

INTERVIEWING for Success

Prepare before you go. **Polish** your presentation. **Post-interview** plans.

Be Confident

You have every reason to feel confident. The employer has already decided that you are qualified based on your résumé, application, or previous discussions.

So, why are you being interviewed?

The employer wants to learn three basic things about you:

1. Are you a good fit?
2. Are you dependable?
3. Can you provide evidence that you can do the job?

The interview is also a chance to make yourself stand out.

1 Prepare & Plan Research the Company.

Thoroughly research the company and the position. Print a copy of the job description and know it well. Most companies have a web presence, so do some research to acquaint yourself with their mission, vision, and values. Do you know someone that works there? What is the work culture like? Do they have a dress code? Has the company been in the news?

General Preparation.

Do an inventory of the strengths you bring to the position. Employers are looking for individuals that will fit in and help them reach their goals. These are sometimes referred to as transferable skills and include qualities like dependable, hardworking, flexible, and collaborative. Think of situations where you have demonstrated these traits and practice talking about them.

Transportation Arrangements.

Know the location of the interview and how to get there—make a trial run. Be aware of possible traffic delays and construction. You may be surprised about how much time it takes to arrive, park, and walk to your destination.

Paperwork.

Find out ahead of time if there will be any additional paperwork. Bring five copies of your resume printed on quality paper, a list of at least three professional references, and a notebook for note-taking. Have a few prepared questions that illustrate your research. Do not ask about salary or benefits.

2 Polish Your Presentation Appearances Count.

Dress as if you are ready to begin working that day. Dress one step above what you would wear on the job. Cater your appearance to the position and industry in which you are seeking employment. Finishing touches include polished shoes, neat hair, nails, make-up and jewelry, knee-length or longer skirt, and ironed pants.

Initial Greeting.

Your initial greeting says a lot. Exhibit good posture, smile, introduce yourself and do not hesitate to be the first to extend a handshake—no limp or vice grips here! Small talk is fitting, and probably desirable before getting right to it. Statistics reveal that we have about 3-5 seconds to provide an initial impression.

Body Language.

Body language makes up 95% of what we communicate. Maintaining appropriate eye contact, good posture, and leaning slightly forward indicates interest in the interviewer and the topic. Be aware of nervous habits such as pen clicking, hair twisting, toe-tapping, and so on. Relax and try to avoid these mannerisms.

Once you've arrived, treat all you meet as if they are the interviewer—they may be!



10 Commonly Asked Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why do you want to work here?
3. How do you handle stress?
4. What are your salary requirements?
5. What are your future career goals?
6. How would your past/current supervisor describe you?
7. What are your greatest strengths?
8. What is your primary weakness?
9. What did you like and dislike about your past position?
10. Do you have any questions?



Answering Questions.

1. Use examples whenever possible. Avoid short "yes" or "no" replies, instead, talk about skills and insights learned based on experience.
2. Be positive, even when asked to discuss your weaknesses or difficult situations with past employers. Emphasize what you learned from them or how your "weakness" has become an area of strength.

Asking Questions.

Be prepared to ask questions. This is your chance to reinforce that you are an interested and qualified candidate.

Consider the following:

1. What can I do to get a head start on this job?
2. What are the future goals for this position or company?
3. What strengths would the ideal candidate possess?
4. Do you have any literature I could take?
5. How many co-workers and supervisors would I have?
6. When are you planning to make a final hiring decision?

Express interest in the position.
If you decide that you want the job, say so.

3 Post-Interview Plans

Continue your favorable impression with the following:

Mail a Thank You Note.

Within 24–48 hours, thank every person who interviewed you. Email is acceptable and timely, but be sure to follow protocols for formal business correspondence. Use the thank you note to reiterate your interest and emphasize your specific qualifications. Thank you notes can be typed or neatly handwritten.

Call Back.

If you arranged a time to call back the interviewer, make sure you do. If you did not, you might wish to. Calling back reinforces that you are interested in the job.

Continue Your Relationship.

If you did not get the job, do not stop your contact here! Make arrangements to keep your application up-to-date for future job openings. You may do this by asking, "Would it be OK if I contact you to inquire about future openings?" Every new employee usually goes through a probationary period, and the first candidate selected may not always be the one who maintains the position. Continuing regular contact keeps you in mind.

Sample Thank You Note

Your address
 Date

Ms. or Mr. Interviewer
 ABC Company
 123 Street
 Anytown, WI 55555

Dear Ms. or Mr. Interviewer:

Thank you for your time and consideration during our meeting yesterday. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about ABC's marketing needs.

Also, I was especially impressed with the new digital approach to ABC's mass marketing endeavors. My experience with this particular software package will be a great benefit to the position.

I am very interested in working with ABC Company as a Marketing Assistant. If accepted for this position, I would be available to start within two weeks. You may reach me at 608-555-5555 should you have any additional questions. A reply from you would be most appreciated.

Sincerely,

Your Name

westernntc.edu/careerservices

18-CS-0274

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 Career Services
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 La Crosse, WI 54601
 608.785.9440

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