

How to land the job: Interview Preparation and Tips

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Thank You Notes

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How to Prepare for a Successful Job Interview

- Plan to take a notebook with you to the interview.
- Research the company online. Learn as much as you can about the company so that you can speak knowledgeably in the interview. (I noticed on website online....).
- If possible, talk to people that work there before the interview (if you know them).
- Develop a set of 3-5 questions specific to the job and the company. Take those questions with you.
- Read the job description in-depth, and pick out duties and experience that you possess, that are specific to the job. Practice discussing success stories in those areas (accomplishments, recognition, completion, etc.) Write down key phrases to describe your experience.
- Based on the job description, develop a set of questions that you would ask if you were interviewing for the position. Practice your answers.
- Put your interview clothes together the night before.
- Locate the business address and scope out the parking situation in advance.
- Plan to arrive 10-15 minutes early, review notes, observe the environment.
- Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses practice addressing those in a positive language.
- Make a list of questions that will make you uncomfortable, if asked. Write a “script” that will help ease your anxiety.
- Ask a friend to pretend to be the interviewer so that you can practice answers.
- Go to YouTube and watch “successful job interviews”. Pick out things that you can do to present yourself confidently.
- Organize any portfolio items that you would like to share in the interview.
- Bring a bottle of water.
- Use the restroom before you check in.
- Diversity is a hot topic. Employers want to know that you can get along with others that are different from you. Do some research and find opportunities to learn about and experience diversity in the workplace through classes, workshops, volunteering, community service projects, etc.

What Employers Want/Expect in an Interview

Here is a checklist to help you prepare for your interview:

- You are prepared with pen, notepad, items from your career portfolio with multiple copies.
- You bring a list of questions to the interview.
- You understand the job description.
- You can explain why you're qualified for the job.
- You will be able to work the hours that are discussed.
- You researched the company and know about the work or service that is done in that company.
- You are dressed appropriately.
- You are on time.
- You have interpersonal communication skills: eye contact, confidence, emotional intelligence, etc. They are wondering, "Do I want to work with this person for 8 hours a day?"
- You use the right grammar, right words.

Tips for Successful Interviews

If you are given a list of questions to review before the interview, write down your answers. Read through all of them first.

It's okay to ask, "How much time do we have today?"

Answer questions as succinctly as possible. Do not go on and on.

When asked a question, jot down a few key phrases that will help you to remember to address all aspects of the question.

If you are not sure that you answered the question—You may say, "Did I answer your question?" "Could you rephrase it in a different way? Or, "Which piece did I miss?"

Be prepared to state why you want to work there.

If asked if you know how to do a particular task. Don't just say, "yes". Be prepared with a story or example of your skill.

When asked to provide an example of how you worked through something, your response should be: "I'd like to give you TWO examples". Then be specific.

You may be asked about your ability to work with people that are different from you. Be prepared to answer questions about diversity. Give specific examples of your (positive) perspective on diversity, and any training that you have received. Provide a values statement, on your beliefs around diversity. "I've worked in many environments where people were very different from one another. What I loved about those employment settings was the opportunity to learn and grow from people that are different from me. I believe that differences bring strength to the workplace. Let me give you an example of how I am educating myself in this area. Last month, I attended...". If the mission statement of the business aligns with your diversity beliefs, you should be prepared to speak to that.

If you have not performed a particular task...or you are asked if you know how to do something, DO NOT FAKE IT. Be honest and say..."I have not done that exact task. However, in my last job, I was required to learn X, Y, Z ". Then give an example of how quickly you learned the task and what you did to get up to speed as fast as you could.

If you absolutely can't answer a question, ask the interviewer to repeat the question, or to phrase it in a different way.

Always provide examples of your specific work—but do it clearly and quickly. Do not waste time repeating yourself, or going on and on.

Be prepared to Answer These TOP 11 Interview Questions

Give us an example of how you had a conflict at work, and how it was resolved in a positive way.

Tell me about yourself (use work skill examples, how you get along with others, work values, what is important to you at work, best skills, what strengths you bring to work. Sell your work skills with the answer.)

What interests you about this opening?

What do you know about our company so far?

Why did you leave your last job? (Or why are you thinking about leaving your current job?)

Tell me about your experience with ____.

What experience do you have doing ____? (Fill in each of the major responsibilities of the job.)

Tell me about your strengths/weaknesses.

Tell me about a time when... (Fill in with situations relevant to the position. For instance: Tell me about when you had to take initiative ... you had to deal with a difficult customer ... you had to respond to a crisis ... you had to give difficult feedback to an employee ... You get the idea.)

What salary range are you looking for? (Research the job market and know what your skills are worth before the interview)

What questions do you have for me?

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