



CENTER FOR CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Interviewing

Be yourself - your *best* self. Trying to be someone you're not may get you the job, but you might be unhappy because the job doesn't fit the real you. To construct your well-managed professional life, you will be demonstrating professionalism and other 21st century career-readiness skills through the interview.

Research!

Most interviews are blown by NOT doing your homework on the organization. Thoroughly review the company website and any other information you can find. If you don't know much about the organization, they won't care much about you.

Body Language

HANDSHAKE

Use a firm, but not bone-crushing, grip where the webbing between your thumb and index finger meets the other person's and shake once.

EYE CONTACT

Maintain good eye contact with periodic breaks. Don't stare directly at the interviewer at all times, but also don't avert your eyes the entire time. When looking away, don't look down.

POSTURE AND GESTURES

Sit up straight, leaning slightly forward to show interest. You can cross your legs but don't cross your arms. Use some hand gestures so as not to look too stiff, but don't flail. Don't touch your face/hair, etc. Practice so that you can look relaxed and natural - not too stiff but not too sloppy.

The Delivery

Energy, enthusiasm and a strong, confident voice will go a long way in the interview. Don't be timid, but don't be brash either. Employers want to know that you really, really want to work for their organization. Watch out for too many fillers like "um," "like," "you know," etc. Again, practice helps, especially when recorded or in front of a friend. Don't forget to smile! Your voice sounds more positive when you do.

Whenever possible give specific examples from past experience. Employers want assurance you'll be able to do the job. The ideal worker is productive, gets results, has a success-oriented, "can do" attitude, is eager to learn, and is flexible and adaptable.

Match those traits with some key answers and you are surely going to get the employer's attention.

Answering Tough Questions

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Most interviewers use at least some behavioral or situational questions that will require you to give specific examples of your experience, such as "tell about a time in which you..." To prepare, think about examples from your own experiences (academic, work/internship, volunteer, leadership) that best demonstrate the skills you think the employer will require. The job description is a good guide, often spelling out relevant skills. Write down the name of the experience, the organization, and then some bulleted statements describing what you did, what you accomplished, some of the obstacles you faced, what skills you developed, and who you interacted with. Remember the STAR technique when answering behavioral questions: describe the Situation or Task, the Action you took and the Result.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Along with work ethic, other transferable 21st century skills employers care about include oral and written communication, critical thinking/problem solving, teamwork/collaboration, digital technology, leadership, and intercultural fluency. Employers want to know whether you have the potential to learn quickly, can work without constant supervision, will show some initiative, and are a person with strong values/ethics. If you get a chance, let them know something about each of these things in the interview. Take every opportunity to sell yourself.

ASKING YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

Ask one or two questions at the end of the interview to show you've done your research about the organization. Make sure the questions aren't ones you can answer simply by looking at the organization's web site. Ask about the interviewer's personal experience (e.g. What do you like about working for [company]? What qualities are you looking for in a colleague?).

Follow-up

Make sure to request a business card/contact information from your interviewers before you leave the interview, then email a thank-you note within 24 hours. Be sure to reiterate your interest and relevant skills. Sending a thank-you note can make or break you in an interview! Don't slack on this one.