



# Interview Skills for Success

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The job interview is a strategic conversation with a purpose. Your goal is to persuade the employer that you have the skills, experience, and ability to do the job, and that you fit into the organization and its culture. At the same time, you can gather information about the job and organization to determine if the job and work environment are right for you.

Take stock of your strengths, skills, contributions, and personal and professional goals.

Research the employer and understand the job description and what the employer is looking for so you can connect the dots between what they are looking for and what you have to offer.

Review the job description and company profile so you can anticipate questions you may be asked.

Develop a set of "scenarios" – situations you can draw upon to provide examples when answering questions.

Exceed expectations. The emphasis should be on appropriate dress; there is no rule that fits all people, however, choosing clothing that fits the company culture or one step above is advised.

Avoid flashy colors, loud fashions, excessive jewelry, perfume/ cologne. Clothing should fit correctly and be neatly pressed.

Shoes should look new and be and polished. Socks should match pant color. Avoid plunging necklines and short skirts.

Avoid smoking before an interview or eating foods which may cause bad breath.

Some organizations have piercing and tattoo policies. You may want to cover tattoos and ask about policies.

It's ok to be a bit nervous. Be yourself.

Let your true self cover tattoos and ask about policies.

Be sure to use a firm handshake and eye contact when greeting the interviewer.

Wait until you are asked to be seated before doing so.

Pay attention to your nonverbal behavior, body language and tone of voice – all give clues about your confidence and attitude.

Face the interviewer in an open, relaxed manner. Listen carefully and nod at appropriate times. Control nervous habits.

Maintain a comfortable amount of eye contact during the interview, without staring. If you are interviewed by a panel, answer the person who asked the question directly, while still making eye contact with others.

Bring a padfolio and pen, copies of your resume, references, and job description. Use the padfolio to record names of those interviewing you and to record information you receive and questions you may have.

Speak clearly and enthusiastically about your experiences and skills. Be professional and let your personality shine through.

Listen carefully. You may be asked multi-part questions, so you will need to focus and concentrate on what is being said, both explicitly and otherwise. Your answers should be concise and to the point. Use your notebook as a tool.

Be positive. Employers do not want to hear a litany of excuses or negativity about an experience. Focus on the facts (briefly) and what you learned from the experience, what you would change next time, or how you grew.

Don't be afraid of short pauses. You may need a few seconds to formulate an answer. The interviewer may need time to formulate an appropriate question or make notes. It is not necessary to fill up every second with conversation.

Prepare questions ahead of time and during your interview so you can gather information about the job and company.

Ask about the next steps in the interview process and when you could expect some kind of a response.

DO NOT bring up salary or benefits. Wait for the interviewer to introduce the topic or until a job offer is made.

Follow up with a thank you email – this is your opportunity to express gratitude and remind the employer of your interest, what you can contribute and how you fit.

Once you have the job offer, ask questions about salary, benefits, overtime, shift differentials, bonuses and vacation.

Also, be prepared with salary ranges for the type of work and region where the job is located so you can negotiate your salary.

Don't be afraid to negotiate – the job is yours and you can turn it down if you don't reach an agreement with the employer.

