



INTERVIEW TIP SHEET

An interview means you have your foot in the door. Your resume or job application —or networking—has convinced an employer to invest time in learning more about your work background and personal attributes. Congratulations! Your goal is to get a job offer. Employers are seeking the best qualified candidate who will be a good "fit" for their organization and budget and produce results quickly. *Your interview is your opportunity to convince the employer that you can do the job, do it well and you are easy to work with.* It's also a way to decipher if it's the right "fit" for you. Put your best foot forward by following the tips below. Good luck!

Before the Interview

- Learn what type of interview the company plans — telephone, in-person, group, multiple individual interviews, etc.
- Ensure you have the right address and appointment time. Determine your route and estimated travel time-or time zones.
- Research the company (its product/service line, history, etc.) and industry via the internet, library and networking.
- Anticipate questions you may be asked about your work experience, work habits, preferences, personal interests, etc.
- Rehearse answers to those questions. Have 3-6 specific examples of how you have used your skills to produce results.
- Prepare questions that you want to ask — if allowed time to do so.
- Make extra copies of your resume and assemble examples of your work- if reasonable, available and not confidential.
- Anticipate that you may be asked to complete a job application, background check authorization or other pre-employment documents. Many of those documents require your full or last four digits of your social security number.
- Organize your records and set aside a pen/pencil to take with you and something to write on.
- Decide what you will wear. Ensure it is clean and in good condition. Generally, it is best to dress *as if* you were the supervisor of the position you are seeking. You could call and ask the receptionist about the company's dress code.

The Interview Itself

- Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early unless you have received other instructions from the prospective employer.
- Turn off or mute your cell phone and/or pager.
- Be polite to the receptionist/greeter because he/she may be asked his/her opinion of you or participate in the interview.
- Smile and greet the interviewer(s) warmly-shake hands if offered.
- Be cordial and polite at all times. Speak clearly. Stand and sit tall. Most communication is conveyed through your tone and non-verbally. Be interested and be interesting.
- Answer questions directly and honestly-add detail if you sense it is desired and would be helpful.
- Do not ask about compensation or employee benefits in the initial interview.
- Do not talk about your current or past employers in a negative way and do not chew gum or tobacco, smoke, belch, etc.
- At the end of the interview, summarize your strengths and accomplishments and what you can do for the employer.
- Tell the employer you want to work for the company and you want the job- unless it is obviously not a "good" fit.
- Learn the next step(s) in the recruitment process, when you can follow up and thank the interviewer(s).

After the Interview

Very few job candidates take the time to send a short thank you note or e-mail to the interviewer(s). Those who make this extra effort distinguish themselves from the pack-and can sway an employer. In the note, recap your strengths. Emphasize how you can help the company. State again that you want the job (if true). Restate when they will call you (or you will call them).

If you don't hear from the prospective employer on the agreed date, call the interviewer and ask about the status of the selection process. Follow-up periodically until you are told the position has been filled or will not be filled-or to stop calling. If they choose someone else and you are truly interested in working for the company, send another short note. Thank them for the interview and ask them to consider you the next time they want someone with your qualifications. If the person who was hired doesn't show up for work or doesn't perform well on the job, the employer wants to quickly fill the position and will remember your interest.

Resources

Your local Department of Labor office offers workshops on interviewing and/or can assist you in preparing for interviews. In addition, most libraries have one or more books and some Web sites contain tips. <http://labor.idaho.gov/>