

Interviewing Tips

Supplement to the ESS presentation

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These tips are meant to help you become less anxious about interviewing for a job. As with everything in life, the more you do something, the better you'll get at it. Interviewing is no different, it's a skill that you must practice becoming good at and to become comfortable doing.

- Have a **positive attitude** regardless of how nervous you are is crucial. Keep things in perspective and approach this interview with a positive attitude.
- **Plan ahead!** Not planning adequately can cause you a great amount of stress.
- Bring **copies of your resumé** with you to the interview.
- Be **on time** for your interview. It will reflect badly on you if you are late.
- Having a **legitimate excuse** for being late or cancelling, like being ill or in a traffic accident, is forgivable. If you do have to be late or cancel, call them immediately and explain. Don't keep them waiting.
- When you research the company you're interviewing for you should **focus on information such as the company's mission statement**, its core values and general company facts. It's a good bet that you will be asked what you know about the company you're interviewing for and how you see yourself fitting in, so be prepared and tie it into your approach.
- The "About Us" page on the company website will introduce you to key people within the company, **learn as much as you can** about these people, they may be the ones interviewing you or sitting in on the panel interview session. Learn what their function is in the organization. You can also confirm or clarify this during introductions.
- In a panel interview, each panel member will approach the interview from his or her **own viewpoint** and you need to **be aware** of this when responding to their questions.
- Importantly, make sure your **respond effectively and completely** to the questions being asked. To help with this, you can take notes right after they ask the question by jotting down the main points. This will give you a chance to get your thoughts together.
- It's **okay to ask** your interviewer for clarification if something is not clear to help you address all their points.
- Interviewers know that we lose track of details because we are focused on one answer, so asking them to repeat the question, or ask them if you covered all your points, this shows that you are **following through**, rather than hoping you did.

- During a panel interview, focus on **speaking to each individual** and then, as you finish your answer, return your focus to the person who asked the interview question. Stay calm and answer each question thoroughly. Use the name of the panel member who asked the question when you start and finish your answer, while your focus is on that individual.
- If, in rare occasions, you should receive an unscheduled call from a company, it is in your **best interest to ask them if you can call them back**. Explain that this call is important to you and you want to give your full attention. You'll come off as a candidate who wants to maximize this opportunity. Once you meet again, you can apologize to the interviewer and explain the reason you had to reschedule.
- During a phone interview, keep your notes, resume, job posting, and questions, handy. You will want to **refer to your notes** and perhaps make notes too.
- During a phone interview, while sitting make sure your **posture is upright and attentive** and not slumped down in your chair, this will project in your voice.
- **An example of how to talk about your accomplishments:** "My organizational skills and my ability to finish projects on time have saved my previous employer both time and money and, as a result, I was constantly called on to train key people on how to effectively plan and organize in order to complete tasks and projects on time and within budget."
- At the end of your interview, you will be asked if you have any questions. You can **learn a lot about the company** by the type of questions you ask. For example, if the company is hiring for a lot of new positions, ask about their growth plan. If the employer is vague with their response regarding a previous employee, make sure to respect their discretion but don't be afraid to ask about the average turnaround of the position. If, for example, they say they've gone through six employees in the last year because the employees were promoted within the company, that is a good sign. If it's because they were all "not a good fit" then find out what does the employer think was missing and what would *you* need to do to survive?
- When it is **time to discuss wages**, rather than being that person who is so grateful for a job that you take whatever they throw at you, you want to be that person that the company is so eager to bring onboard that they work to make it work *for you!*
- **Know exactly who you are, what you can do and how much you are worth.** Be careful not to come off arrogant or entitled. Research what other in this role are being paid and go from there.