

A Cure for those Interviewing Blues

Job interviews can be stressful, but you can increase your comfort level and effectiveness by remembering a few simple steps. Remember, you are called in for an interview because the employer thinks you have the qualifications for the job based on your resume and wants to validate his or her assessment. In my experience running a staffing company, I often encounter candidates who are plenty qualified, but fumble the opportunity during the interview. Here are some helpful hints that will get you to clear that all-important last hurdle.

- Be prepared. Research the company via the internet and remember important things you learn for the interview. For example, if the company is expanding overseas, mention any second languages you might speak.
- Write down possible interview questions and prepare clear and adequate responses. One of my favorite questions in preparing an applicant is "What is the one question you fear most will be asked?" Prepare an answer so you will feel more comfortable should it be asked.
- Dress for success. Whether the office atmosphere is conservative or casual, always dress conservatively. You are there to impress!
- Bring several extra copies of your resumes.
- Bring a list of references. Be sure to get their permission before you offer the list to an employer.
- Fill out the application entirely. View the application as a test on how well you follow instructions. Avoid omitting answers.
- Be on time. Arriving late leaves the impression that you might have a problem getting to work on time. Also, do not show up more than 10 minutes early. If you are really early, walk around the block and rehearse your questions/answers.
- Be pleasant and friendly with everyone you meet at the company. Treating the receptionist rudely shows that you might be a difficult employee.
- Give a good, firm handshake.
- Avoid speaking too much and stay on topic. Often, I come across candidates that talk too much and never answer the questions posed.
- Do not speak while the interviewer is speaking. Wait for a break in the conversation to make your points.
- Make eye contact. Eye contact expresses strong self-confidence.
- Be positive and excited. Use your personality, achievements and strengths to help get the offer.
- Turn a negative into a positive. Avoid simply saying you don't know something; but rather, talk your adaptability, ability and eagerness to learn.
- Refrain from speaking poorly about a current or former employer. This is the fastest way to disqualify you from a job. No matter how reasonable your complaints, you will come off looking bad.
- Do not ask about benefits on a first interview. Once you have the job offer, you can ask these questions.
- Remember to send a thank-you letter. This will express your sincere interest in the position.

Keep in mind a qualified resume will get you in the door, but it is your strong interview skill set that will land you the job.

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