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Interview Success Secrets

You attend college with the hopes and dreams that you will get a job upon graduation. Thousands of others are doing the same thing, which can make applying for jobs tough. If you turn in an application, it is possible that 20 to 30 others have as well. The worst part is most of them will have the same experience and qualifications that you have. So, how can you become the standout candidate if everyone has reviewed the same material and prepared? Is it possible to ensure that you are memorable?

The answer is yes, it is possible. This eBook is directed to those who are applying for jobs and want an edge in the interview stage. When you know the tips and tricks to use during an interview, you can walk in there more confident. Confidence leads to immediately standing out and having the ability to answer all types of questions.

It is common for candidates to have questions asked that they are not comfortable answering. The questions may not always have an easy answer, and you need to think carefully prior to answering them. These are the times when it is good to know how to deal with the situation, what to say, and how to remain composed. The tactics you will learn in this book will help you face all sorts of situations you may face in an interview.

A few things to keep in mind during an interview include:

- What to wear and how to know
- Proper preparation for the interview
- How to handle the tricky questions
- Drafting the perfect resume
- What NOT to say during an interview
- How to read the interviewer

All of these points mentioned are vital in assisting a candidate to face everything that may come up during an interview. You can find answers online, but the answers may not be reliable to better your chances.



Different Types of Interviews

There are five basic types of interviews, but they all require an interviewer and the interviewee (you). The questions and interview setup will vary between the different types.

The interview styles include:

- ***Phone Interview***
- ***Video Interview***
- ***Panel Interview***
- ***Exit Interview***
- ***Lunch Interview***

Phone Interview

Many view phone interviews as informal, but they make just an impact on the job process. In fact, interviewees make some of the most critical mistakes during a phone interview. Phone interviews are growing in popularity, so it is important to know how to handle them.

- Phone interviews save time for both parties, which make them ideal for career fairs.
- Companies like to call potential employees prior to having a physical interview.
- Interviewers can cover any questions from the application prior to the formal interview.
- Interviewees can discuss the position and have any questions answered.

There are drawbacks to phone interviews, with the primary concern being that it only caters to the needs of the employers. Candidates can be caught off guard and it may come when conditions are not favorable. Phone interviews are best when they are scheduled, so the candidate can be prepared.

Video Interview

Thanks to new technology, video interviews are becoming more popular. They are mainly used in the first interview stage, to help the interviewer narrow the candidates. They are also common in positions that are virtual, where calling someone into the office is not possible. Some of the things to keep in mind with a video interview include taking them as seriously as an in-person interview.

- Be in a location where you can be professional.
- Make sure you have everything set up early enough to be situated for the interview.
- Dress professionally, from head to toe.
- Always keep eye contact with the camera so you are talking to the interviewer.

Video interviews require a lot more planning than a phone interview, and they can be difficult to ensure proper set up. You can secure a successful interview by treating it like an in-person interview and checking the interview equipment a day before the actual interview.



Panel Interview

Panel interviews are held as a primary selection process. A candidate is brought in front of a group of interviewers. They will be taking notes and chatting throughout the interview. This interview is extremely stressful and it can be nearly impossible to get a good read on the interviewers. There are a few things that can be done to prepare for a panel interview.

- Bring a cheat sheet that contains the highlights of what you wish to mention during the interview. Focus only on the key assets; do not write an essay. Create an outline on what you want mentioned and keep it brief.
- Prepare by knowing the interviewers or bringing paper to take note of names. When you refer to the interviewer by the name they prefer, it is more likely they will remember you. It also lets them know that you are paying attention and directing a reply.
- A beneficial tip is using the last question you were asked as a cross reference with other questions you have been asked before. This keeps you in tune with where the interview is going and will help you remain calm. It will also allow you to talk to more than one interviewer at once.
- Always have a notepad with you during a panel interview. It is likely that you will be given tidbits of information that will be worth remembering. It also shows the interviewers that you are paying attention and care about the job. You can use the notes you take as a way to remember information that may be brought up later.
- It is vital that you make eye contact during a panel interview. It can be difficult to figure out whom to look at, so the best tactic is to start with the person who asked the question, and then span the panel.

The hardest part of a panel interview is feeling outnumbered. You need to focus on the questions when your mind is trying to impress multiple people. The best way to remain calm during the interview is to realize that panel interviews are often done with candidates they view as strong possibilities. They take a great deal of time to consider the candidates and you simply need to show why you are the most qualified. By staying calm and considering the questions before answering, you can successfully complete the interview.

Lunch Interview

Lunch interviews are very laid back, but should still be taken seriously. They are usually used as a final talk prior to the hiring process. It is very common for interviewers to be very frank with the candidate. In response, the candidate is expected to be relaxed and answer the questions as if they would if they were talking to a friend. However, lunch interviews are not easy because it is hard to be confident when someone is watching you eat. In addition to contemplating your answers, you must also make sure you are thinking about eating politely.

- Order something simple to eat that you can break down and take small bites. Bread is always a safe choice.
- Stick with water because it does not stain. It is never a good idea to order alcohol, even if the interviewer does.
- Order something in close comparison to the interviewer (including in price).
- Always wipe your mouth with a napkin and never order food that will likely be stuck in your teeth.
- Try to order food that can be eaten with a fork, unless it is a small sandwich. Most companies pay for the lunch meal, but always be prepared to pay your own way. It is also a good idea to bring enough money to cover the interviewer's meal and the tip.



After the interview, make sure you thank the interviewer and offer a firm handshake. Finally, follow-up with a thank you letter that will give the interviewer another reminder of who you are.

Exit Interview

Exit interviews are usually held when a person is leaving a company. Some companies do not use exit interviews, but those who do are looking to build relationships with former employees. It is important to remember that the interviews can be used for possible restructuring of the policies and procedures. Exit interviews can happen any time between the last final days of employment up to two or three months after the final date of employment.

Advantages to Exit Interviews

- Helps focus on policies and procedures that may have become outdated
- Help determine the employees state of mind in quitting
- Gives a safe place for future re-employment or discuss difficulties
- Can identify possible departmental competencies
- Identifies conflicts and complications that can be harmful for other employees or management

Disadvantages to Exit Interviews

- Personal conflicts and gossip can cloud discussions
- Tough to maintain a positive environment, especially if the employee was fired
- Provides a time for disgruntled employees to voice their anger, which can be disruptive to the workplace



Skill Building

Skill building is an important part of being successful in an interview. It is not something that can be taught in a college class. You can only be successful with skill building by using knowledge that you have obtained over many years. It does not require a person to be super smart or high caliber. You simply need practice and patience to allow your skills to build. Some important aspects to consider include building your writing skills.

Writing skills are the only way to succeed in today's job force because the Internet is crucial to all companies. You will want to show that you know how to type and how to communicate. This can be done through crafting resumes, cover letters, thank you letters, and blogs. Make sure you remain up to date on newsworthy topics by reading magazines, news sites, or news blogs. There are several RSS feeds that you can subscribe to that will keep you updated.

In addition to writing blogs, you can be noticed by your participation on social networks. You want to use the networks to see how others succeed or trip up. Interact with people, build networks, and take the time to build your skills.

Tools and Miscellaneous Things to Have

When you are preparing to job hunt, you will want to have some tools that will help you prepare. Some items can be pricey, but they will pay for themselves when you get a job. The biggest thing the tools do is by making you look more professional.

Must Haves:

1. *Laptop/Computer* – You could borrow one to get your work done, but buying is a better option. You will need a computer or laptop to create your resume, cover letters, reference pages, and any samples if necessary.
2. *Internet Access* – Most companies post their job openings online. You will want to make sure you have an updated copy of your resume on any job hunting sites that you can think of. Make sure you check the resume regularly to ensure the information is ready if a job opens.
3. *Briefcase or Portfolio* – You will need a way to transport your paperwork to and from job fairs and interviews. Briefcases and/or portfolios will allow you to look professional while keeping everything protected.
4. *Mobile Phone* - Mobile phones allow you to be accessible at all times. If you post your jobs in several places, then you will want to make sure that the potential employers can reach you. Smartphones will also offer you the ability to check on jobs on the go.



Significance and Importance of the Right Resume

In order to start on the right foot with an employer and secure an interview is with a good resume. Most companies will use the resume as a way to get a good feel on a candidate. You want to make sure your resume is effective, concise, and leaves a positive impression with the employer. You do not want a prebuilt resume that took you only a couple minutes to create because the employer can see right through it. Several things MUST be kept in mind while writing your resume.

- Never, ever lie on the resume
- Mention all skills, qualifications, experiences, and awards carefully
- Make your resume relevant to the job you are applying to
- Keep a resume simple and look at creating a few customized resumes for different industry types you are applying for

There are various formats available for resumes, including ones for fresh graduates to list their degrees and awards. Candidates that have been employed in other jobs will want to focus on their previous work experience. With all types of resumes, you want to make sure it is very easy to read. Most employers are skimming over resumes so you want short sentences and bullet points. Use tables and correct terminology whenever you can.

You want the resume to promote yourself without sounding as if you are boastful. Work on emphasizing your skills and experience. In addition to promoting yourself, select references that can be reached and are willing verify your information. Make sure your references know that they may be contacted so the employer does not catch them off guard. Remember that the possible employer is looking at your resume for character and personality purposes, but they will also look at your grammar and spelling to see how well you can write and communicate.



Preparing for an Interview

Proper preparation for the interview is vital when it comes to applying for a job and attending an interview. In addition to knowing what to say, you will gain confidence when you practice. You will be calm during the interview and be prepared for bizarre questions. There are multiple ways to prepare for an interview, but a few will give you the best chance of success.

- Talk to family and friends – The best way to prepare for an interview is talk to a person who has been through the interview process. Find out what advice or tips they have to offer, and see if you can find out what mistakes they experienced. Using their mistakes as a way to learn how to perfect your interview techniques will give you a better chance of preventing errors.
- Go social – Talk to people in your community or on a forum that would be willing to give you tips on preparing for an interview. Some great people to talk to include guidance counselors, professors, former classmates, and people who may be working for the company you are interested in. Many companies will reward employees for referrals, so make sure you note that on your resume, cover letter, or in the interview.
- Use career sites – Websites such as LinkedIn or Employment Solutions Network are great resources for interview prepping. Job fairs are another way to meet companies and have impromptu interviews. Always carry your resume and cover letters on you when you attend a job fair so you can hand the paperwork to the employer when asked.

How Does Appearance Aid?

Appearance plays a huge part in helping secure a job. Candidates want to look their best when talking to a potential client. This can include dressing nice, but it may also include shaving and removing of any piercings.

Remember that first impressions are lasting and you want them to look at your resume at least. You want to create a lasting impact with your appearance and walk when approaching a company representative.

- Practice your walk and handshake the night before your interview, preferably in front of a mirror.
- Answer questions in front of a mirror so you can monitor your facial expressions. You do not want to be over dramatic, but you want your face to add to the answer.
- Keep your business clothes prepped and ready every day.
- Do not buy a new outfit the day before an interview because it might be uncomfortable. Practice in your interview outfit so you are comfortable. Ties are a very nice touch, as are buffed shoes.
- Females should avoid wearing multiple jewelry pieces. You want to present yourself to the interviewer, but you want to make sure it is not over the top and scares them off.
- Do not have a complete makeover prior to the interview. You want to be comfortable with your looks so you appear relaxed while answering questions.
- Make sure you sleep well the night before and practice good hygiene the morning of the interview.



Tips to Prepare – Pre-Interview

The pre-interview is the period right before the interview and when most people get a sour stomach. Feeling stressed and tense is very common, and it makes sense as to why. However, some things can be done to help prepare for the interview day.

- Know the location of the interview and practice getting there during different traffic types. Make sure you are aware of where there is parking so you can get to your interview on time.
- Know the answers to common questions and make sure you have done your research on the company. You want to show that you care about the company.
- Have planned answers for uncommon questions such as favorite color or animal. Companies use these questions to see you think on your feet and handle unusual situations.
- Attempt to arrive about ten minutes before your interview and always greet the receptionist.
- Do not smoke before or during an interview.
- Make sure you have gone through the bathroom and all of your electronics are put on mute so you can give the company your undivided attention.

Things to Remember for the Interview

Before walking into the interview room, take a deep breath and remember that your first impression is based on your appearance and behavior. Your qualifications and experience are already on the resume, so you want to exhibit your personality during the interview.

- Always knock before you enter the room
- Wait for the interviewer to reach out for a handshake. You want your handshake to be firm with a solid grip.
- Do not sit until the interviewer sits.
- Always be polite and smile during the interview process.
- Create a good impression and smile
- Make sure you maintain your appearance following to the game.



Do's and Don'ts of Interviewing

The most important part of interviewing is knowing what you should and should not do. Here are some main points to keep in mind.

Do's:

- Always maintain eye contact with the interviewers
- Keep your answers clear and to the point
- Nod when you understand what they are saying
- Ask for clarification on questions you do not understand
- If you get to ask questions, ask about things that the interviewer has not mentioned (go prepared)
- Be flexible with your skills
- Ask about the role you will play and the team you will be working with
- Ask about opportunities to grow in the company

Don'ts:

- Don't ask about salary and benefits first
- Try not to fiddle (keep change and keys out of your pocket)
- Do not mumble
- Try to not appear nervous or scared
- Do not go in looking arrogant
- Do not lie, EVER
- Try not to overreact on anything said or asked
- Do not flirt
- Do not complain about previous employment (simply say it was personal differences)
- Do not seem needy

Tips from the Experts

One of the best ways to have a successful interview is to take tips and advice from interview experts. Here are a few that have been known to help secure success.

- Keep your personal information safe by not giving up too much to employees of the company you are applying for
- Focus on yourself and shy away from bad habits (such as tapping, biting nails, etc.)
- Find out the interviewer's name and use it during the interview
- Keep good posture. Body language is something all interviewers read.
- Stay relaxed and do not appear "fake." The interviewer wants to get to know you.



How to Close an Interview

How you close the interview will make a huge impact with the interviewer, as it is the final impression you leave. Make sure you mention any vacations you already have scheduled, salary issues if there are any, and get questions answered. Thank the interviewer and give a solid handshake. Smile and gracefully leave the room, and make sure you thank the receptionist on the way out. Finally, always follow up with a thank you letter.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the job market is extremely tough but not impossible.

The companies are all looking for the right candidate and you need to make sure you have the edge to show you are that person. With a great resume and effective interview, you will be able to sell yourself. You will be able to stand out without looking overconfident.

I hope that this eBook has given you some clear instructions on how to face all types of interviews with ease and professionalism. **Once you master the interview, you can achieve confidence and success in the job field.**

