

TIP SHEET

SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS

Your resume and cover letter have gotten you an interview. Now you want to make the most of the opportunity to show them you are a good fit for the job. Follow these tips.

1. Research the company, what they do, problems they face, and their competitors. This can help you answer the question, why do you want to work for us?
2. Examine the Job Posting, and find out what you can about the required skills, education, etc. Use this to show you are a good match. Don't worry if you don't have 100% of the qualifications, but sell them on what you have to offer that makes up for what is missing.
3. List your strengths and skills. These are the key points you need to emphasize. Even if they don't ask about them directly, watch for an opportunity to bring them up.
4. Get a list of interview questions and prepare your responses. Write them out if you can, and practice them. Don't memorize, but make yourself so comfortable with your key phrases that you can say them confidently and easily.
5. Prepare a few questions for when your interviewer asks if you have any questions. Focus on the company and the position, and not on salary, benefits, working conditions, etc. It's all about what you can do for them, not what they can do for you.
6. Plan what to wear. Be conservative and dress the same way your interviewer will probably dress. If you are not sure, it is always safer to dress a little better.
7. Be sure you have directions, and figure travel time, and where to park. Arrive 10-15 minutes early.
8. Bring copies of your resume, and your references. Keep your work history information handy in case you need to fill out an application form. It should list previous job titles with dates, supervisors, salary, etc.
9. Before the interview, spend some time relaxing and building your confidence. Recall a time you accomplished something that made you proud. When were you recognized for something you did? Calm last minute nerves with slow steady breathing from the belly.
10. Be pleasant to the receptionist as you arrive. Greet your interviewer with a smile and firm handshake. Project energy and enthusiasm. Your body language says a lot about you.
11. Listen to questions carefully, and answer briefly. Bring up your qualifications and strengths. Show how well suited you are for this position. At the end, it is usually a good idea to tell them directly that you want the position, and ask what the next step will be.
12. Afterward, write down how it went, what questions they asked, and your answers. Send a thank-you note to all interviewers within 24 hours to express your appreciation and show your interest in the job. Remember, it is a thank you, not a sales pitch.

Sample Interview Questions

Here are just a few sample interview questions to prepare to answer. Keep answers brief and to the point.

- Tell me about yourself.
- Describe your current job duties, and your accomplishments.
- How would your current supervisor describe you?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?
- Why do you want to leave your current job? Why did you leave your last job?
- Describe a situation where you had a conflict with another person. How did you go about resolving it? If a similar situation arose now, what would you do differently?
- Give me an example of a difficult problem you have solved, and what you did to solve it.
- What can you contribute to this company?
- When do you feel really charged up at work? When do you feel burned out?
- We are looking at several very good candidates; why are you the best person for the job?
- Where do you expect to be in five years? What are your long-range career goals?
- What type of student were you?
- Describe the best/worst boss you ever had.
- What interests you about our products/services/company?
- What personal characteristics do you have that would be of particular value to us in this position?
- How do you handle pressure?
- Would you rather be in charge of a project or a member of a team?
- How do you go about judging or evaluating your own work? How do you know when you have done a good job?
- What questions do you have for me?
- Is there anything else I should know about you?
- Why should I hire you?