

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW.....

- Make sure there is no confusion about where you are supposed to go for the interview. If necessary, get a map or make a practice run to the place so you know how long it will take to get there.
- Research the company. You should know exactly what they do before you go in.
- Make a list of common job interview questions and figure out how you can best answer each one.
- Make a list of questions to ask the company. You can ask about the company itself, the company's customers, the position, and the people you will be working with.
- Practice your job interview with a friend or family member. Ask them to critique your answers afterwards.
- Record your practice interview sessions with a video camera so you can critique yourself later on. Pay special attention to your posture and body language.
- Determine your availability. The interviewer may ask you when you can start the job.
- Determine your bottom line. Will you accept the job if the pay is low? What about benefits? Interviewers often ask how much you expect to make.
- Be prepared to be tested during or after the job interview. Nowadays, many companies do drug testing.
- Wear something that fits you well, looks nice on you and is job interview appropriate. No short skirts, t-shirts, flip-flops or other casual clothing. Unless you wear a tux or an evening gown, you can't be overdressed.
- Don't douse yourself in perfume or cologne. Some people have sensitive noses. A shower and deodorant is sufficient.
- Cover up piercings or tattoos, and even jewelry that might be offensive to someone else.
- Make sure your breath is fresh. Dragon breath never makes a good impression.
- Spit your gum out before you go into the building.
- Show up at least 10 minutes early--15 minutes is even better.

DURING THE INTERVIEW.....

- Greet every single person in the room with eye contact and a handshake. Be sure to treat everyone from the receptionist to the CEO equally.
- Shake hands firmly, but not too firmly. You're a job interviewee, not a father meeting his daughter's boyfriend.
- Control your voice when you speak. Speak loud and clear, with a confident voice.
- Don't use slang when you greet people. 'Hey, how ya doin'?' is not a proper greeting in a formal setting.
- Be conscious of your posture when sitting or standing. Try not to slouch or look too stiff. Don't cross your legs or shake your legs (restless leg syndrome)!
- Don't sit down anywhere until you are asked to. When you do sit, don't fidget. It makes you look nervous.
- Keep hand talking to a minimum. It is okay to make gestures while speaking, but it is not okay to look like a mime while doing it--unless you are interviewing for a job as a mime. Then it's acceptable.
- Be ready to ***sell yourself!!!*** Be prepared to talk about your hobbies, interests, skills, school, clubs you belong to, activities, sports, volunteer or work experience, classes or training you've taken that pertain to the career you've chosen.
- If you are given water or something else to drink, sip it. Gulping and chugging a beverage is unattractive.
- Smile and nod your head on occasion when being spoken to so you don't look like a mannequin.
- Try to look interested when people speak--no matter how boring they are.
- Be specific and give details when appropriate, yet try to keep answers short and to the point. Nobody wants to listen to you babble.
- When you do answer a question, don't start out with words like 'uh' or 'um.'
- Do your best to sound confident when you speak.
- Remember to maintain eye contact throughout the job interview. Looking away while someone is talking will make you seem disinterested, shy or unsure about your answer.
- If you are being interviewed by multiple people, try to look at them all while talking. Nobody should feel left out of the conversation.
- Ask questions! You're at an interview, not an interrogation. Employers will expect you to have at least one question about the job, the company or the people you will be working with. Don't ask "How many days off do I get?" or "When is my first vacation?" This shows you aren't going to be a hard worker!
- Don't look at the clock or your watch at any point during the interview. It makes you look like you'd rather be somewhere else.
- If you are left alone in a room, don't do anything you wouldn't do in front of a group of people. You might be on camera.
- This should go without saying, but we'll say it anyway: Don't flirt with anyone you meet on the day of your job interview. You have no idea who you are hitting on or how it might impact your chances of getting the job.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW.....

Make an impression after the interview has ended.

- When the job interview has ended, you should ***shake hands with everyone once again and thank them for their time.***
- If you are still interested in the job at this point, now is the time to say it. Tell the employer you want to work with the company and hope you will be considered for the position.
- Ask your interviewer when a decision will be made and whether or not you can follow-up at a later date. This way you won't be sitting by the phone or making a pest out of yourself for no reason. This also shows that you are interested in the position.
- Send a thank you note to your interviewer(s) ***immediately after leaving the interview.*** In the thank you letter, emphasize again how much you would like to be part of their team. The thank you should be done via a handwritten thank you card or letter and should be short and to the point.
- Go home and write down everything you can about the interview. Take note of what went well and what didn't. Write down questions that stumped you that you weren't prepared for. If you don't get the job, this information could prove very helpful later on.
- Don't be afraid to follow-up. If the interviewer said you would hear something in a week and you don't, there is nothing wrong with initiating the contact yourself. Just remember to be polite when you call--no guilt trips.

Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why should I hire you?
3. Describe your most rewarding educational experience.
4. What two adjectives describe you best and why?
5. How would you describe your ability to work in a team?
6. What has had the greatest influence on you and why?
7. What are your strengths? Explain.
8. What are your weaknesses? Explain.
9. What has been your greatest accomplishment?
10. What has been your greatest setback?
11. What are the most important characteristics to be successful?
12. What are your career goals?
13. What is one positive thing a past employer would say about you?
14. Give me an example of when you handled a conflict effectively.
15. How do you handle criticism?
16. What motivates you to put forth your best effort?
17. How would friends or teachers describe you.
18. What are some things you enjoy most about your current job or school?
19. What are your short-term goals? Long-term goals?

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK THE INTERVIEWER:

******* YOU MUST ASK AT LEAST 1 QUESTION!!!! *******

- How do you see someone with my background and skills-set fitting within this organization?
- What type of training program(s) do you have in place? (School-related & job-related)
- Why is this position open, and what are you looking for in the person taking the position?
- What opportunities for advancement are there within your organization?
- Why should I work for your organization?
- What is the company's mission/vision statement? Is your company living the this mission/vision now, or is this the direction in which you are heading?
- What is your vision for this department/role? Is it being lived out now within the organization?
- What is your background? How long have you been with the company, and why do you stay?
- How do you remain competitive in the marketplace?
- Why are your products/services better than your competitor's?
- Describe the department—three things going well and three things that need improvement...and what do you believe needs to happen to ensure improvement?
- How quickly do you want to fill this position? How many people are you considering for this role?
- Through our conversation today, is there anything you see in my background, skills, or impact I can have on this organization that still concerns you?

DRESS GUIDELINES

MALES - Required Interview Attire:

- Dress-collared shirt with tie or
- Dress slacks or khakis
- Polo shirt
- Dress shoes and dress socks
- Men's business suit (optional)

FEMALES - Required Interview Attire

- Dress slacks and nice dress shirt
- Business suit or
- Business pantsuit (pants accompanied by a coordinated jacket) or
- Business dress or
- Skirt and blouse
- Dress shoes and hosiery
- Hemlines should be no more than two inches above the knee

INAPPROPRIATE ATTIRE includes:

- Visible body piercing, other than ears
- Denim clothing of any kind
- Open-toed shoes or sandals!
- Shorts, stretch pants, athletic wear
- Backless, see-through, tight-fitting, spaghetti-strap, low-cut blouses/tops/dresses, or tops not reaching the beltline. No skin should be visible at the mid-section.
- Sun dresses
- T-shirts, lycra, spandex, midriff tops, tank tops
- Athletic shoes, industrial work shoes, hiking boots, flip-flops, or over-the-knee boots
- Hats/caps
- Visible undergarments