

Interview Tips

If you are chosen for an interview, you are one of the few. Be ready to sell yourself. Look your best. Learn about the company. Be ready with questions.

Preparing for the Interview

- Research the company; know the company's mission and core values; products and services, be aware of any current news about the company, for example: if they recently won an award, are expanding or starting a new product line. Be sure to "google" the company.
- Be knowledgeable about the company and the industry.
- Have a good understanding of yourself and what values and skills you would bring to the company.
- Be prepared to give specific examples of how you could contribute to the business.
- Practice interviewing as much as possible, with emphasis on personalizing your answers by giving examples.

General Guidelines

- Arrive prepared with extra copies of your resume and cover letter. You want to have a copy of your resume for each member of the interview panel. Bring a pen and portfolio that has a notepad.
- Listen to the questions carefully. Sell yourself while at the same time be mindful of the time. *The interview is about what you can do for them.*
- When an interviewer is asking questions that are open-ended, such as "Tell me a little about yourself," make sure that your background information relates to the job itself and when and why you developed an interest in a specific field.
- If asked, "Why did you leave your last job," try to be positive rather than dwelling on issues.
- Prepare for the interview by thinking of several strengths you have that relate to the job you are seeking.
- Weaknesses should be turned around and presented in a positive manner by describing how you have overcome them.
- Always have a plan for furthering your professional growth by education or work experiences.
- Stay away from the topic of salary and time off when first interviewing for the job.
- A concluding question may be, "Why should you get the job?" Be ready to give your best reason as to why you would be the best hire and give examples.
- Make sure that you thank the interviewers for their time and ask when you will be hearing from them on their decision.
- Ask appropriate questions related to the position or the company.
- It is appropriate to ask how the follow-up is done by the company.



During the Interview

Get off to a Good Start – First impressions are lasting impressions!

- Dress appropriately and professionally. Take a good look at the clothes you are wearing to the interview...you are judged by your attire and appearance. Should you be wearing a suit? Is your outfit too revealing? Are your clothes clean and pressed?
- Make sure you appear fresh – maintain daily hygiene, comb your hair, brush your teeth, use deodorant. Avoid excessive amounts of perfume or cologne.
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist or anyone that you meet in a courteous manner.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early for the interview.
- Practice a firm handshake that is sincere. Remember interviewer's name.
- Let the interviewer take the lead. Wait to take a seat until you are instructed.
- Have your cell phone turned off.
- Cover up any tattoos, remove body piercings.
- Don't chew gum.

Body Language

- Use natural gestures. **Smile.** Sit up straight, nod, and lean slightly forward.
- Keep arms uncrossed.
- Establish eye contact.
- Show interest and demonstrate a positive attitude.
- Try to relax. Exhibit patience.

After the Interview

After the interview, mail or email a thank you note reiterating your genuine appreciation for the interview and expressing your enthusiasm in the position.

If you do not hear from the company within the time stated during the interview, it is appropriate to call or email and check the status of the position.



Common Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little about yourself. Emphasize your passion for the position/business. Relate this question to what skills you have to offer and how the skills have been developed over the years.
2. Why do you want to work here? Bring up positive examples about the company.
3. Why should I hire you? What skills do you have that make you stand out?
4. Why did you leave your last job? Be positive, never, ever, dwell on negatives of the last job.
5. What are your strengths?
6. What are your weaknesses? Be sure to add how you are improving your weak area.
7. Do you prefer to work alone or with a team?
8. What are your goals? Mention ways that you will continually improve including education.
9. What specific skills do you bring to our business?
10. What can you do for the company or me? Be prepared, practice what skill sets you have.
11. What motivates you?
12. What has been your biggest challenge/failure? Mention what you learned from it and how it made you better.
13. What has been your biggest accomplishment?
14. Do you have reason to believe that you would have difficulty performing any of the essential job duties?
15. Do you have reason to believe that you would have difficulty meeting the company work schedule?
16. How did your education prepare you for this position?
17. What do you know about our company? Research the company, check online, and know more than the basics.
18. What is most important to you, money or the type of job?
19. What would you like to do in your future, 5 years down the road? Always look to improve yourself.
20. Do you have plans for continued education? Be honest, continuing on in school for some programs is an expectation.
21. What made you decide to enter this field? Talk about your passion.
22. What qualities do you feel that you would need to have to be hired for this position?
23. What would your current supervisor say about you?
24. How do you like to spend your spare time? If possible, relate it to the job itself.
25. Give an example of when you multi-tasked to complete a project. Give specific examples that relate to the job you are trying to get.
26. Give an example of how well you can work under pressure or stress.
27. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me? Always have questions.
28. What was your favorite subject in school and your least favorite subject? Make sure any negative is turned into a positive.
29. Describe your dream job.



Behavior-Based Interview Questions - These types of questions are focusing on discovering how an applicant DID act in a specific situation. The logic is that your past behavior or actions will predict your future performance.

Team Work

- How do you go about building relationships based upon trust and respect? Provide an example.
- What have you done in the past to contribute toward a teamwork environment?

Time Management

- Describe your current projects and how you keep them scheduled for on-time delivery.
- Describe a time when a project under your direction was late and how you dealt with the issue.

Risk Taking/Decision Making

- Describe a time when you weighed the pros and cons of a risk and why you decided to take it.
- What factors must be present for you to make a decision?
- Describe a decision you made and came to regret, and why.

Problem Solving

- Give an example of a time when you helped solve a problem at work or school. What exactly did you do to solve the problem?
- Provide an example of your problem solving ability.

Customer Service

- Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.
- Tell me about your experience with dealing with the public.
- Tell me about steps that you have used to handle an irate customer.

Leadership

- We like to hire self-starters. Give me an example of your ability to take the lead or be a self-starter.
- What have you done to develop your leadership skills?

Supervision

- What experience have you had with supervision?
- Describe a situation that you had to resolve a grievance.



Appropriate Questions to Ask in an Interview

Try to ask questions that show you are interested in a good “fit” rather than simply getting a job.

- What would a typical day be like for me at this position?
- Who would be my supervisor and tell me about his/her job?
- What challenges does this business face today, and how are you planning to meet those challenges?
- Do you provide incentives for continual training and development?
- How will my performance be evaluated?
- Is there opportunity for growth in your company?
- Where does the company hope to be in a few years?
- What type of person is likely to be successful in this company?
- What is the industry outlook?
- What is your history with the company?
- What advice do you have for people new to the company?
- What is the next step in the interview process?

Illegal Questions

Federal and state laws prohibit prospective employers from asking certain questions that are not related to the job they are hiring for. Questions should be job-related and not used to find out personal information.

In a nutshell, employers should not be asking about your race, gender, religion, marital status, age, disabilities, medical issues, ethnic background, country of origin, sexual preferences, or age.

Your Options When Asked an Illegal Question

- Answer the question. Answer the “intent” of the question. For example, if you are asked whether you are a United State’s citizen (not legal to ask), reply that you are authorized to work in the United States.
- Try to change the topic of conversation and avoid the question.
- Refuse to answer the question. To refuse to answer might cost you the job, especially if you are very uncomfortable with the question. However, consider whether you really want to work somewhere where you are asked questions that are not appropriate.