



Interview Guide

1) First Impressions Count!

The first minutes of the interview are the most important. An employer begins sizing up your potential the instant you walk in the room. An excellent initial impression, on the other hand, will put a favorable glow on everything else you say during the rest of the interview--and could well encourage the employer to ask less demanding questions.

How can you ensure that you make a terrific first impression? The easiest answer is to be sure your grooming and your dress is immaculate. Just be sure that you are able to put together an adequate outfit that is both professional and squeaky-clean.

In virtually the same instant the interviewer notices your appearance, even before either of you speaks, your body language will begin to affect the way you are perceived. Here are some important things to think about:

- Are you smiling before being greeted? A sincere smile is a universally attractive trait.
- Do you approach the interviewer with a confident, self-assured gait or do you slump your shoulders and look at the floor?
- Do you extend your right hand naturally to begin a firm (but not viselike) handshake?
- Are your briefcase, note pad, and coat in your left hand or do you have to juggle them around in order to shake hands?
- Do you remember the interviewer's name and pronounce it with confidence?
- Do you make just enough eye contact without staring at the interviewer?
- Do you make small talk easily, or do you act formal and reserved, as though under attack?

As you can see, much of the first impression you make at an interview will be dramatically affected by how relaxed and confident you feel. This is why it is so important to practice for each interview--so you can truly give your best impression.

2) Timing is Everything

Although it may seem hard to believe, many job seekers arrive late for interviews.

Allow plenty of time to get ready and travel to your job interview. You should not arrive at the interviewer's office more than 10 minutes in advance. However, if you are driving across town, planning 10 minutes of extra time is probably not enough. Try to get to the location at least 30 minutes early; you can then spend 20 minutes in a nearby coffee shop or take a walk around the building. Interviews are important enough to build in a little extra time. Here's another tip: If you have never been to the interview location before, visit it the day before so you know exactly how to get there, access the building, and locate adequate parking.

3) Projecting the Perfect Image

While you should spend a great deal of time preparing your answers to interview questions, you must be careful to not let your practice and preparation become a disadvantage. Once the interview begins, your focus should be on



interacting well with the interviewer--as opposed to trying to recall the exact responses you prepared earlier. If you prepared for the interview well, your conduct and responses will convey to the interviewer the image that you want to project without effort.

It is important for you to know that the interviewer's decision about whether or not you will be invited back for an additional interview will probably be influenced as much by your qualifications as your attitude and personality. So while preparation is important, how you conduct yourself during an interview can make even more of a difference. The overall impression you make is very important. Generally, you should try to stress these qualities in your choice of words, your tone of voice, and your body language:

- Capability
- Enthusiasm
- Confidence
- Flexibility
- Dependability
- Resourcefulness
- Easygoing manner
- Strong work ethic

One word of caution: do not concentrate too much on trying to project the perfect image. Just try to relax and visualize yourself as smooth and confident, and you will project these qualities.

4) Dressing for Success

How important is proper dress for a job interview? Well, the final selection of a job candidate will rarely be determined by dress. However, first-round candidates for an opening are often quickly eliminated by inappropriate dress. This is not to say you should go out and invest in a new wardrobe, just be sure that you are able to put together an adequate interview outfit.

Generally, a professional-looking dress or suit with low-heeled shoes makes the best impression. In more conservative industries like law and banking, a suit is a safer bet than a dress. At the same time, some hiring managers in "creative" industries like advertising and publishing look for a more informal, stylish look that reflects the applicant's individuality. Use your best judgments and wear whatever is both professional and comfortable for you.

Top personal grooming is more important than finding the perfect outfit. Be sure that your clothes are immaculately clean and well fitting, that your hairstyle is neat and businesslike, and that your shoes are clean and attractive. Avoid excessive jewelry, makeup, or perfume.

Be sure to bring a watch, pen, and pad of paper for taking notes. A briefcase or portfolio, if you have one, will help complete the look of professionalism. Avoid carrying purse if you can--it may detract from your professional image. And don't forget to take a few extra copies of your resume!

5) Dressing Clean and Conservative

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For a man, a clean, conservative two-piece suit, white dress shirt and simple tie is the basic corporate wardrobe.

Women should either wear a relatively conservative dress or a suit. In traditionally more conservative industries, such as investment banking, a suit is a safer bet than a dress.

Remember, top personal grooming is more important than finding the perfect outfit. Careful grooming indicates both thoroughness and self-confidence.

6) Overcoming Nervousness

As if formulating solid answers to interview questions isn't tough enough, if you are like most job hunters, you'll have to overcome your own nervousness. Most employers will not condemn job candidates for a bit of nervous behavior after all, it's only normal but they will pay close attention to how you hold up under pressure. Displaying excessive nervousness can easily eliminate you from further consideration.

One good way to overcome nervousness is to exercise positive thinking. If you're feeling nervous about an upcoming interview, rehearse the scenario in your mind. Think of what you'll say, the questions you'll be asked, and how you'll answer them. Imagine yourself responding calmly, effectively, and in a controlled manner. This type of mental rehearsing won't guarantee your success, but it should help you feel more optimistic and self-confident, which will in fact influence your final presentation in a positive way.

Also, you should practice interviewing as much as you can especially with real companies. You will become more confident and your answers will become more polished with each interview you have. If you have a terrible interview, don't let it shake your confidence! Realize that everyone has a bad interview experience sooner or later. Learn from it, work on your performance, and keep looking for other opportunities.

7) Overcoming Shyness

For most employers, shyness is not a major problem unless it interferes with your work. In fact, employees are often valued for their shyness because they tend to get along well with other workers and don't participate in office politics. However, shyness can hurt your chances of landing a job if you resist contacting new people or fail to communicate that you're qualified for the position.

You probably won't be able to avoid job interviews altogether, though. Your best bet is to manage your shyness as best you can. For the first few minutes of your interview, just listen to the interviewer talk, interject a few questions or comments here and there, and let yourself relax. When you're asked about your accomplishments, simply be frank and relate what occurred. Don't feel pressured into giving the "hard sell" by telling the recruiter that you were brilliant or that you did a great job if you are uncomfortable doing so. Let recruiters come to their own conclusions; they'll not only see the positive qualities that led to your accomplishments, but they'll appreciate your frank but unassuming manner as well.



If it makes you feel more comfortable, tell the recruiter right away that you tend to be shy and you're feeling a little nervous. This often breaks the ice and will keep the employer from concluding that you're trying to hide something or that your shyness is a sign of some larger problem.

8) The Secret to Interview Success

One of the key messages that you will want to convey to the interviewer is that you are seriously interested in a career in that particular field at that particular company. If you have been keeping up with industry trends by reading trade publications and talking with industry insiders, you have already won half the battle. But, if in addition to this, you impress the interviewer with your knowledge of that company, you will have a great advantage over the competition. This is the secret to interview success.

To find the information you need, dig into every resource you can find. You can locate some information in business directories available at libraries.

9) Structured or Unstructured?

Interviewing styles generally fall into one of two categories, structured and unstructured. In a structured interview, the interviewer asks a prescribed set of questions, seeking relatively brief answers. In the unstructured interview, the interviewer asks more open-ended questions to prod you to give longer responses and reveal as much as possible about yourself, your background, and your aspirations. Some interviewers will mix both styles, typically beginning with more objective questions and asking more open-ended questions as the interview progresses.

Be very careful to answer questions in the manner the interviewer desires. Try to determine as soon as possible if the employer is conducting a structured or unstructured interview; respond to the questions accordingly. As you answer the questions, watch for signals from the employer as to whether your responses are too short or too long. For example, if the employer is nodding or looking away, wrap up your answer as quickly as possible.

Following the style the interviewer establishes will make the interview easier and more comfortable and will leave him/her with a more favorable impression of you.

10) Have the Obvious Answers Ready

You can never be sure exactly what you will be asked at a job interview, but certain questions are more likely to arise than others, and you should be prepared for them. By developing solid answers to questions that are likely to be asked, you will probably be in a better position to answer questions that you had not anticipated.

Try to structure your responses in a way that conveys that you are someone the employer would want to hire. In other words, project yourself as someone who is likely to stay with the company for a number of years, who is achievement oriented, who will fit in well with the other people, who is likable. Of course, you should also try to present yourself as someone who is capable of performing extremely well in the position.

11) Interview Strategy



Focus your efforts on remaining calm and collected. Listen carefully to what the interviewer is saying and respond promptly and thoroughly to his/her questions.

Once you begin to feel more confident about interviewing you may wish to think strategically about each interview. One effective tactic is to adjust your speed of speech to match that of the interviewer. People tend to talk at the speed at which they like to be spoken to. If you can adjust your speech rate to that of the interviewer without sounding unnatural, he/she will probably feel more comfortable (after all, interviewing others isn't much fun, either) and have a more favorable impression of you.

Another strategy is to adapt your answers to match the type of company for which you are interviewing. For example, if you are interviewing for a job at a large product marketing company that emphasizes group decision-making and spends much of its energy focused on battles for market share with its competitors, you might want to talk about how much you enjoy team sports--especially being part of a team and competing to win.

During later interviews, the competition for the position will drop off and employers will tend to look not for strengths, but for weaknesses. At this point you should focus on presenting yourself as a well-balanced choice for the position. You will want to listen carefully to the interviewer's questions so you can determine her underlying concerns and try to dispel them.

12) Ten Most Asked Interview Questions

Here are 10 questions and answers to help you prepare for your interview

1. Why do you want to work here?
2. What did you like/dislike about your last job?
3. What would you like to be doing five years from now?
4. What are your biggest accomplishments?
5. Can you work under pressure?
6. Why should I hire you?
7. How do you take direction?
8. Tell me about yourself.
9. What is the most difficult situation you have faced?
10. Do you prefer working with others or alone?

1. WHY Do You Want To Work Here?

To answer this question, you must have researched the company. Reply with the company's attributes as you see them. Cap your answer with reference to your belief that the company can provide you with a stable and happy work environment--the company has that reputation--and that such an atmosphere would encourage your best work.

"I'm not looking for just another paycheck. I enjoy my work and am proud of my profession. Your company produces a superior product/provides a superior service. I share the values that make this possible, which should enable me to fit in and complement the team."

2. What did you like/dislike about your last job?



The interviewer is looking for incompatibilities. If a trial lawyer says he or she dislikes arguing a point with colleagues, such a statement will only weaken--if not immediately destroy--his or her candidacy.

Most interviews start with a preamble by the interviewer about the company. Pay attention: That information will help you answer the question. In fact, any statement the interviewer makes about the job or corporation can be used to your advantage.

So, in answer, you liked everything about your last job. You might even say your company taught you the importance of certain keys from the business, achievement, or professional profile. Criticizing a prior employer is a warning flag that you could be a problem employee. No one intentionally hires trouble, and that's what's behind the question. Keep your answer short and positive. You are allowed only one negative about past employers, and only then if your interviewer has a "hot button" about his or her department or company; if so, you will have written it down on your notepad. For example, the only thing your past employer could not offer might be something like "the ability to contribute more in different areas in the smaller environment you have here." You might continue with, "I really liked everything about the job. The reason I want to leave it is to find a position where I can make a greater contribution. You see, I work for a large company that encourages specialization of skills. The smaller environment you have here will, as I said, allow me to contribute far more in different areas." Tell them what they want to hear--replay the hot button.

Of course, if you interview with a large company, turn it around. "I work for a small company and don't get the time to specialize in one or two major areas." Then replay the hot button.

3. What would you like to be doing five years from now?

The safest answer contains a desire to be regarded as a true professional and team player. As far as promotion, that depends on finding a manager with whom you can grow. Of course, you will ask what opportunities exist within the company before being any more specific: "From my research and what you have told me about the growth here, it seems operations is where the heavy emphasis is going to be. It seems that's where you need the effort and where I could contribute toward the company's goals." Or, "I have always felt that first-hand knowledge and experience open up opportunities that one might never have considered, so while at this point in time I plan to be a part of [e.g.] operations, it is reasonable to expect that other exciting opportunities will crop up in the meantime."

4. What are your biggest accomplishments?

Keep your answers job related. If you exaggerate contributions to major projects, you will be accused of suffering from "coffee-machine syndrome," the affliction of a junior clerk who claimed success for an Apollo space mission based on his relationships with certain scientists, established at the coffee machine. You might begin your reply with: "Although I feel my biggest achievements are still ahead of me, I am proud of my involvement with . . . I made my contribution as part of that team and learned a lot in the process. We did it with hard work, concentration, and an eye for the bottom line."

5. Can you work under pressure?

You might be tempted to give a simple "yes" or "no" answer, but don't. It reveals nothing, and you lose the opportunity to sell your skills and value profiles. Actually, this common question often comes from an unskilled interviewer, because it is closed-ended. As such, the question does not give you the chance to elaborate. Whenever you are asked a closed-ended question, mentally add: "Please give me a brief yet comprehensive



answer." Do that, and you will give the information requested and seize an opportunity to sell yourself. For example, you could say: "Yes, I usually find it stimulating. However, I believe in planning and proper management of my time to reduce panic deadlines within my area of responsibility."

6. Why should I hire you?

Your answer will be short and to the point. It will highlight areas from your background that relate to current needs and problems. Recap the interviewer's description of the job, meeting it point by point with your skills. Finish your answer with: "I have the qualifications you need [itemize them], I'm a team player, I take direction, and I have the desire to make a thorough success."

7. How do you take direction?

The interviewer wants to know whether you are open - minded and can be a team player. Can you follow directions or are you a difficult, high-maintenance employee? Hopefully, you are a low-maintenance professional who is motivated to ask clarifying questions about a project before beginning, and who then gets on with the job at hand, coming back to initiate requests for direction as circumstances dictate.

This particular question can also be defined as "How do you take direction?" and "How do you accept criticism?" Your answer should cover both points: "I take direction well and recognize that it can come in two varieties, depending on the circumstances. There is carefully explained direction, when my boss has time to lay things out for me in detail; then there are those times when, as a result of deadlines and other pressures, the direction might be brief and to the point. While I have seen some people get upset with that, personally I've always understood that there are probably other considerations I am not aware of. As such, I take the direction and get on with the job without taking offense, so my boss can get on with her job. It's the only way."

8. Tell me about yourself.

This is not an invitation to ramble on. If the context isn't clear, you need to know more about the question before giving an answer. In such a situation, you could ask, "Is there a particular aspect of my background that would be most relevant to you?" This will enable the interviewer to help you find the appropriate focus and avoid discussing irrelevancies.

Whichever direction your answer ultimately takes, be sure that it has some relevance to the world of your professional endeavors. The tale you tell should demonstrate, or refer to, one or more of your key behavioral profiles in action--perhaps honesty, integrity, being a team player, or determination. If you choose "team player" (maybe you're the star player at first base on a community team), you can tell a story about yourself outside of work that also speaks volumes about you at work. In part, your answer should make the connection between the two, such as, "I put my heart into everything I do, whether it be sports or work. I find that getting along with teammates--or professional peers--makes life more enjoyable and productive."

Or you might describe yourself as someone who is able to communicate with a variety of people, and give an example from your personal life that indicates ability to communicate that would also apply at work.

This isn't a question that you can answer effectively off the cuff. Take some time in advance to think about yourself, and those aspects of your personality and/or background that you'd like to promote or feature for your interviewer.

9. What is the most difficult situation you have faced?



The question looks for information on two fronts: How do you define difficult? and, what was your handling of the situation? You must have a story ready for this one in which the situation both was tough and allowed you to show yourself in a good light. Avoid talking about problems that have to do with co-workers. You can talk about the difficult decision to fire someone, but emphasize that once you had examined the problem and reached a conclusion you acted quickly and professionally, with the best interests of the company at heart.

"What are some of the things that bother you?" "What are your pet hates?" "Tell me about the last time you felt anger on the job."

These questions are so similar that they can be treated as one. It is tremendously important that you show you can remain calm. Most of us have seen a colleague lose his or her cool on occasion--not a pretty sight and one that every sensible employer wants to avoid. This question comes up more and more often the higher up the corporate ladder you climb, and the more frequent your contact with clients and the general public. To answer it, find something that angers conscientious workers. "I enjoy my work and believe in giving value to my employer. Dealing with clock-watchers and the ones who regularly get sick on Mondays and Fridays really bothers me, but it's not something that gets me angry or anything like that." An answer of this nature will help you much more than the kind given by a California engineer, who went on for some minutes about how he hated the small-mindedness of people who don't like pet rabbits in the office.

10. Do you prefer working with others or alone?

This question is usually used to determine whether you are a team player. Before answering, however, be sure you know whether the job requires you to work alone. Then answer appropriately. Perhaps: "I'm quite happy working alone when necessary. I don't need much constant reassurance. But I prefer to work in a group--so much more gets achieved when people pull together."

13) The Stress Interview Questions

Your worst nightmare can come true at a stress interview, but once you learn that these questions are just amplified versions of much simpler ones, you'll remain cool and calm.

- Would you like to have your boss's job?
- Why should I hire an outsider when I could fill the job with someone inside the company?
- Why were you out of work for so long?

Would you like to have your boss's job?

It is a rare boss who wants his or her livelihood taken away. On my own very first job interview, my future boss said, "Mr. Yate, it has been a pleasure to meet you. However, until you walked in my door, I wasn't out on the street looking for a new job." The interviewer wants to know if you are the type of person who will be confrontational, challenging, undermining, or too ambitious or arrogant. He also seeks to determine how goal-oriented and motivated you are in your work life, so you may also want to comment on your sense of direction. But remember that while ambition is admired, it is admired most by the ambitious.

Be cautiously optimistic; perhaps, "Well, if my boss were promoted over the coming years, I would hope to have made a consistent enough contribution to warrant his recommendation. It is not that I am looking to take anyone's job; rather, I am looking for a manager who will help me develop my capabilities and grow with him."

Why should I hire an outsider when I could fill the job with someone inside the company?



The question isn't as stupid as it sounds. Obviously, the interviewer has examined existing employees with an eye toward their promotion or reassignment. Just as obviously, the job cannot be filled from within the company. If it could be, it would be, and for two very good reasons: It is cheaper for the company to promote from within, and it is good for employee morale. Hiding behind this intimidating question is actually a pleasant invitation: "Tell me why I should hire you." Your answer should include two steps. The first is a simple recitation of your skills and personality profile strengths, tailored to the specific requirements of the job.

For the second step, realize first that whenever a manager is filling a position, he or she is looking not only for someone who can do the job but also for someone who can benefit the department in a larger sense. No department is as good as it could be--each has weaknesses that need strengthening.

So in the second part of your answer, include a question of your own: "Those are my general attributes. However, if no one is promote able from inside the company, which means you are looking to add strength to your team in a special way. In what ways do you hope the final candidate will be able to benefit our department?" The answer to this is your cue to sell your applicable qualities.

Why were you out of work for so long?

You must have a sound explanation for any and all gaps in your employment history. If not, you are unlikely to receive a job offer. Emphasize that you were not just looking for another paycheck--you were looking for a company with which to settle and to which to make a long-term contribution. "I made a decision that I enjoy my work too much just to accept another paycheck. So I determined that the next job I took would be one where I could settle down and do my best to make a solid contribution. From everything I have heard about this company, you are a group that expects people to pull their weight, because you've got a real job to do. I like that, and I would like to be a part of the team. What have I got to do to get the job?"

You answer the question, compliment the interviewer, and shift the emphasis from you being unemployed to how you can get the job offer.

14) Be Prepared to Ask Questions

Toward the end of the interview the employer will usually ask if you have any questions. You should be prepared to ask one or two questions; if you do not, he/she may think you are ill prepared or not interested in the company. Use this opportunity to ask questions that subtly demonstrate your knowledge of the firm and the industry, and to underscore your interest in seeking a long-term career position at that company. At the same time, you should not allow your questions to become an interrogation. Two or three thoughtful questions are usually sufficient.

What questions should you ask? Here are some examples:

"What is the next position or positions that this job typically leads to?"

"Assuming I was hired and performed well as a (the position you are applying for) for a number of years, what possible opportunities might this lead to?"

These questions imply that you are an achievement-oriented individual looking for a company where you can build a long-term career.



"I have noticed in the trade press that your firm has a terrific reputation in marketing. What are the major insights into the marketing process that I might gain from this position?"

"I understand that your company is the market leader in industrial drill bits in North America. I am curious to know how much of the product line is sold overseas."

These questions imply that you are very interested in a long-term career in this industry and that you might lean toward taking a career with this firm because of its solid reputation. Your well-timed and appropriate questions are sure to impress even the toughest interviewer.

"What skills are considered most useful for success in the job I am applying for?"

This question implies you really care about your success at your first job and also provides important information for further interviews--or your follow-up after this interview.

"I would really like to work for your firm. I think it's a great company and I am confident I could do this job well. What is the next step of the selection process

More than a question, this is a powerful statement that will quickly set you apart from other job hunters. However, you should only make this statement if you mean it. If you are offered the position but then say you need two weeks to think it over, you will lose your credibility. Even so, it is reasonable to ask for 24 or 48 hours to "digest the details."

Be sure to save your questions about salary, benefits, and related issues for later, after you receive an offer. You will still be free to negotiate--or to decline the position--at that point. Also, avoid asking any questions that will be difficult or awkward for the interviewer to answer. This is not the time to ask, for example, "Does your company use recycled paper for all of its advertising brochures?"

15) The Ten Most Common Mistakes

An interview is your opportunity to strut your stuff and also to learn about the company and their people. The most important ingredients to a successful interview are proper preparation and good listening skills.

Here are 10 things to avoid while preparing for your interview. You can either scroll down the page or click the different topics located below to read each question and get valuable advice.

- Lack of Preparation
- Arriving Late
- Improper Appearance
- Lack of Confidence
- Poor Attitude
- The Wrong Pitch
- Inconsistency
- Failing to Listen
- Losing Your Cool
- Blowing the Negotiation

Lack of Preparation



Once the interview is scheduled, do your best to get ready for it. Find out as much as you can about the interviewer(s): bone up on the company, their business, and the position for which you're interviewing. Prepare for the questions they're likely to ask you, as well as the questions you would like to ask them. Formulate an objective, e.g., getting a job offer and learning enough about the company and their people to enable you to decide whether you want to work there.

Arriving Late

On the day of the interview, leave enough margin of error to avoid any possibility of being late. No one will remember your excuse for being late, only that you were late. If you are unavoidably late, offer a sincere apology just once, and then let it drop.

Improper Appearance

Every large company has its culture. This is likely to include a dress and grooming code and standards. The appropriate attire and grooming (e.g., length of hair, and use of cosmetics and jewelry) is generally what you see around you. If you're in doubt as to what to wear on your interview, pay an anonymous visit to their facility during lunchtime and take a look.

If you expect the interview to last several hours, plan to wear clothing that will look neat all day. Bring a comb and whatever other "equipment" you may need to maintain a neat and tidy appearance. If it's raining, protect your outfit with reliable rain gear. Do not, under any circumstances, allow yourself to appear disheveled.

Lack of Confidence

Are you confident of your ability to meet responsibilities entrusted to you? Would you hire someone like you? If not, then you need to learn to appear as competent and confident as you would like to be (and want others to believe you are). Of course, feeling confident doesn't automatically make you competent, but it does create an atmosphere that is conducive to success.

Poor Attitude

The best way to approach an interview is with enthusiasm and an open mind. Treat everyone you meet with courtesy. If you decide during the interview that you don't want the job, or that you may not be sufficiently experienced or qualified to receive the offer, chalk it up to experience.

Continue to present yourself in an upbeat and professional manner. If they're giving you the courtesy of their time and consideration, the least you can do is to respond in kind. Practice manifesting a positive attitude--it's a good habit to develop and maintain.

The Wrong Pitch

There are different kinds of interviewers, with different purposes. The personnel/human resources professional typically is there to screen people out to keep from wasting the decision-maker's time. You don't need to "impress" them, and you certainly can't snow them. They just want to ensure that you have truly and accurately represented yourself in your job application and resume.

When a screener interviews you, answer their questions as clearly and accurately as possible, but do not volunteer any additional information. They don't need to like you, only to decide that you're worth passing along to the decision-maker. Chances are you'll never see them again even if you get the job.



The decision-maker, on the other hand, wants to feel comfortable with you and certain that you can do the job. This is where you may opt to turn on the charm, discuss more personal interests, and talk shop. They probably don't have a lot of experience conducting interviews, and you may be able to get them to do most of the talking.

Inconsistency

Professional interviewers are quick to notice inconsistencies, hesitations, and uncertainties. They may challenge something you say just to see how you respond. If you back off, change, justify, qualify, over-explain, or retract what you said earlier, they may suspect that you've been exaggerating or lying to them, and they're likely to probe deeper. When someone responds to your statement with a skeptical look, a pause, or a comment, like "Really?" you've got to hold the fort. Just smile politely, nod, and wait for them to continue. If you become uncomfortable, you can always ask, "Have I answered the question to your satisfaction?" or "Was there anything else you wanted me to talk about?"

Failing to Listen

The successful interviewee reads the interviewer's tone and gestures and responds accordingly. This means paying attention, and knowing when to continue, change direction, or stop talking. Avoid potentially controversial and overly personal issues.

Losing Your Cool

If you are being interviewed for a high-level or high-pressure position, you may be subjected to a pressure interview. This can take the form of making you wait, having the interview interrupted (once or several times), inappropriate conversation or questions, and even rudeness or hostility. Most likely, you will never be subjected to such tactics, although some unpleasant situations (especially being kept waiting) can arise without intent.

The trick is to know yourself, your tolerance, and what you're willing to put up with. If you react, do so with control and resolve, so that you won't regret your behavior afterward. It's a matter of personal temperament and values...and perhaps how badly you want the job.

Blowing the Negotiation

If you get the offer, at some point you will have to negotiate your compensation package and any other benefits. Make sure that the terms of your employment, including responsibilities, reviews, and related conditions are defined and that you have a clear idea of what is expected of you. Don't commit yourself to a salary or conditions that will make you unhappy.

Remember, once you have accepted specific terms, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to amend them. So prepare yourself to negotiate wisely on your own behalf.

16) Look on the Bright Side

Many job candidates kill their chances for a job by making negative comments during an interview. Never make a negative statement about a former boss or colleague--even if it is completely true and fully justified. If the interviewer asks why you were fired from your last job, do not say "My boss was unfair" or "I didn't get along with my co-workers." An interviewer would rather hire someone who was fired than someone who either does not get along with people or shifts blame to others.



On the other hand, you can greatly increase your chances of getting a job offer by projecting a positive, upbeat attitude during your interview. This is one of the best ways you can stand out from the competition. You can project this image by smiling from time to time during the interview; by responding to interview questions with enthusiasm; by demonstrating excitement about your past accomplishments; and by showing optimism about the prospect of starting or continuing your career.