



Interview advice: How to prepare for and ace your interview

You've applied to job openings, fine-tuned your résumé, and now you've landed an interview with your ideal company. What is the best way to prepare so you can make the best impression on the hiring manager? Succeeding at job interviews and getting the job you want depend mostly on having the right approach both before and during the interview. Below are six job interview tips that will significantly increase your chances of success.

No. 1: Research ahead of time

Make sure you conduct extensive research on the company you're interviewing with as well as the hiring managers you will be meeting. LinkedIn is a great tool for researching individuals, and Google Alerts is a great way to keep up with company news. Be prepared to ask specific questions about the company's products or services, target markets or recent news. Hiring managers will be looking to see if you've done your research, and many times this will be criteria they'll use to screen out candidates who are not prepared.

No. 2: Make a list of your accomplishments

As you prepare for your interview, write out your accomplishments. For each position, list your major accomplishments and then describe how you did it. This also includes the strategies and processes you used to identify what needed to be done and then how you implemented the changes. The trick here is to handwrite all of this out. By handwriting your notes, you move the information from long-term memory to short-term memory, making it much easier to access. I recommend to candidates they perform this exercise a few days before their interview and then review it the day of the interview.

No. 3: Focus on the intangibles

In a recent blog, The Wall Street Journal stated communication skills, organizational skills and punctuality are some of the most common skills or attributes that will lead to hiring. Some other traits hiring managers frequently rate at the top of their lists are having a strong drive or work ethic, the ability to build trust and listening skills. These aren't skills that are easy to show on a résumé, so it's very important

you highlight them and give examples of how you've used them during the interview.

No. 4: Your mindset

Your mindset is so important when you interview. You want to convey confidence and self-assurance; tell them why you're the right person for the job, and be sure to "ask for the job." Remember energy and enthusiasm are highly contagious; be sure to show your enthusiasm. This will draw the hiring manager in and lead to you making a better connection with him or her.

No. 5: Listen

Listen carefully during your interview. I can't stress this enough. Pay attention not just to what is said but also to the interviewer's body language. Not only will good proactive listening skills allow you to engage more effectively with the hiring manager, but they will also display one of the key intangibles hiring managers look for: effective listening skills. There's an old saying that is a great reminder: "You have two ears and one mouth. Remember to listen twice as much as you speak." When you sit back,

listen and engage, often the hiring manager will tell you just what he or she is looking for.

No. 6: Final question

In his article in Forbes, "12 Surprising Job Interview Tips," Jon Youshaei shared a great tip. Before your interview ends, ask the hiring manager, "Have I said anything in this interview or given you any other reason to doubt that I am a good fit for this role?" Not only does this show your confidence, but it allows the hiring manager to share any concerns he or she has and allows you to respond. I can think of several instances when doing this has made the difference between the candidate being offered the job or not. In one case, the confidence the candidate showed raised him from being a second-choice candidate to the No. 1 choice.

One final note: Be sure to thank the hiring manager for his or her time. Handwritten "thank you" notes are a very nice touch. This will keep you top-of-mind as well as show your gratitude.

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