

The In-Person Interview Tips

As you know, in order to extract an offer it will not only take your understanding of the job requirements, but also your ability to demonstrate your communication, logical and behavioral skills. Interviewing is an art form and it takes combining technical skills, interpersonal communication (soft) skills, previous responsibilities and accomplishments.

This process we have outlined will help you feel more comfortable with the phone interview, assist in gauging the client's need, and establish why you are the best possible candidate.

Before the Interview:

1. Be presentable and educated.

- Dress to Impress –Professional Business Attire always
 - Don't cut corners when it comes to ironing or dry-cleaning.
 - It's better to be over-dressed than under-dressed
- Try to avoid strong-scented perfumes and colognes.
- Review the company's website, job description and gather data
 - Check out newsletters, managers' online profiles, company's competitors, etc.
 - Consider a couple of questions that indicate to the hiring manager that you have researched the company – research indicates your interest!
- Know the name of the interviewer so that you can ask for that person at the receptionist's desk. It's embarrassing when the receptionist asks, 'Who are you here to see?' and you can't remember

2. Eat before the interview, not during your conversation.

- Do not bring anything into the interview such as food, drink, gum etc.
- Make sure that what you *do* eat beforehand does not have a strong odor.
 - You want to be remembered for your professionalism and outstanding skills, not for what you ate for lunch.
- You are welcome to bring a portfolio, pen and pad of paper to your interview.

3. Don't be too early and bring a photo ID

- Arrive 5-7 minutes early
- Arriving earlier will lead to anxiety – you will have to sit and wait for the hiring manager, and s/he may feel frustrated and rushed knowing you are waiting.
- If you arrive at the location early, wait in your car or take a walk around the block and review your resume.
- Reminder – turn off your cell phone before you enter the building, or better yet, leave it in your car.
- **You're late for the interview** - Say you're late for an interview.
 - Don't tell them about traffic, bad directions or parking problems. Just say, "I'm sorry I'm late. If I've thrown off your day, I will be glad to reschedule whenever it's convenient for you."
 - Take ownership, don't make excuses, and offer ways to make things better. Nothing ever goes perfectly, and knowing you will take responsibility and work to fix problems is impressive.

5. The interview begins the moment you enter the building

- Most people would never think of the receptionist as being an interviewer, but it's true. It's fairly common that the receptionist will report the candidate's behavior to the manager.
- Turn off your cell phone and wait patiently.

First Impressions:

1. Firm handshake, eye contact, and thank you.

- When introduced to the interviewer, give him/her a firm handshake
- Be aware of “sweaty palms” and have a tissue in your pocket
- **Immediately thank them for taking the time to interview you** and demonstrate that you are excited about the opportunity.
- Let them direct you where to sit and don’t sit before they do. Walking in and sitting down immediately gives the impression that you feel like you own the place.
- Eye contact indicates you are interested and engaged in the conversation.
 - Any given eye contact should last about five seconds at a time. Any more can be intimidating; any less could be seen as insincere.
 - If there is more than one interviewer, make eye contact with the interviewer 60 percent of the time, and 40 percent should be given to the other people in the room.

2. Don't look at your watch, click your pen, or touch your face repeatedly

- Don’t have distractions during the interview. The manager should be focused on your skills, not the drumming of your fingers on the table, the ringing of your phone or your constant itch.

3. Be ready and attentive.

- Be engaged and set to go. Hit the ground running and immediately focus on the interviewer. “Work” is a verb. Make “interview” a verb too.
- Sit up, sit forward, and show the interview matters to you; kicking back says you don’t really care.
- If you brought a pad of paper or a portfolio, don’t take notes the entire conversation. Eye contact is imperative!

Discover the Need during the Interview (Very Important)

1. REMEMBER – the client has a need, and if they did not, you wouldn’t be sitting there for your interview. Your goal is to reconfirm/establish what the client is seeking in a candidate.

- Ask specifics about the position in the BEGINNING OF THE INTERVIEW, and mirror your background to the specific need.
- You have to figure out what the client needs in a candidate. If it is not described to you, you have to ask.
- Make the interview into more of a conversation vs. a Q&A session.

2. Use the interviewer’s name when addressing him or her; it grabs their attention.

3. Don’t interrupt or overpower the interviewer: best interviews are the ones where the manager speaks the most.

- Everyone appreciates a leader, but when you overpower the interview, it is very irritating.

4. Use “I” when stating responsibilities. Your previous colleagues and teammates are not interviewing for the job, you are, so keep it that way.

5. FOCUS

- **Demonstrate Interest** by asking questions, regarding technology, products, methodologies etc.
- **Turn negatives into positives – always tell the client what you can do, not what you can’t do. If you are asked a question and you’ve never worked with that specific tool, but you know**

what it is – demonstrate familiarity and/or talk about similar products you have worked with.

- **Provide examples** of similar tools & technologies you have used and where (“I’ve never worked with Waterfall methodology, but I have worked with SDLC and PMBOK.”)
- **Show** that you have some knowledge of the product or tool and interest in learning more about it. “I have never worked with QTP, but I know it is an automated testing tool.”
- **Don’t complain.** Most people know not to complain about their present employer, but any complaint is a downer. Even gentle whining is a bummer. Don’t complain about anything, no matter how justified. Negatives always stand out.

6. IDLE THE CONVERSATION: Once or twice in the middle of the interview, ask the client “are you satisfied with that answer?” or “do you want me to explain something further?”

- How do you know you provided the right answer if you don’t ask? Never assume.
- Remember the difference between “open ended” and “close ended” questions and answers.
- Be prepared to stand behind your answer – whatever you provide for an answer is likely to lead to another question to see if you can back up your statement

End of Interview:

1. The client will always indicate to you that they want the interview to end. More than likely, the interviewer will say to you “that completes our interview for today, do you have any questions or comments?”
 - At this point, if you have a burning question that is specific to your conversation, go ahead and ask it.
 - **HOWEVER, you should NOT ask about the project and what they are looking for in a candidate. IT IS TOO LATE.**
2. **What NOT to do**
 - Do not ask broad questions which should have already been answered i.e. “what are the project details.” If this question hasn’t been answered already, it would be tough to get it answered in the 30 seconds remaining in the interview.
 - Do not ask for feedback i.e. “how did I do?” backs the manager into a corner.
 - Do not ask for the next steps i.e. “what is the next step in the hiring process?”
 - Do not make assumptive statements i.e. “look forward to working with you.”
3. **What TO do...**Do not wait for the hiring manager to ask you these questions you should just come out and state the below quickly
 - IMMEDIATELY thank them again for taking the time to speak with you
 - Demonstrate interest in the position
 - Let them know that IF you are selected you can be available....”provide specific date, day, two weeks etc.” If you are working now, full time, let them know it’s a two week notice.
 - Let the hiring manager know you are aware of the location and can work on site (if the position requires it).

Please note:

1. **Give your recruiter a call as soon as possible. Your feedback will allow staff to go back to the hiring manager for next steps or offer extraction.**

Top Interview Questions:

Prep for the Top 10 Interview Questions

As the saying goes, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail". So here is a valuable insight into the world of interview questions and the techniques best used to answer them.

There are some questions that are asked frequently in interviews and you should prepare your answers beforehand. The key things to remember when responding to interview questions are to keep your answers relevant, brief and to the point. If you are faced with a difficult question, make sure you stay calm, don't get defensive, and take a moment to think about your response before you answer.

Remember, these responses are only suggestions. Try to personalize your response as much as possible.

Question: Tell me about yourself.

Answer: Identify some of your main attributes and memorize them. Describe your qualifications, career history and range of skills, emphasizing those skills relevant to the job on offer. Don't drone on for several minutes; keep it concise and to the point.

Q: What have your achievements been to date?

A: Select an achievement that is work-related and fairly recent. Identify the skills you used in the achievement and quantify the benefit it had to the company. For example, 'my greatest achievement has been to design and implement a new sales ledger system, bringing it in ahead of time and improving our debtors' position significantly, saving the company \$50,000 per month in interest'.

Q: Are you happy with your career to date?

A: This question is really about your self-esteem, confidence and career aspirations. The answer must be 'yes', followed by a brief explanation as to what it is about your career so far that's made you happy. If you have hit a career plateau, or you feel you are moving too slowly, then you must qualify your answer.

Q: What is the most difficult situation you have had to face and how did you tackle it?

A: The purpose of this question is to find out what your definition of difficult is and whether you can show a logical approach to problem solving. In order to show yourself in a positive light, select a difficult work situation which was not caused by you and which can be quickly explained in a few sentences. Explain how you defined the problem, what the options were, why you selected the one you did and what the outcome was. Always end on a positive note.

The need a specific **S**ituation, **T**ask at hand, **A**ction you took and the **R**esult (STAR method). This will demonstrate to them what you will likely do in other situations. Answer should be concise and to the point...no need for elaborate stories.

Q: What do you like about your present job?

A: This is a straightforward question. All you have to do is make sure that your 'likes' correspond to the skills etc. required in the job on offer. Be enthusiastic; describe your job as interesting and diverse but do not overdo it - after all, you are looking to leave.

Q: What do you dislike about your present job?

A: Be cautious with this answer. Do not be too specific as you may draw attention to weaknesses that will leave you open to further problems. One approach is to choose a characteristic of your present company, such as its size or slow decision-making processes etc. Give your answer with the air of someone who takes problems and frustrations in your stride as part of the job.

Q: What are your strengths?

A: This is one question that you know you are going to get so there is no excuse for being unprepared. Concentrate on discussing your main strengths. List three or four proficiencies e.g. your ability to learn quickly, determination to succeed, positive attitude, your ability to relate to people and achieve a common goal. You may be asked to give examples of the above so be prepared.

Q: What is your greatest weakness?

A: Do not say you have none - this will lead to further problems. You have two options - use a professed weakness such as a lack of experience (not ability) on your part in an area that is not vital for the job. The second option is to describe a personal or professional weakness that could also be considered to be a strength, and the steps you have taken to combat it. An example would be, 'I know my team think I'm too demanding at times - I tend to drive them pretty hard but I'm getting much better at using the carrot and not the stick'.

Q: Why do you want to leave your current employer?

A: State how you are looking for a new challenge, more responsibility, experience and a change of environment. Do not be negative in your reasons for leaving. It is rarely appropriate to cite salary as your primary motivator.

Q: Why have you applied for this particular job?

A: The employer is looking for evidence that the job suits you, fits in with your general aptitudes, coincides with your long-term goals and involves doing things you enjoy. Make sure you have a good understanding of the role and the organization, and describe the attributes of the organization that interest you most.

Other questions to consider:

- How does your job fit in to your department and company?
- What do you enjoy about this industry?
- Give an example of when you have worked under pressure.
- What kinds of people do you like working with?
- Give me an example of when your work was criticized.
- Give me an example of when you have felt anger at work.
- How did you cope and did you still perform a good job?
- What kind of people do you find it difficult to work with?
- Give me an example of when you have had to face a conflict of interest at work.
- Tell me about the last time you disagreed with your boss.
- Give me an example of when you haven't got on with others.
- Do you prefer to work alone or in a group? Why?
- This organization is very different to your current employer - how do you think you are going to fit in?
- What are you looking for in a company?
- How do you measure your own performance?
- What kind of pressures have you encountered at work?
- Are you a self-starter? Give me examples to demonstrate this?
- What changes in the workplace have caused you difficulty and why?
- How do you feel about working long hours and/or weekends?
- Give me an example of when you have been out of your depth.
- What have you failed to achieve to date?
- What can you bring to this organization?