

How to Ace Your Job Interview

You filled out and submitted a job application. Then, out of the blue, you receive a call from the manager inviting you in for an interview. Now what are you going to do?! Easy: you are going to prepare yourself to ace your interview!

Managers typically receive a lot of applications for a job opening, but something about your application made you stand out. At the interview, you get another opportunity to make a positive impression. Make the most of that opportunity.



Important Documents

You will need to gather the following documents and have them ready prior to arriving at your interview. If you are offered the job, you will need to provide these documents to your employer in order to get a work permit (if you are under 18):

- Birth certificate
- Social security card

For more information about work permits, visit the [Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development](#).

Dress for Success and Dress to Impress

You will want to present yourself in a positive and professional manner. Blue jeans and a t-

shirt may be how you dress around your friends, but khakis, a nice dress shirt, and dress shoes (no sneakers) will go a long way toward making a positive impression.

Remember: you want to stand out among all the job applicants for the right reasons.

Arrive Early

You never want to show up late for a job interview. Plan on arriving early; 10 to 15 minutes before the start of the interview.

Make sure you have transportation to the interview arranged at least the day before.

If you run into transportation issues, call the interviewer and inform him or her of your circumstances.

It is also a good idea to travel to the job site a few days before the interview. This way, you will know where to go and plan out how long it will take you to arrive at the job site. Preparation is the key.

Be Positive and Be Prepared

Don't ever say any negative things about yourself, a former job, a previous supervisor, etc. This is your chance to make a positive impression by promoting your positive qualities to your potential new boss.

Practice, practice, practice. Ask your parents or a friend who has job experience to help you prepare for your interview. Be open to their feedback and seek out advice from them on how to improve

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your interview skills.

Be Polite

Again, first impressions can make all the difference, even before the interview starts. You will often be checking in with a receptionist or another employee. Make sure to treat that person with as much respect as you will the interviewer.

Shake the interviewer's hand and introduce yourself by your first and last name. Make sure you don't use too strong or too weak of a handshake. A nice firm handshake and good eye contact will make for a positive impression.

An interview is not the place to use slang. You will want to practice talking in a respectful and courteous manner ahead of time. Little things, like saying, "Yes" instead of "Yeah." Or, "Could you repeat the question?" instead of, "What did you say?" can make a big difference when it comes time for the manager to make a decision on who they would like to hire.

Always Ask at Least One Question

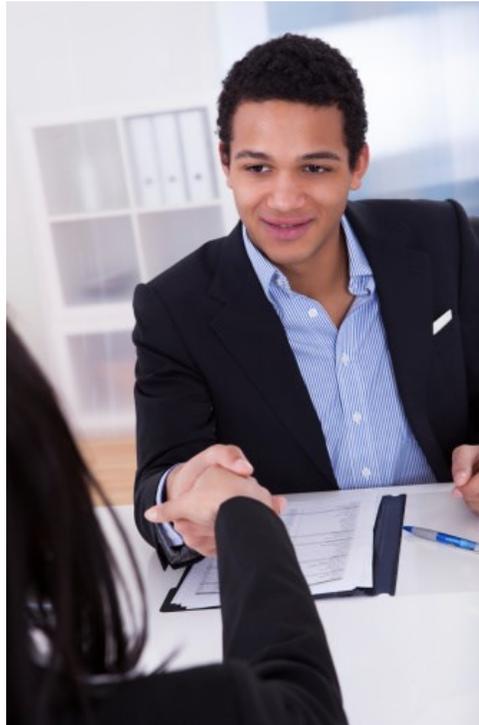
There is always an opportunity for you to ask a question and this usually occurs at the end of the interview. When you are asked if you have any questions, be prepared to ask one or two. This shows that you are interested in the position and the company and that you are interested in finding out more information about the responsibilities associated with the job.

These are some good questions to ask:

- What are the job responsibilities of this

position?

- How soon are you looking to fill this position?
- Why do you like working here?
- Can you describe an ideal employee?
- Can I have your business card?



At the End of the Interview

Always shake the hand of the interviewer at the beginning and the end of the interview. You should also express your appreciation for being invited to the interview. For example, you might say:

- "Thank you for taking the time to interview me, Mr. Jackson. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future."
- "Thank you for your time and consideration, Ms. Jones. I am definitely interested in working here, and I will look forward to hearing from you soon."

After the Interview is Over

Take a deep breath! You are done . . . well, almost done.

Reflect back on how you did. Are there things you could have handled differently? Remember, each interview is a learning experience and a chance to develop your skills. You can learn something positive from every interview experience!

Write a thank you letter to the person or persons who interviewed you. Send your thank you letter out within two days of your interview. Sending out a thank you letter will make you stand out.

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This alone may not get you a job, but you will definitely make a positive impression.

If you do not get offered the job, do not get discouraged. Keep on applying and keep on interviewing. Remember, you are competing with many others for a job and, therefore, many other people are also not going to be offered the position, either.

The more times you interview, the more interviewing skills you will acquire. While interviewing is often stressful, try to look at it as meeting someone new and try to enjoy the process. Stay confident in your abilities and ace the interview!



Resources

For additional resources on job skills, visit the following websites which is designed for youth in care and provide a number of independent skill resources:

- Independence for Foster Youth independence.wa.gov

Additional Resources

- *Do You Have What It Takes? A Comprehensive Guide to Success after Foster Care* (book)



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