



BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER AN INTERVIEW

The interview is usually the first meeting you have with a prospective employer but it's not the first impression. Your first impression was the moment they looked at your resume and called you in. Remember they called you so they are interested in you - show that confidence.

BEFORE

A Roman philosopher once said, the definition of luck is when preparation meets opportunity. It is crucial that you take some time to prepare before an interview. Here are some tips to help you begin:

1. Research the company's products, services, trends, leadership and community ventures. This is the fuel for your interview, and it demonstrates your interest in the company.
2. Know where you are going, length of time it will take you (arrive 15 minutes early, anything earlier could be interpreted as poor time management), who you are interviewing and the correct spelling and pronunciation of their name.
3. Prepare several, edited resumes and cover letters on quality paper, a portfolio (work samples, recommendations, references, pad and pen) and questions, such as, can you discuss the corporate culture? Can you describe the company's management style?
4. Practice answers to questions you may be asked, such as why are you interested in this job and can you describe a weakness. (For example, I have been known to become very nervous when making public presentations but I've since joined Toastmaster's to help improve in this area.)
5. Impress Mindtools.com says it takes 3 seconds to make a first impression. This impression is based on your dress, body language, mannerisms and your speech. So be sure to exude professionalism in all areas. That means sitting up straight, a firm handshake and eye contact.

Now that you've prepared, stop for a moment and envision yourself at the interview. If you have a clear vision, you will attract the right strategy to succeed.

DURING

You've made it, and now... lights, camera, action!

1. Ask how you may address the interviewer: Mr., Ms., Dr. or first name.
2. Treat all people you encounter with professionalism (I remember meeting a lady in the bathroom once and when I returned to the office, I found out she was the head of marketing.)
3. Inquire if it is okay that you take note of key points throughout the interview.
4. Be prepared to demonstrate a skill you say you have - if you say you speak Spanish, be prepared to speak Spanish.
5. Be concise with your answers, but that still includes answering your questions with details.

For example, I am a team player, tell the employer a time when you've demonstrated that quality.

6. Don't pull all your answers from one place. Use the "suitcase compartment method" - imagine you have a suitcase with five compartments and each compartment contains specific experiences. For example: 1. current job, 2. past job, 3. community service, 4. entrepreneurial experience and 5. education.





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Now that you've identified all five compartments, pull your answers from each of them so your answers will not be mundane - but be honest!

7. Listen carefully to the interviewer and answer the question asked. A chief economist once said, "Most of the successful people I've known are the ones who do more listening than talking."

When ending the interview, ask where the company is in the hiring cycle? When may you follow-up? I also suggest you ask if they have any doubt in your ability to do the job. This would give them the opportunity to have you address any concerns. Remember, it is to be expected that you talk about your accomplishments and successes.

AFTER

1. Ask for their business card and when you are back in your car, make notes right away so you don't forget the critical details.

2. Send a thank you note with specific details of the interview and your qualifications, email or hand-written (more personal approach).

3. Follow up in 1-2 weeks if not given a specific time frame, as this will demonstrate your continued interest.

4. And if you receive notice that another person was hired still send a follow-up note letting them know you thoroughly enjoyed the interview and should another, similar position open in the future, you would appreciate the opportunity to meet with them again.

Now that we've covered Before, During and After the interview, you should be all set to go out there and get that job. Remember if you believe it you can achieve it!

Source: Natascha Saunders, The Career Coach, visit: www.NataschaSaunders.com

