

Great Interviewing Tips

Things you NEED to know to interview successfully:

- Your skills
- Your accomplishments
- Your strengths & weaknesses
- Why you want this position
- Why you want to work for that company
- What you do best
- What value can you add to my enterprise as an employee?

The Dos and Don'ts of Successful Interviewing

How to get an Offer ~ THE DOS:

- Dress professionally
- Know yourself, your strengths and what you can do for the employer
- Give work related examples of your skills/strengths
- Treat interviewer like a human being; be professional but be yourself
- Use manners
- Arrive early
- Ask questions about the position/company
- Practice, Practice, Practice!

How to Blow an Interview ~ THE DON'TS:

- Be too casual (in dress, language or attitude)
- Talk negatively about people, employers, the competition or situations
- Bring friends/family with you to pick up applications or to an interview
- Use slang
- Chew Gum
- Talk too much/too little
- Act disinterested
- Take credit for things you didn't do

Sample Interview Questions:

Tell me about yourself?

Why are you interested in this position?

Why should I hire you?

What are your strengths/weaknesses ?

Tell me about a time you had to handle a difficult situation/customer/problem.

Tips on Answering Questions in an Interview

The following is a list of some typical questions with suggestions for responding in a positive manner. It is suggested that you cite specific examples from past work experience when you answer questions to provide the employer with a very real idea of your capabilities. These suggestions are meant to be general guidelines. In fact, you should allow your own personality to show – your smile and your unique qualities will be the most effective selling tools.

Q. Tell me about yourself.

A. Tell the employer about your skills and interests – especially ones relating to the position for which you are applying. Indicate positive personality characteristics such as being dependable, honest, and able to get along well with others. Cite some examples from the past to back up what you say.

Q. Why do you want to work here?

A. Mention positive things you might have learned about the company, its products or services, and its personnel. This is an excellent time to show the interviewer that you have done your homework about the company and the job, and that you are highly enthusiastic about working there. Be certain to let the interviewer know you can do the job and that you would fit in well.

Q. Why do you think I should hire you?

A. Clearly and specifically point out your related skills and experiences. Tell the employer about successes in past jobs and describe yourself as hardworking and dependable. Show your interest in working for that employer and let the interviewer know that you are informed about the company and the position. Also mention education, training, and any hobbies or community activities that would be in any way related to the position and the skills necessary to do the work.

Q. Why did you leave your last job?

A. It is best to be truthful in most cases. Keep your answer BRIEF and positive. If you had problems with coworkers, be certain not to blame others. Take responsibility for your part in the problem, state what you learned and why it would be different today. Remember, the interviewer is likely to identify more with your former employer than you during the interview so watch what you say about past employers, supervisors and company policies.

Q. Frequent lifting of 35 pounds is an essential function of this position. Can you physically handle this portion of the job?

A. If you can physically perform the duties associated with the position, with or without reasonable accommodation, be prepared to discuss your abilities in a positive manner. Also, remember that it is your responsibility to help in identifying what reasonable accommodations might be required. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the interviewer.

Q. How would your past supervisor describe you?

A. If it is true, talk about yourself as your best friend would. The interview is no time for modesty. State positive traits and give specific examples to back up what you say. For example, you could say, “I was very dependable. In my last job, I missed only two days of work in three years. I was never late and was always willing to work some overtime.”

Q. What is your greatest strength?

A. Be prepared to answer this one – it is a favorite! Don’t be afraid to say good things about yourself; if you do not, no one else will. Describe positive past experiences as examples of being dependable, honest, hardworking, creative, or whatever else you claim. These examples will stand out in the interviewers mind more than the general responses that most interviewees give. For example, you might state, “I am very quick to learn new things. In my last job, my supervisor had me learn all the tasks in our department and had me train new staff as well.”

Q. What is your greatest weakness?

A. This one can be difficult. Employers do not really expect you to confess your true weaknesses, though they will never stop you from doing so. The trick to this response is that you should state something that would actually be perceived by the employer as a strength. For example, “My weakness is probably that I am somewhat of a perfectionist in my work. I find that it is hard for me to stop working on a project until it is nearly perfect. However, I have learned that I cannot let perfection get in the way of getting the job done on schedule.”

Q. What would you like to be doing in five years?

A. The employer wants to know if you plan to stay with the company. The interviewer is also checking out your maturity and whether or not you are a person who likes to continue to grow and learn. Avoid mentioning that you would like to be the manager or supervisor unless you are positive that would be the career path the company would have you follow. Remember too, you are probably being interviewed by that supervisor and s/he may see you as a possible threat to his own job security. Be a bit more general in your approach assuring the interviewer that you would like to be with that company in five years, growing professionally and contributing to the organization.

Q. Have you ever been fired or asked to leave a job?

A. If you have been fired or asked to leave a job and this information is likely to be uncovered during reference checks with former employers, be sure that it is you who tells the interviewer. Be as positive as possible and do not blame the former employer. You could say something like, “Unfortunately, I did have a problem with my last supervisor. It did result in my leaving the job. However, I learned a lot from that experience about the importance of communication and I don’t believe it would happen again.” Employers appreciate honesty and a positive attitude. Do tell the truth, but do not dig back into significant and negative things from your past to confess all.”

Q. When would you be willing to start work?

A. In most cases, the sooner you can start, the better for the employer. If you are presently working and need to give a fair notice of termination to your current employer, most employers will arrange to give you that time. However, if you are unemployed, it could give a negative impression to ask for two weeks to get ready or make child care arrangements before you start work. Remember, you want to make a good impression as someone who is hardworking, motivated and cooperative.

Q. Do you have any questions you would like to ask?

A. It is usually a good idea to ask one or two relevant questions of the interviewer. Asking, “What do you consider to be the most important aspect of this position?” or “Would I be working closely with other staff?” shows a real interest in the position. Never put the interviewer on the spot by saying “When do I start?” Most interviewers say they prefer an applicant who asks five or six questions during the interview as a natural course of the conversation. An interview should be a dialogue, two people sharing thoughts and ideas, rather than an interrogation. The interviewer will want to hire someone with whom he feels comfortable and who will fit in with the staff.