



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

Finally an interview! All the hours you've spent preparing your resume, making contacts and checking out potential employers are about to pay off. But now you're in a room with what seems like your whole graduating class, all who seem to be qualified for the job. What's going to set you apart from the crowd? Your interview.

Not all job hunters like yourself understand how interviewing works or are lucky enough to have my personalized Tips at their disposal. Keep reading for the basics of interviewing and simple steps you should take to prepare, to ensure a successful interview and stand out in a crowded field of candidates.

The Interview Process

So how does an interview go? It's pretty simple, really, and follows just four typical steps:

Pre-contact Preparation:

The interviewer reviews your application and/or resume for background information and develops a general interview guide. At this point, you should review background material about the company and prepare yourself for the interview.

Greeting and Rapport:

The interviewer greets you with a handshake, asks you to be seated, and creates small talk to put you at ease. Shake hands and establish eye contact, take a seat and chat it up. Show that you're a friendly, sociable person.

Questions and Answers:

The interviewer begins with job-related questions about your education, work experience, skills and abilities, motivation, and attitudes. You will also be invited to ask some of your own. But wait! This is not the time to ask about personal issues of pay, advancement or vacation policies. Show your willingness to benefit the company by asking about job-related tasks.

Meeting Closure:

Once the interviewer gathers enough information and discusses the next step, he or she stands up to end the interview and escorts you out. Indicate your interest in the position, get agreement to follow up, shake hands and depart.



Interview Formats

There are different kinds of interview formats depending on who is conducting the interview.

A personnel interview is conducted by a trained interviewer evaluating your potential on your preparation, dress, how easily you answer questions and your general motivation.

Questions will be focused more on your goals rather than your technical expertise.

A line-supervisor interview is conducted by your immediate supervisor wanting to be sure you can handle the immediate job and fit in with the team. It will focus more on the nuts and bolts of the specific job.

A co-worker can also interview you to see what you're like, if they can work with you, and if you are willing to be a member of the team.

A group interview is usually a combination of all these interview formats and can include being interviewed by more than one person or one person interviewing a group of job candidates.

Making a Good Impression

Dress appropriately. What you wear during an interview is an important part of how you present yourself. Dressing conservatively is always the safest route, but also try to find out what people who do the job you want wear, and dress as they do, so you look like you fit in with the organization.

But always remember to dress for success!

Arrive on time. Better yet, be 10-15 minutes early so you don't appear or feel rushed. Drive the route a day or two in advance so you know how long it takes.

Be friendly and courteous to everyone. Don't overlook the

secretaries and receptionists, as they are often asked for their first impressions of a job seeker and you never know who has a deciding vote. SMILE—it goes a long way!

Have a firm handshake, use eye contact, and don't forget to make sure your cell phone is off!

Questions & Answers

One of the most important parts of successful interviewing is answering the questions well and effectively.

Anticipate what questions will be asked. Put yourself in the employer's position and think about what you would want to know about an applicant. If you know what the interviewer will ask, prepare and practice answers with a coach (spouse, relative, friend), but don't memorize your answers, as you will sound rehearsed and unnatural.

Some Typical Questions Interviewers Ask:

Tell me about yourself.
What did you most like about your previous job?
What did you accomplish in your last job?
Why did you leave your last employer?
What do you know about what we do here?
How long would it take you to learn our system?
Why should we hire you?
What is your greatest strength?
What are some areas in which you need to grow?
What are your goals for the next 5 years?
Do you prefer to work alone, or in a group?
Describe your ideal job.



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Give short, crisp, smooth answers. Talking 50% of the time is a good rule of thumb.

Try to modify your verbal style and actions to match those of the interviewer. This helps establish rapport and “connect” with the other person.

Get a tough question? Don’t be afraid to pause and reflect for a few moments before answering. It will show the interviewer you have the ability to think on your feet and will keep you from rambling.

And remember, have a positive attitude. Speak well of your past employers and focus on solving problems rather than complaining.

Employers want to hire people with a “can-do” attitude.

Follow Up

Effective follow-up can help you get a job offer, or keep you in the running for the next round of

interviews. It may even result in the position being tailored to fit your strengths.

Send a short thank you note or e-mail even when you are not interested or not qualified for the position. Write a more formal and creative letter when there is a good probability of receiving a job offer.

Timing is everything. The letter should be mailed 24-48 hours after the interview.

In the letter, show appreciation for the employer’s interest in you and your interest in the job. Remind them why you are the perfect person for the position, offer to supply references and justify a reason to meet again.

Write a letter to each person who interviewed you after each interview. Make sure you spell names correctly, use correct titles and don’t forget to spell and

grammar check! It’s also a good idea to have someone else review your letter and give an objective opinion.

Make a follow-up call. Wait a few days after you send the letter and call to express interest in the job, introduce a new point about why you qualify, and arrange a second meeting.

There you have it! My personalized Tips for interviewing. Be sure to keep checking out my blog (www.tonypogo.com) for more updates and useful Tips for work and interviews. Happy job hunting and good luck!



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