence.
- Informative replies.
- Tact, maturity, courtesy.
- Maintenance of eye contact.
- Positive handshake.

Closing The Interview

- If you are interested in the position let the interviewer know.
- If you need time to think about an offer, ask for it. Most employers respect the need for a considered judgement.
- Don't be discouraged if there is nothing "concrete" at the end of the interview.
- The employer almost always needs time to make THEIR considered judgement.
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration.
- Don't indulge in small talk at the end of the interview (or during it), unless invited to do so.

After the Interview

Immediately call the Consultant (or Administrative Assistant) who referred you to the position and describe how the interview went. He / she will want your views before the employer calls, and will appreciate the courtesy of your feedback.

If you are, or are not interested in progressing with the position further, we need to know as soon as possible.

Finally, relax - you have now done all you can.