



Interviewing Tips for Success

Your initial interview is the most important aspect of any job hunt. The first impression you make on a prospective employer will likely be the reason why you do or do not get a job offer. Doing your homework to prepare in advance will help enhance your value, effectiveness, and lower your stress to help you perform better during the interview. *Below are some excellent tips that are refresher points to help differentiate you from other candidates that are competing for the position.*

1. BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Research the company.** Do your homework and learn as much as you can about the company, key players (executives, management team), revenues (if public), mission, product lines, services and divisions. Conduct a search on the Internet and read all new press releases. Print, read, highlight company information to demonstrate your knowledge of the company, its niches, mission, products, and service offerings.
- Review your resume and catalog your skills and accomplishments.** Bring a list of your soft and technical skill sets with you. Differentiate yourself by highlighting your qualitative and quantitative accomplishments for past employers. Be prepared to share the contributions you can do for the company.
- Block out a minimum of two hours for the interview.** Employers want to spend quality time with you. They may want you to meet other key people, tour their facility, take pre-employment screening test and so forth. It's a mistake to feel rushed, or to leave the impression that you have more important things to do than the interview.
- Dress for success.** Look your best and dress up for the interview. First impressions are lasting expressions. You only have 15 seconds to make a good first impression so pay attention to personal details. It is recommended that men wear a tie, suit or sports coat. Make sure your shoes are shined. It is recommended that women wear a business suit, hosiery and dress shoes. Avoid wearing or revealing anything that may take the attention away from your skills and qualifications such as excessive jewelry, make up, strong perfume, tattoos, nose rings, scuffed heels, etc.
- Don't ask about pay or benefits on your first interview.** Avoid asking questions regarding compensation, benefits or bonus incentives in the initial interview. Doing so will make you come across as being self-centered instead of company centered.
- Rehearse.** Practice your answers, eye contact, handshake, facial expressions, and body language. Role play with a Recruiter or friend to evaluate your answers and response to general interview questions.
- Print directions to the company and make sure you arrive 15 minutes early.** Allow extra time for traffic conditions or if you are unfamiliar with the area.



2. THE INTERVIEW

- ❑ **Be polite and maintain good eye contact.** Show respect to everyone you meet, whether it's the receptionist, prospective peer, employee or senior executive. Maintain good eye contact with all the people who are involved in the interview.
- ❑ **Focus on the value that you can bring to the company and be a good listener.** Avoid being introspective (what's in it for me...). Talk about how you are seeking a career opportunity where you can add value and contribute to the company's growth and success. Be a good listener and avoid being long winded. Answer questions with specific examples and as briefly as possible. It's good etiquette to check with the interviewer to see if you answer the question to their satisfaction.
- ❑ **Do not come across as arrogant (full of yourself):** Show confidence without arrogance. Humility is a virtue that is highly esteemed by most interviewers/clients. Proudful arrogance (a know it all) is the downfall of many.
- ❑ **Sell yourself.** Think of yourself as a retail product like a Mercedes Benz with features and benefits that you want to convey and sell. What are your features (Personal Character – passion, integrity, values, work ethic; Competence - technical knowledge, relevant qualifications, skills, and strengths, Chemistry – ability to interact and work with people). For example, you have 10 years of sales/product development experience that helped previous employers increase revenues by \$50MM. You have a passion to make a difference with a desire do whatever it takes (work long hours) to help the company complete projects, improve quality, increase revenues/profits, grow marketshare, etc.
- ❑ **Come prepared with company information and the right questions:** Print information about the company's mission, products, services, and management team. Develop a list of five to seven open ended questions about the company (see next page for sample questions. Asking the right questions sets you apart from the rest of the pack. Questions demonstrate that you're as interested in finding out how you fit in to help the company achieve their goals as well as your career objectives. You may not have as much time as you'd like to ask all your questions, so write them down and plan on asking the most important questions (see sample questions on page 4) just in case the interviewer closes the interview before you've had time to ask them all.
- ❑ **Bring extra resumes with you.** Even if the interviewer has a copy, bring two extra copies with you.
- ❑ **Make a list of five (5) professional goals.** Written goals convey that you are a focused professional who has a mission and is committed to personal achievements.
- ❑ **Stay positive and avoid making negative comments about past employers or supervisors.**
- ❑ **Listen, take notes and avoid interrupting.** Be a good listener, take notes on important information that is being said and wait for the interviewer to pause.
- ❑ **Don't talk about pay in your first interview.** Avoid asking about salary, benefits or perks during your initial interviews unless the interviewer brings it up. Doing so may be misinterpreted by the person and perceived as if you are only interested in what you are going to get out of the job. Remember, the goal of an interview is for you to communicate the value you have to offer the employer. The time to talk about compensation and other benefits is when both you and the potential employer agree to advance to the final offer stage.
- ❑ **Send a thank you card.** Follow up with a thank-you note expressing your appreciation for the interview and convey a strong desire to help the company grow. Highlight key points that you discussed in the interview and communicate your desire for the position.

SAMPLE THANK YOU

Dear _____, I wanted to thank you for the opportunity interview with you today. It was a pleasure meeting you and I'm extremely interested in the (position title). I feel very confident that I will be a valuable asset to you and the company and am willing to do whatever it takes to help you and the company achieve its goals and objectives. I am excited about this opportunity and look forward to hearing from you. Sincerely,
Your name



SAMPLE INTERVIEWER QUESTIONS

Below are some sample questions that you may be asked during you interview. Prepare your answers in advance with specific examples. You may want to consider purchasing the book – **“Best Answers to the 201 Most Frequently Asked Interview Questions”** By Matthew J. DeLuca

Q: What were your major accomplishments and contributions in your last 2-3 positions?

1. How do you explain your job success?
2. Compared to others in your same field, how would you rate yourself & why?
3. Cite specific examples on how you positively affected your previous employers with... (new products/design/projects/sales growth/quality/production/processes, etc.)
4. How will previous supervisors describe your performance?
5. How will previous supervisors and peers describe your attitude?
6. How were you measured?
7. Describe the specific things you are doing to improve your knowledge, skills, and performance.

Past performance is the best indicator of future behavior. If you can communicate your value with past employers, it helps the interviewer(s) perceive and expect that they will receive the same kind of performance and results from you for their company. Bring tangible examples (reports, recognition letters/e-mails, work samples, performance reviews, etc.) of your work.

Q: How do you manage multiple tasks and pressure?

1. Describe three (3) projects you recently handled with pressing deadlines.
2. How would past supervisors describe your organizational skills and time management?
3. What are your strengths? (Technical skills, personal qualities, etc.)
4. What would you say is your biggest weakness?
5. What are your professional goals?

The interviewer is trying to see how much work (capacity) you can handle and how you deal with multi-tasking and project management.

Q: What was been your favorite position and why?

1. What did you like and dislike about it?
2. What are you passionate about?
3. Tell me why you want to leave?
4. What are the things you liked and disliked in previous supervisors?

The interviewer is looking for relevant experience, including what you really love and want to do. Is the position a long-term or short-term match? What type of management style you work best with?

Q: Why should you be considered for this position?

1. What value, knowledge, skills, and experience will you contribute to the company?
2. Why do you desire this opportunity?

Employers are looking to hire “A” players who are the best in class and have the right chemistry. An “A” player works well within the culture and framework that is already established with the company culture as well as show they will work the hardest for them. Communicate how you are willing to go above and beyond the call of duty. Express a passion to be a profitable contributor who exhibits a stellar work ethic, high integrity, and ability to build trust with others.



SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK (develop your own and put them into your own words):

- About the *Company / Department*
 - What do you think are the keys to your company's success?
 - What differentiates your company from other competitors?
 - What are the biggest challenges in the department / company?
 - How would you describe your culture and work environment?
 - What are the company/departmental goals?
 - What would you say are the superior reasons why candidates should consider working here?
 - What are the core values of the company?
 - What are the short and long-term goals you'd like to see achieved in the department?
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- About the *People and it's Managerial leaders*
 - What attracted you to this company and how long have you been here?
 - What is the average tenure of employees in the department/company?
 - Why do employees stay with your company?
 - How would you describe the management style of the leadership team?
 - What type of professional development
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- About the *Position*
 - What are the biggest challenges facing this position?
 - What do you consider to be the critical skills needed to succeed in this position?
 - What do you see are the key accomplishments you'd like to see the person achieve in the first 30-90 days in this position?
 - How soon would you like to fill this position?
 - What impact is this opening having on the department and company?
 - What's the career path for this position?
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We wish you great success in your interview!