

Doing well at a job interview is important to getting the job. Let's talk about what you can do to improve your chances of being selected.

### When You Arrive at the Interview

Here are some things you need to remember when heading to and arriving at the interview:

- **Be on time and prepared.** The interview is one of the most important meetings to be on time for. DO NOT BE LATE for your interview. On the day of your interview, make sure you bring a copy of your application, your resume or a list of past employment and references, as well as a pen and note pad.
- **Be courteous and professional.** You can have great qualifications and hit it off with your interviewer, but if you're unpleasant or inappropriate to the employees, it could cost you the job.
- **Be confident and alert.** While in the waiting room, think of your body language. Sit up straight and try to look confident and relaxed.

### In the Interview

So, you're on time, prepared, courteous and professional, and as confident as you can be. Now what? Let's look at how to conduct yourself when you are meeting with the interviewer:

- **Manners.** Manners are how you behave, the polite things you do, such as saying please and thank you, greeting someone, being respectful, and not interrupting. For an interview, this includes things like acting in a professional way, shaking hands, using good eye contact, and more. Remember, first impressions matter, so be polite and use non-verbal communication that conveys confidence when meeting your interviewer—even if you're nervous.
- **Don't be overly familiar.** Try to be personable during the interview, but not overly familiar. It's okay to acknowledge things you have in common with your interviewer if they come up, but don't spend a great deal of time on them. Take your lead from the interviewer and don't overstep their level of familiarity.
- **Keep good eye contact.** Your interviewer will likely start off by discussing the company and sharing a lot of important information about the job. It's important to listen carefully and keep good eye contact. Try not to get distracted when you're nervous.
- **Take notes and ask for clarification.** It's okay to take notes, ask questions if you need a point or two clarified, and to convey your understanding of what they're saying. But be careful not to interrupt.

### Tips on Answering Questions

Answering questions is the part where you sell yourself. You want to fully answer questions with confidence.

- **Don't brag or act overly confident.** Being arrogant is just as bad as being under-confident. Arrogance is when you brag about yourself like you're superior to everyone. Remember, you'll need to fit in with others, and arrogance isn't a good quality.
- **Don't lie.** If asked about something negative in your past, don't lie about it. Turn it into a positive by sharing what you learned from the negative experience.
- **Do showcase your skills.** When asked about your skills, showcase them with brief stories, if you have them, from past jobs. These stories highlight your abilities.
- **Do be concise.** Remember to fully answer the questions but with as few words as possible. That's being concise. It's easy to ramble on when you're nervous.

## Your Questions

A job needs to be beneficial to both you and your employer. Asking questions will help you decide if this job is good for you. It's a good idea to come prepared with a few questions, in case you can't think of them on the spot. Here are a few to consider:

- **Ask any clarifying questions** about things discussed in the interview.
- **Ask what the work environment is like.** You may want to know if it is highly competitive, respectful, calm or fast-paced, a team environment, welcoming, etc.
- **Ask what the culture of the business is like.** Is it a place where suggestions are appreciated, hard work is rewarded, time off is respected, family is valued, etc.
- **Ask about any training.** You might want to know if there is someone who will specifically help you get adjusted or who will show you the ropes or train you to specific job duties.
- **What are the next steps to this process?** You can ask if there will be another interview, or how long they think it will take them to make their decision.
- **Ask for a business card or contact information.** Ask if it's okay to follow up in a week or so to see where you stand or if a decision has been made.

Once the interview is over, make sure you give the interviewer a firm handshake, if you can, and thank them for taking the time to meet with you.

## After the Interview

A lot of work went into the interview, so now what? Do you just sit and wait? Well...yes, but there two more steps that are often overlooked by many applicants. These are steps that make you stand out above all others.

**The first step** is to follow up with a thank you note to your interviewer either by dropping it off or mailing it to the company's address.

**The second step** after the interview is to follow up. If they didn't give you a timeframe, then follow-up in a week. If they tell you that they still haven't made any decisions yet, then ask them if there is anything more you can provide them to help them make their choice – more references or would they like to talk with you again. You want to appear eager but don't overdo it. In other words, don't call every day, but once a week should be fine.

**The final step** is to get the position! But if you don't, that is OK, because you just got some of the best practice you could ever get at interviewing – by going to an ACTUAL interview.

**Do these things, and you will stand out as a strong candidate to your future employer.**

### Sources:

1. [https://gallery.mailchimp.com/893163b900efdc50e4a7f0c5/files/Job\\_Interview\\_Anxiety\\_Survey\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/893163b900efdc50e4a7f0c5/files/Job_Interview_Anxiety_Survey_Report_FINAL.pdf). The telephone survey found that 92% of Americans are stressed by at least one thing about the job interview process. Out of the more than 1,000 U.S. adult workers surveyed, 17% said that being too nervous caused the most job interview anxiety.
2. Martin, Carole. "Interview Tips: 10 Ways to Improve Interview Performance." Monster Career Advice, Monster Worldwide, 2019, [www.monster.com/career-advice/article/boost-your-interview-iq](http://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/boost-your-interview-iq).