

INTERVIEW

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR FIRST FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW

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How to handle your first face to face interview with the new potential employer

You have won the prize-a "face to face interview with the employer." Now it is up to you, if you want the job you must go for it.

Study the following suggestions and ideas, some of these may help you.

PREPARATION

Do research on the company: go to the library and read the annual reports, study magazine and newspaper articles, get informed.

The impression you make will be a lasting one. It is vital to look your best. Dress conservatively and in good taste. You have one shot, make it the best you can.

Most companies require applications to be filled out, so make sure you are completely prepared: gather addresses and phone numbers of all references and review all pertinent information, including your resume. Remember, when completing the application form, answer all the questions. Do not leave any blanks, if the question does not apply put a line through it or say "does not apply." This way they will know you read the question and answered it.

Be early for the interview, allowing plenty of time for the unexpected. It is always better to wait for the interviewer. While you are waiting, mentally prepare to sell yourself.

Introduce yourself to the Receptionist and let her know who you are there to see. The Receptionist may put in a positive comment about you.

If you are delayed for any reason, notify the interviewer immediately. This is very important and will help you with you current appointment and/or help to schedule a new one.

THE INTERVIEW

Project a positive image and attitude. When you meet the interviewer, smile and offer a firm handshake. Speak clearly, politely and be direct. Make eye contact and be pleasant. Never tell jokes, use swear words, or make negative comments of any kind. Do not be judgmental, criticize or complain about anything. Stay away from

politics, religion and personal relationships, since comments and discussions about these can only lead to difficulty for you, watch out!

Give brief but complete answers. Always speak highly of past employers, supervisors and yourself. Remember to stress the many things you have to offer the company.

Always mention throughout the interview your desire to work for this company (at least 3 different times). And the fact that you can and want to make a contribution to their success.

Detailed below is a list of possible questions. Your study of these and the development of correct answers may win the job offer. Is it worth your time? You bet it is!

Why are you interested in this particular position?

Why would you like to work for our company?

What are your short and long term goals?

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

What do you know about our company?

What can you do for our company?

What contributions have you made in your present position? In your previous position?

What are your major weaknesses? Strengths?

What are your personal interests or hobbies?

How has your education and training prepared you for this job?

Do you prefer working as a member of a team or would you rather work alone?

What career or business would you consider if you were starting over?

How do you react to criticism by supervisors? If you believe it is unwarranted?

What is your idea of success?

What types of people try your patience?

How have you benefited from your disappointments and/or mistakes?

Tell me about yourself.

How do you cope with pressure?

What do you do when you have trouble solving a problem?

What do others think are your strengths?

What do others think are your weaknesses?

What are some of the things your (current/previous) employer might have done to be more successful?

What steps would you take to terminate an employee who is not performing adequately?

How long will you stay with this company?

What do you believe are your special qualifications for this job?

Is there one particular trait or skill you possess that should lead us to consider you above other candidates?

In five minutes or less, tell me why this company should hire you?
What salary are you worth?
Do you expect to be rewarded for work you consider to be well done?
What risks did you take in your last job and what was the outcome?
Why are you leaving your present position?
What factors contribute the most to your success in your present job?
Do ask questions about the duties and responsibilities of the position.

Do not ask questions about salary, vacations, holidays or benefits until the position is offered. You don't want to make it seem that you are more interested in time off than in your opportunity to contribute to the company's success.

Do not let these negative factors cost you the job:

1. Late for the interview without calling
2. Failure to fill out the application properly
3. Poor personal appearance
4. Being overly aggressive and overbearing
5. Inability to express thoughts clearly poor diction or grammar
6. Lack of interest and enthusiasm
7. Lack of confidence, poise and maturity
8. Over emphasis on money and benefits
9. Criticism of past employers, associates, etc.
10. Failure to ask questions about the position and the company
11. Persistent attitude of "What can you do for Me?"
12. Failure to ask for the job

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

As the interview closes, summarize your qualifications.

Ask for the job, remember you do not have a decision to make until they offer you the job.

Ask what their interest is in you. How did you place as compared with the others they have interviewed?

Thank the interviewer and ask if there is any additional information and/or references you can provide.

Ask what the next step is and again mention that you can start to work right away or after a reasonable notice.

THE OFFER

When an offer is made and it is right, accept it with enthusiasm. If you need to discuss the offer with others, ask for a few days to do that. Set up a definite time to get back with your answer.

When the offer is not exactly as you expected, ask if you can discuss it with them, but start your discussion in steps.

1. First, go over all the duties and responsibilities of the position making sure you fully understand them.

2. Second, go over all the benefits, making sure you fully understand those as well.

3. And thirdly, talk about salary. If you expected more than they offered, say something like "I expected a higher starting salary."

Explain why: tell them what you are currently making and that you expected to get at least that or an increase over that. Ask them if they can go up some to cover that? Do not threaten or demand the increase - you will only lose. It is important that once you presented your position clearly, stop talking and listen. Be prepared, so that if they meet your request, you accept the position or at least show a positive response at this time.

4. Do not state that the market is higher, or you know someone in the same type of job that is getting more, or you need more to live. These comments never work.

5. If they can not raise the starting salary, ask for a review with a performance raise earlier than planned.

6. If this does not work, ask if they can do anything to help you. If they cannot then you have to deal with the offer as it is. This is the time to ask for some time to think about it, maybe a couple of days. If you are working with a recruiter bring the offer to him/her before you make a decision.

7. Remember when you turn an offer down, that's it. It is nearly impossible to recover from a turndown. Therefore, do not decline an offer until you have considered all sides; and, you are sure that is what you want to do. Take the necessary time you need: ask additional questions and talk to people who know about the company and the particular position in question. Good offers (even though not perfect) are hard to come by.

8. If this is your first job opportunity, your evaluation of the offer must be based on the potential of you learning and adding new skills to increase your employment worth and help establish a career path.

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR AN ENTHUSIASTIC, POSITIVE ATTITUDE