

Assuming you have mastered the art of writing good resumes and have the interview lined up, the next challenge is how do you present yourself through the interview to prove that you are the right candidate?

It is imperative that you look at your interview as a sales call or an audition for a Broadway play. Keep in mind you will not know if you want the job until the middle or end of the interview process, but if you did not give the best presentation of yourself right from the start it will not matter if you want the job. The company is the buyer that will make the decision to hire or not to hire, then you have the decision to take the part or bow out gracefully. The interview this is the time the employer determines whether you are the right choice or not and the time for you to sell yourself and impress the employer. Consider an interview as a business conversation where you “the employee” need to close a major deal. There will be a lot of interviews for you if you are determined and aggressive as you climb up the ladder in your professional career.

Keep in mind your potential employer does not know you they just know the piece of paper your resume. It is your job on the interview to sell yourself. Be honest because as dishonesty most always backfires on you. Here are some steps you can take to prepare yourself for the interview. I could give an entire course on interviewing techniques but here are some points that will assist you.

1. Research

This goes out without say...Do your homework! Make an effort to learn about the organization or company you are going to be hired. A successful job interview starts with a solid foundation of knowledge about the company. You should know almost everything there is to know about the company, the employer and the job you are interviewing for. This will help you understand your employer and the organization at large.

You should also consult with people who have some knowledge about the company and the day-to-day running of it to have an edge during the interview. Go through some interview questions you think may be asked and research on the best answers for them. Review your resume prior to your interview. You should know your accomplishments from each position and what you did to get there. Review your strengths and weaknesses. Formulate questions to ask on the interview however do not ask about money, benefits or time off that comes later in the interview process.

2. Practice

By now you may have done all your homework on the company and just waiting for the big day. You should also practice on what to say and how you are going to say it during the interview. You can make a small presentation about your background for the interviewer. Practice on what to ask and the answers you are going to give. To help you

remember better you can form your answers in form of a story or have acronyms to the answers you may give in regards to the questions asked. Practice makes perfect. It is a good idea to role play with someone. Also you can use a mirror to ensure you are keeping good posture, eye contact and good facial expressions. Smile it always helps.

3. The First impression

After preparing yourself and doing a background check on the company it is better to practice on what your first impression would be.

- Dress your best and professionally in regards to the environment of the job opening. Plan out a wardrobe that is not offensive and goes hand in hand with the culture of the organization. Don't over accessorize and use too much makeup you don't want to send the wrong message. It is okay to be over dressed professionally but not okay to be underdressed. When in doubt suit and tie or business suit.
- Be well groomed, hair, nails, breath etc. Don't smell like a chimney if you smoke.
- Another important thing you need to have done before setting foot to the interview room is to have your social networking sites cleaned up. Remember the HR or the interviewing personnel will want to know something about you before you come in. the one place they always go to is online. So make sure your online profiles portray nothing but professionalism.
- Exude confidence. From the first time you set foot to the premises you should be an embodiment of confidence, however don't be cocky. From the way you walk, talk and carry yourself at the interview room. Confidence gives out a certain feeling that you know what you are doing and what you want. If you lack on this make prior preparations on how you are going to overcome your fears
- Don't be late. Consider waking up earlier than usual. Have in mind that there may be traffic jams, few parking spaces that may slow you down. Being on time is 15 minutes prior to your interview. Yes you should go in 15 minutes early

4. During the interview

As I said earlier I consider an interview to be a business conversation, sales call or audition of you. There will be questions asked and you should be prepared to answer them to the best of your ability. Remember the following:

- Be cautious with your language. It will not help you to curse or talk poorly but a previous employer ever if the interviewer does as they may be looking to trap you.
- Be organized and also prepare questions to the employer in advance. Again avoid the benefits, money, and time off questions. If they bring it up it is fine but you should not during a first interview. Good questions are formulated on the company



- background, history, growth potential, short term goals long term goals of the position.
- Asking questions states that you are well informed about the organization and can be of great importance to the company. Remember that employers may judge about the applicant's interest in the job by whether or not he/she asks questions during the interview.
 - It is also important to have a note book and take notes during the interview. This gives a professional atmosphere at the premises and is sure to score some points with the interviewer. This also helps you remember some of the points given.

5. After all's done...

After you ace the interview and probably got the job it is courteous for you to do a follow-up and write a thank you note to the employer. Write an email or drop off a letter in the mail to thank them for the opportunity they gave you. Writing a thank you note immediately after an interview will give you an edge over any of the other candidate and you might be lucky and land the job.



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