

Interview Skills

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Well Done, You got the Interview

You always knew you would. The first thing to do is to take a break, relax, and feel good about yourself. A great thing to do for the future is to look at the CV and cover letter that got you the interview, and use the same brilliant techniques for the future. Or if you got the interview from a friend or acquaintance, perhaps you should thank them.

Preparation

Learn about the company. Interviewers really do appreciate it when a candidate has taken the time to research the role and the aim of the organisation. Of course, there is information that you will not have access to, and employers do enjoy letting you know all the latest developments in the interview, but a basic grasp is a necessity. I cannot stress this enough; know exactly what role you're going for and what the company does. It shows willing, and is really just polite.

The dress code can vary. If it's an office job, then go with smart office attire. If it's in fashion, dress with style. If I've been offered an interview on the phone, I'll more often than not ask what the dress code is. It shows that you're not afraid to ask for assistance (employers don't want their staff struggling because they're won't ask for help), and that you're pro-active, already asking questions to be the best candidate for the role.

Never show up late. It's just about the worst first impression you can make, because you aren't even there when you make it. Know where you're going, work out a route beforehand, and if you have a chance, find the place a day or so before the interview. Be early, but not too early, as that can indicate poor time management. I usually aim for 10-15 minutes before the interview. And turn off your phone.

In The Interview

You're sitting down, waiting for the interviewer, and you're nervous. You may not be; if not, then great, you'll be perfect. However, most of us get at least slightly anxious. Interviewers expect this and allow for it, and usually do their best to help you relax into the interview.

Smile. Would you hire a miserable person? What if the company is relatively new and small? One negative person can really affect the whole working atmosphere. Perhaps you're having a bad day; forget about it. Be confident, and smile.

Be interested in the company and in the person opposite you (who may or may not be giving you a job). Ask questions; prepare a few before you go in. Ask anything about the company, where they see themselves in a few years, how the interviewer got to where they are, how you would progress through the company, or something along these lines. Don't ask about money. You may already know the wages from the job description, but if you do not, you will find out before you start working.

Don't speak too quickly. Calm down and think about what you want to say. Don't go into too much detail about personal matters. If you're explaining a gap in your CV, be clear and concise. Only divulge more if you are asked to.

Sit up straight. Keep eye contact. Shake hands if approached. These are pretty basic, but they really can make the difference. Don't be too quiet, and don't be shy. If you're shy, then you're hiding yourself away. Why did you bother going to the interview? No one here knows you, let go of your insecurities.

I've tried to avoid using a certain phrase: 'sell yourself'. I think it's horrible. On the other hand, it's pretty close to what you have to do. Think about your CV and the interview as just a big advertisement for how wonderful and capable you are.

Be positive. You will get that job. You are the best candidate for the role. In all honesty, if you don't believe this, then why should the employer?

