

Interview techniques



Presenting yourself effectively in an interview is crucial to landing a job. What can you do to prepare yourself? What questions will you be asked and what can you say to convince the interviewer that you are the best person for the job? These are some of the questions you must ask yourself as you plan for your interview.

This information sheet outlines some general tips for making a great first impression.

Preparing for the interview

The key to performing well at an interview is preparation. Preparation includes things such as researching the company, anticipating questions and practicing responses, and being aware of the appropriate way to dress and behave. Preparation and practice can boost your confidence and your overall performance within the interview.

Learning about the company

Find out as much about the company as possible. You can find information about the company in a number of ways, including its website, Internet searches, or simply call the company and request some information. Ask for an annual report or other promotional material that can give you information on the services or products, locations, size, turnover and other vital statistics. By learning about the company's culture, you may be able to find out which skills and experience the employer needs most.

Practice questions and answers

Your success at the job interview will depend on your answers to a wide variety of questions. These questions can range from your early background and education to your personal effectiveness and job skills. You need to prepare and rehearse answers to these possible questions to make sure you give a good impression. (See the separate fact sheet on 'Possible Interview Questions' for more information).

Making a good first impression

First impressions are all important, so put some thought and effort into your appearance. You should dress to create a good impression, arrive early, smile, be polite to everyone you encounter and remain positive and confident.

Dealing with rejection

Unfortunately, rejection is part of the job search process and happens to most people at some time. The main thing is to be prepared and to remain positive about yourself and your prospects. There are many reasons why your application or approach may have been unsuccessful. It can be worthwhile to ask the employer why you did not get the position (make sure you thank them for their feedback), as this can help you to focus on areas for improvement.

Look on your unsuccessful interviews as learning experiences and keep trying. Ask us about resources available to help you practice your interviewing skills.



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The thank you letter

A formal thank you letter should always be sent (or emailed) to an employer following your interview. Your letter should thank the employer for their time, restate your qualifications and enthusiasm for the company.

An effective thank you letter demonstrates your initiative and can be pivotal to getting the job.



Interview dos and don'ts

DO:

- Be early or on time.
- Shake hands firmly.
- Be prepared.
- Listen to and answer the questions.
- Answer questions completely and concisely.
- Give examples of achievements to demonstrate your capabilities.
- Display confidence, positivity and enthusiasm.
- Ask properly prepared questions about the company to reinforce your interest to the interviewer.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Show an understanding of the company and its needs.
- Avoid using negatives. Instead of problems, talk about challenges and opportunities.
- Thank the interviewers for their time at the end of the interview.
- Send a thank you letter or email shortly after the interview.

DON'T:

- Criticise former employers.
- Smoke or chew gum.
- Lose your temper or show frustration.
- Ramble.
- Oversell or undersell yourself.
- Slouch, fidget, or look distracted.
- Raise the issue of salary.
- Discuss personal issues.
- Exhibit defensive body language (e.g. crossed arms or legs).
- Be careful not to display nervous mannerisms such as nail biting or giggling.