

INTERVIEW TIPS - BE PREPARED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS

Tell me about yourself. Be prepared to respond to the question, "Tell me about yourself," by creating a 15-second "sound bite" that describes your professional background and strongest skills in two or three sentences. Vary your response according to the specific job opportunity and offer a brief description of why you would be a good fit for the position. One of the best ways to prepare for an interview is to rehearse with a tape recorder and then critique your answers.

Tell me about your background, accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses. Employers who ask this question are usually looking for a short synopsis of your experience. Be sure to demonstrate how you've developed professionally and be objective when listing your strengths and weaknesses.

How would you describe your most recent job performance? Hiring managers tend to ask this question in order to gauge your level of enthusiasm for the work that you do. They're also looking for a direct connection between your current position and the one for which you're applying.

What interests you about our company? This question seems straightforward, but it can sometimes be difficult to answer if you haven't thought about it beforehand. There are two important factors to include in your answer. The first is to use your knowledge of the company to show your sincere interest. Second, give a specific reason why the position for which you're applying appeals to you (other than the fact that you need a job).

Who was your most difficult boss and why? It's imperative to be as diplomatic as possible when answering this question. Avoid becoming too personal; instead, focus on your previous supervisor's management style and the manner in which he or she communicated. The interviewer is looking for some indication as to how well you would get along with your future boss, if you were hired.

What outside activities are most significant to your personal development? Many employers ask this question to see what kind of balance you are looking for between your personal and professional lives. While it's good to list one or two activities, be careful not to list too many activities as the employer may wonder if outside interest will interfere with your work.

Where do you see yourself in five years? In ten years? Avoid mapping out a detailed plan when answering this question. Instead, describe what you feel is the next logical step or steps in your career path.

INTERVIEW TIPS - PREPARATION

Preparation is essential to remaining calm under pressure and is the first step toward a successful interview. Here are some tips:

- ✦ **Give yourself plenty of time to get there.**
- ✦ **Ask about parking availability before you go.**
- ✦ **Know the exact place and time of the meeting, the interviewer's full name (including correct pronunciation) and his or her title.**
- ✦ **Research the company through the Internet or the library to learn relevant facts such as annual sales revenue, principal lines of business and locations.**
- ✦ **Look your professional best. Wear business attire in neutral colours and be conservative in your use of fragrance, cosmetics and jewellery.**
- ✦ **Organize the night before. Your interview clothing, briefcase and portfolio should all be prepared. Get a good night's rest.**
- ✦ **Re-read your resume before the interview.**
- ✦ **Arrive poised and confident. Bring several copies of your resume and a list of references. Greet your interviewer with a firm handshake and an enthusiastic smile.**

INTERVIEWTIPS - ASK QUESTIONS

Be prepared to ask questions of the hiring manager during the interview that are based on your research of the company and industry. Insightful and pertinent questions will demonstrate that you've done your homework and that you're serious about the position. And your questions will help both of you determine if you are the right match for the job.

Know what questions NOT to ask. Don't inquire about vacation time, benefits or your office space at the first interview. These questions are appropriate only after the hiring manager has expressed serious interest in offering you the position.

Here are some questions you might ask:

- ✦ **What would I be expected to accomplish in this position?**
- ✦ **What are the greatest challenges in this position?**
- ✦ **How do you think I fit the position?**

INTERVIEW TIPS - CLOSING

Be pro active. Reiterate your interest in the job and the company by asking about the next step in the process.

If you get the impression the interview is not going well, don't let your discouragement show. Remain poised, upbeat and professional. There may be other opportunities in the company that would be a better fit.

Be enthusiastic about the job and the company. The people you meet during your job search and at your interviews can become valuable networking sources, even if you don't get the job.

INTERVIEW TIPS - DOS AND DON'TS

INTERVIEW DOS

- ✦ **Arrive on time or a few minutes early.**
- ✦ **If presented with an application, fill it out neatly and completely. Don't attach your resume unless you're told to do so.**
- ✦ **Greet the interviewer by first name if you are sure of the pronunciation. If not, ask the employer to repeat it.**
- ✦ **Project energy and enthusiasm. Smile and shake hands firmly.**
- ✦ **Wait until you're offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright, look alert and interested at all times. Listen carefully and respond succinctly and articulately.**
- ✦ **Look the hiring manager in the eye while speaking.**
- ✦ **Early in the meeting, try to get the interviewer to describe the job and the duties to you so you can focus your responses on your background, skills and accomplishments that relate to the position.**
- ✦ **Be sincere and truthful while focusing on communicating your specific professional achievements that relate to the job opening.**

INTERVIEW TIPS - DON'TS

INTERVIEW DON'TS

- ✦ **Don't answer with a simple "yes" or "no." Explain whenever possible.**
- ✦ **If you don't understand a question – or need a moment to think about it - say so. Never pretend to know something or someone when you don't.**
- ✦ **Don't rely on your application or resume to do the selling for you. Interviewers will want you to be convincing.**
- ✦ **Don't make negative remarks about present or former employers. When explaining your reasons for leaving, communicate your rationale professionally.**
- ✦ **Don't over-answer questions. If the interviewer steers the conversation into controversial – or even illegal – topics, try to do more listening than speaking. Keep your responses non-committal.**
- ✦ **Don't inquire about salary, vacations, benefits, bonuses or retirement on the initial interview unless you are sure the employer is interested in hiring you. If the interviewer asks what salary you want, give a range based on your research of the job market, but indicate that you're more interested in the opportunity for continued learning and professional development than in a specific salary.**

I hope the above helps in terms of settling your nerves and also preparing you for the interview. Remember, you only get one chance at making a first impression. If you require additional material/directions or anything else please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Good Luck,

Nick