

Job Interview Success Checklist

Succeeding at job interviews and getting the job you want depends, in large part, on your having the right approach. You need a well-thought-out, coherent strategy that will guide your behavior at interviews, no matter what type of interview you are facing.

One of the keys to acing job interviews is to adopt the attitude that you are an equal participant in the process. The interviewers are judging you and your accomplishments, but you are judging them and the organization as well. You must ensure that there is a reasonable balance of power between you and the interviewers during and after an interview.

Here is a list of ten things you should do to significantly enhance your chances of success in getting the job you want.

#1. Ensure that you conduct good pre-interview research on the company or organization you are targeting. Ideally, this should be done before you ever establish any contact with the company -- after all, you want to be sure that you only target those organizations that have some kind of fit between your career goals and what they can offer.

#2. Your mindset is critically important in interviews and in life. You must develop an attitude of self-trust and confidence to succeed at any endeavor. As stated above, be aware of the power you have in an interview situation and exercise some of that power to steer the outcome of the meeting.

#3. Make a written list of your accomplishments. Elaborate on them. Make lists of your biggest strengths and write down experiences from the workplace (or other experiences, if appropriate) that brought out each of the strengths. Basically, you want to be able to demonstrate to the interviewers, using concrete examples, that you have the track record it takes to do well at the job you are targeting.

#4. If there are negatives in your background (and most people have at least some negatives), be honest about them, but put a positive spin on them. You may need to think this through carefully and take the help of friends and trusted colleagues to do this.

#5. Dress appropriately for the job interview. What is appropriate depends on the kind of job you are applying for and the company's practices. Your pre-interview research should give you clues to this.

#6. If there are gaps in your communication abilities -- written or oral -- get whatever help you need to address it. There are classes that help you develop fluency, for example. There are people who can train you in using language properly.

#7. Get your act together. Make sure you are well-organized and punctual in everything you do. If you have been asked to fax transcripts, for example, do so promptly.

#8. Energy and enthusiasm are highly contagious. Project liberal doses of both during your meetings with prospective employers.

#9. Listen carefully to what the interviewers are saying. Pay attention not only to what they say, but to their body language as well. This will allow you to answer questions and in general, project yourself in the best possible manner during job interviews. There is nothing worse than enthusiastically answering a question -- and then discovering that the interviewer had asked something quite different!

#10. After the interview is over, follow up persistently but politely. Don't just passively wait to hear from them.