



## Here's How to Ace Your Interview!

**Objective:** You want to get to the next interview or offer by professionally selling yourself and your potential contributions to this organization. The most common mistakes candidates make are:

- Poor personal appearance.
- An overbearing, overaggressive, conceited attitude.
- Inability to express thoughts clearly. Poor poise, diction or grammar.
- Lack of planning for their career. No purpose or goals.
- Lack of interest and enthusiasm. Passive and indifferent.
- Lack of confidence. Nervousness.
- Overemphasis on money. Interested only in the best dollar offer.
- Evasive. Makes excuses for unfavorable factors in their record.
- Lack of tact, maturity and courtesy.
- Condemnation of past employers.
- Failure to look employer in the eye and limp handshake.
- Failure to ask questions about the job.
- Persistent attitude of "What can you do for me?"
- Lack of preparation for the interview. Failure to get information about the company, resulting in inability to ask intelligent questions.

**Prepare:** Research the organization. Visit their website. Read their annual report. Search for recent news stories. Talk to insiders. Know the exact place and time of the interview, as well as the interviewer's full name (with pronunciation) and title.

**Introduction:** Arrive early. Always wear a suit. Have a pen, paper and written questions to ask, since an interview is a "two-way street." Be brief with small talk. Do not express negative feelings about weather, traffic encountered or anything else. If it's a face-to-face interview, offer a firm, brief handshake and a smile. Remember the 12/12 Rule: You are judged 12 feet away when you walk in the room and you are judged 12 inches away when you shake someone's hand. Give full eye contact.

**Responses:** Practice your responses to the typical job interview questions most employers ask. Think of actual examples you can use to describe your skills. When asked a question, answer it specifically. Do not ramble. Answers to entry questions should only take fifteen seconds. Answers to follow-up questions will take longer. It's okay to occasionally ask for clarification by saying, "I'm sorry, I'm not sure I understand the question." or "Does that answer your question?" Possible questions might be: "Why did you choose this particular vocation?" "Why do you think you might like to work for our company?" "What qualification do you have that make you feel that you will be successful in your field?" "What is your major weakness?" "Are you willing to relocate?" "How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies?" "What job in our company

do you want to work toward?” “What jobs have you enjoyed the most? The least? Why?” “What are your own special abilities?”

- Signals:** Throughout the interview, maintain good eye contact. Lean slightly forward and remain attentive. Give the impression you are enjoying yourself; that you like to talk about and share experiences. Show obvious interest in the position and what the interviewer has to say.
- Questions:** Have at least five questions prepared. Only ask questions that indicate your desire to benefit the company. Questions such as “Who will I report to?” “What growth opportunities are there?” and “Where can I be in three years?” are inappropriate, as are any questions regarding money, benefits or work schedules. Instead, ask: “What major challenges does your company face in the next twelve months?” “How can I best help your company achieve its objectives?” “How do you measure performance?” “What is most important to you about the person you hire for this position?”
- Anecdotes:** Use a few brief stories from your recent past to support your answers and illustrate your background, skills and accomplishments. Make certain your story is directly in line with the question asked. Never lie or make derogatory remarks about your current or former employers or companies.
- Closing:** Ask what the next step is and, when appropriate, ask for the job. Ask the interviewer how they see you fitting this position. Express your continued interest, keeping any concerns you have between you and your recruiter. Thank the interviewer for their time and information. Send a written thank-you note or at least an email, briefly restating your interest and why you are qualified for this position. Above all, expect to have a successful interview and you will!
- Follow Up:** Call your recruiter immediately following each interview so you can talk before the employer calls them.

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