

Putting Your Best Face Forward: Simple Tips for a Successful Interview

You've managed to write the perfect cover letter and resume, introducing yourself to a recruiter and impressing them with your skills, experience, and professionalism. Their interest is piqued, and now our client – your prospective employer – wants to know more about you, what you can bring to the table, and how that could benefit their business. Your resume was merely the ticket that got you into the main event – the interview – and now it's time to really impress them with your experience-based insights, strategic thinking and enthusiasm for a next-level career challenge. These simple tips will help you ace the interview and get you started down the road to your next professional success.

Be prepared. Do your research! Prior to your interview, it's important that you are versed in the company's operations. Are you familiar with their history? What does the company do? What sectors do they target, and who is their target client? With all of the information available on the internet today, there is no reason not to be fully prepared with this information – plus, doing your homework will impress your interviewer.

Positive impressions. Everyone knows that your first impression will shape the way someone interacts with you, and at an interview this is particularly true. Being aware of the things that a prospective employer will notice about you – namely, your appearance and your attitude – will help you present yourself in a positive way. The old adage, "Dress for the job you want," rings true even in today's society, so dress professionally and appropriately for the position at hand as well as the environment. It should go without saying that you should pay a little extra attention to personal grooming on Interview Day, but make sure not to go overboard with strong cologne/perfume or heavy-handed cosmetics.

Appropriate attitudes. Interviewers also pay attention to your attitude and body language during your interview, so it's important to exude confidence. Start with a firm handshake and a confident smile, and make eye contact throughout the conversation. Sit up straight and try not to fidget with your hands or other objects. By physically conveying your interest in the company and position, you will make it easier for your interviewer to imagine your enthusiasm as part of their team. On that note, it's important that your *positivity* shines through. Never speak negatively about former colleagues or supervisors; instead, focus on what you've learned in the face of adversity.

Detail your aptitude. While your resume offered your prospective hiring manager an initial glimpse into your professional history, now is the time to go into detail about your responsibilities and achievements. Tailor your responses to their questions about your previous positions as they relate to the one you're aspiring to. A good formula to follow is to explain a particular responsibility; explain what you learned from carrying it out; and explain how what you've learned will help you – and subsequently your new team/company – going forward. Be specific and, where appropriate, use real-life examples, preparing answers to specific behavioral-type interview questions like how you overcame a difficult circumstance or solved a complex problem.

Let your achievements shine. In addition to responsibilities held, it is important to mention professional and business goals and accomplishments you have achieved. Include things like honors earned in college/university or professional organizations, sales goals met, or otherwise exceeded performance metrics. Be enthusiastic; explain to your hiring manager what motivates you, what your future goals are, and how working with the company can help you achieve them.

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Don't jump the gun. No matter how positive you are that your interview went flawlessly, remember that it's not a sure thing until you have actually received a job offer. In the same vein, it is good etiquette to send your interviewer a quick note a day after your interview. Thank them for their time, reiterate your enthusiasm about the opportunity, and make yourself available if they have any questions or need any additional information from you in order to move forward.

