



Interviews: In-Person Tips

Guidelines for successful in-person interviews.

Attitude is everything.

Congratulations! You've landed an interview with the organization of your choice. What could go wrong? Plenty.

Don't worry. You've done everything right so far and you know the basics: what to wear, how to greet, saying "thank you" (See: "Successful Interviews"). Now use these tips to get you through your interview and stand out above all the rest.

Pre-interview checklist.

Practice makes perfect. Review your résumé and practice answers to potential interview questions. Preparation is key. Practice out loud to make sure you sound natural.

Do your homework. Research the job position, company, and interviewer so you know what you're talking and asking about. You don't want to get caught off guard.

Be proper. Create a new e-mail address strictly for your career/job search contacts.

Money woes. Research the average salary for the job in which you've applied so you can speak intelligently when salary and benefits become the topic of conversation. Expect a 5% margin for negotiation.

The week before. Pick out your outfit for the interview and make sure everything is ready to go. You don't

want to discover a problem with your outfit at the last minute. Pack only relevant items in your portfolio or briefcase: extra copies of your résumé; pad and pen; references, if requested; business cards, if you have them; and if you're filling out an application, a sheet with previous employer contact info is helpful. Get plenty of rest.

DON'T BE LATE. Have directions on how to get there. Allow extra time for traffic, getting lost, detours, and any other unexpected happenings. If you can, take a test run. Arrive 15-30 minutes early to give yourself time to gather your thoughts.

The interview.

Eat something. You don't want to get distracted by thoughts of food or the noises your empty stomach might make.

Cell phone etiquette. Turn it off. Even vibrations can be heard.

Two-way street. The interview should be a conversation. However, keep it professional. Answer when asked.

Communicate. Be clear about what you expect to gain if hired. Articulate your goals and what you expect to contribute to the company.

Manners matter. Always be polite with everyone, including the receptionist. Be honest, positive, and enthusiastic – even when discussing your weaknesses.

Simply put:

A successful in-person interview is within your grasp if you follow these tips:

- Practice, practice, practice.
- Research the company.
- Be well rested, on time, and well groomed.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Have a professional attitude from the minute you step onto the premises until the minute you step off.
- Begin and end the interview with a firm handshake and a "thank you."
- Be polite and respectful.
- Listen attentively and communicate.
- Send a "thank you" in the form of e-mail and/or old-fashioned snail mail within two days of the interview.

Bow out gracefully. Regardless of how things go, conclude the interview with a sincere "thank you," a firm handshake, and a courteous smile. Maintain a professional attitude even after you've left the office – you never know who may be watching and what might get back to the interviewer.

Send a "thank you." Be sure to e-mail the interviewer within two days of the interview to thank them for their time and consideration. An old-fashioned "thank you" on quality stationary is another great option.

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