Landing the Job You Want! ©

Tips for Interviewing Like a Pro

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When does your interview begin?

- When you begin to answer your first question?
- When you sit down at the interview table?
- When you introduce yourself?
- When you meet the interview team?
- When you walk in the building?
When you walk into the building!

So think about how you:

- Sit
- Wait
- Engage others (e.g., receptionists)
- Shake hands
- Introduce yourself
How should you be dressed?

- In the way you will feel most comfortable?
- In the most formal clothes you own?
- Always in a suit?
- Two levels up from the job you are interviewing for?
- For the job you are interviewing for?
You should dress one or two levels up from the job you are interviewing for!

- You should be groomed and neat.
- When you look good, you feel good.
- Clothes and accessories should be neutral and conservative. (You don’t want them to be THE attraction!)
Who would you hire?
Tattoos and Piercings . . .

- What do employers think and believe?

- According to www.suite101.com

  “Many [applicants] may be of the attitude ‘If they don’t like it, they don’t have to look.’ Well unfortunately they don’t have to hire your tattooed pierced butt either!”

- What suggestions can we make for interviewees with tattoos in more conservative work environments?
Will you request an interpreter for your interview?

If so, how will you procure one?

- Will you pay for the interpreter yourself?
- Will you ask NCOD for the interpreter?
- Can you ask the Department of Rehabilitation to provide you with an interpreter for your interview?
- Should you always expect the company or organization you are interviewing with to provide the interpreter?
NCOD cannot provide interpreters for your job interviews . . . Sorry!

You should not have to pay if you can avoid it.

If the company or organization you are interviewing with is small and not deaf-aware, asking for an interpreter may be putting yourself in a bad light before you even start your interview. (Not fair, but true!)

Resources: Department of Rehabilitation, GLAD, EDD (Employment Development Department)

With Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you do have the right to communication access and non-discrimination if you are qualified.
What do you think the ideal *demeanor* (attitude and behavior) should be during the interview for the following?

FOR YOUR:
♦ Introduction?
♦ Language?
♦ Behavior?
♦ Facial expression?
♦ Energy?
First, Your *Introduction*

- Exude confidence
- Make eye contact with all interviewers
- Try to remember each person’s name (make up a mnemonic!)
- Handshake: firm, not limp, wet, or too strong
Next, Your *Language*

- Keep it professional (avoid slang)
- Use vocabulary from your field (aka, professional jargon)
- No profanity (swearing)!!!
- Try to avoid fillers (e.g., you know, um, well, like, I guess)
- Be specific; avoid “RIP” words (e.g., a lot, many, a few, some)
Behavior

- Sit professionally (with knees together or legs/ankles crossed)
- Try not to fidget (it makes noise … both visual and auditory!)
- Don’t be cocky! You don’t have the job until they formally offer it to you. There is a fine line between confidence and arrogance.
- Don’t be too familiar … even if you know the interviewers. Pretend that you don’t know anyone in the room.
SMILE!

Where do your eyes go when you are thinking about an answer? Up? Down? OR on the interviewers?

If the question is difficult, try not to let your face show that. Practice handling hard questions.

Don’t look DESPERATE for the job, showing a puppy dog face.

Look as if you are enjoying the experience! (Hopefully you will!)
Energy

- You want high energy! (without being wired)
- Pay attention to the question.
- Make sure you understand the question and are engaged in the process.
- Sit up straight (slouching indicates indifference).
Prepare for the Standard Questions

How?

- Practice prior to your interview.
- Get feedback.
- Organize your answers.
- Be creative.
- Include details; be interesting.
- Time your responses just right ... Not too long, not too short.
“Tell me about yourself.”

**Challenges?**
- To know what the interviewer wants from you.
- To figure out how long your answer should go on, how much you should actually say in your response.

**Opportunities?**
- To show your dynamic, interactive style.
- To demonstrate your ability to describe your traits that you think fit the job best.
- To respond in a brief, yet clear manner, giving the interviewer a snapshot of who they are interviewing.
“What are your strengths?”

**Challenges?**
- To make your strengths applicable to the job
- To make your strengths specific

**Opportunities?**
- To emphasize your abilities you may not have been able to describe in your resume
- To show how you want the interviewers to see you
“What are your weaknesses?”

- **Challenges?**
  - To NOT emphasize your weaknesses.
  - To avoid listing too many (Choose one and explain how you are making improvements in this area).

- **Opportunities?**
  - To recognize the potential for growth and self-development.
“Why do you want to work here?”

- **Challenges?**
  - To avoid coming up with the same old answer.
  - To provide enough detail to show that you have given this some thought.

- **Opportunities?**
  - To show that you have read their values and mission statements.
  - To show your passion for this particular job and/or organization.
“Tell me about a time when ...”

- **Challenges?**
  - To show the interviewer how you behave in a particular situation.
  - To find a situation where your decision or action had a positive outcome (include details but don’t make the story too long).

- **Opportunities?**
  - To demonstrate that you can make decisions or behave in a professional manner.
  - To show that you have already had these experiences and can apply these skills to future employment.
“Where do you see yourself five years from now?”

- **Challenges?**
  - To show that you know the field (e.g., Is there opportunity for growth?).

- **Opportunities?**
  - To show your eagerness to grow within the company or organization.
  - To show that you intend to stay.
“Describe your ideal supervisor.”

**Challenges?**
- To not make it seem like you are criticizing a past supervisor.
- To select one significant adverse quality that you think is the most important in this job. Think carefully and clearly.

**Opportunities?**
- List three to five ideal qualities you see in a supervisor and explain why.
“What would you do if ...?”
(hypothetical situations)

- **Challenges?**
  - To think the question through quickly and make the best decision. (Even if you have never been in that situation, you need to come up with what you WOULD do.)
  - To provide an excellent response even if your gut reaction is NOT the answer you think the interviewers want.

- **Opportunities?**
  - To show you can think quickly.
  - To show that you can see more than one solution for a given problem, but can make a decision.
Specific questions in your field

- **Challenges?**
  - To respond with detail if your experience or knowledge is superficial (these tend to be knowledge – or procedure – based).
  - To show that you have knowledge of specific vocabulary (professional jargon).

- **Opportunities?**
  - To show your experience and knowledge of the field.
“Do you have any questions for us?”

**Challenges?**
- To avoid anything to do with salary!
- To decline to ask any questions … bring 1 or 2 questions ready in case you don’t come up with them during the interview.

**Opportunities?**
- To take some control of the interview.
- To show that you’ve done your homework in reading up on the company/organization you are interviewing with.
How should you handle “illegal” questions?

Examples of illegal questions:
- How old are you?
- Do you plan to have children in the next five years?
- Do you think your disability/race will have an impact on your doing this job?
- Are you a U.S. citizen?

So – What do YOU do?
- Just answer the question?
- Refuse to answer the question?
- Don’t answer the question, but answer the intent behind the question? (What does this mean?)
IDEALLY: Do not answer the question. Respond to the intent behind the question.

For example, the interviewer asks, “Are you a U.S. citizen?”

*HotJobs* through *Yahoo* suggests a smart answer might be:

“If you mean to ask if I am legally authorized to work for you, the answer is yes.”
How should you best handle your references?

- Email them to your interview contact prior to the interview?
- Bring them with you to the interview?
- List them on your resume?
- Send them to your interview contact after the interview?
This depends on the situation. If the person who set up the interview does not give you specific instructions, bring a printed list of references (at least three with contact information) to the interview.

Make sure you have gotten permission from the references ahead of time.
Your interview is over, the hard part is done. Now what should you do?

- Send a thank you to your interviewers.
- Party!
- Contact the interviewers daily to see if you were selected for the job.
- Check around to see who else applied for the job and who your competition is.
Send a thank you to your interviewers!

This means that you must ask at least the lead interviewer for contact information if you do not already have it.
What will the interview team be doing after your interview?

- Checking your references?
- Checking your account on Facebook and MySpace?
- Interviewing other applicants?
- Meeting to discuss all applicants interviewed?
- Making decisions about who to hire?
All of the above!

Don’t let the Facebook/MySpace answer fool you ... employers and grad school evaluators regularly check electronic social networks when making important decisions like this!

(You may want to go to your account and remove questionable pictures and/or information!)
Interview NO–NO’s

- Don’t arrive late!
- Don’t simply answer with “I don’t know” or “I have no idea for that.”
- Don’t lie, pretend or give an evasive answer.
- Don’t criticize a former employer.
- Don’t try to be too clever.
Internet links to Résumé Writing and Interviewing Skills

Résumé writing:
Online workshop:  [http://www.csun.edu/career/workshops/resume/](http://www.csun.edu/career/workshops/resume/)
Making your words count: [http://www.free-resume-tips.com/10tips.html](http://www.free-resume-tips.com/10tips.html)
Interview Skills:

Online workshop:  
http://www.csun.edu/career/workshops/interview/

Tips:  http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/interview

Traditional interview questions:  
http://www.pohly.com/interview–1.html (click on “Career & Interview Resources”, then “Answering Traditional Questions”)

Behavioral interview questions:  

Do’s and Don’ts:  
http://hiringopportunities.suite101.com/article.cfm/job_interviews_dos_and_donts

Quiz:  http://www.quintcareers.com/job_interviewing_quiz.html