

Top Ten Ways to Ace a Job Interview

1. Attitude, Attitude, Attitude

Attitude is the number one reason 3,000 employers told the U. S. Dept. of Labor they hired job candidates. Positive energy, passion, and enthusiasm are contagious. Employers really want someone who really wants the job.

2. Research the position, the interviewer/hiring manager and the company

Network, research, and call friends and acquaintances to find out all you can. Find out what the employer really needs from the successful candidate -- the key challenges the person will face -- the most effective solutions. Use that information to prepare for the interview.

3. Hold practice job interviews

You don't go to job interviews everyday, so you're rusty when it comes to pitching yourself. Practice interviewing with someone you respect and who can give you constructive feedback. It's your career -- invest in yourself.

4. Focus on meeting the employer's needs

Early on in the interview, find out from the interviewer "what are the top three deliverables you most need from this position?" Use the rest of the interview to demonstrate how you are uniquely prepared through your experience, skills, and education to provide these deliverables. Remember, it doesn't matter that you need the job. What matters is what they need.

5. Answer the questions

Be concise, precise, and specific. Tell the employer exactly how they will benefit from hiring you. Give concrete examples. Speak in terms of your measurable accomplishments.

6. Ask questions -- always

Demonstrate your thinking skills and that you are serious about the position. Examples:

- "What are the key selection criteria for the position?"
- "What are the most significant challenges I would face coming into the position?"
- "What were the reasons the previous employee left the position?"
- "What are your most serious reservations about me and how well have I answered them?"

7. Prepare in advance for the difficult questions

Anticipate them in your mock interviews. Then, stay calm, cool, and collected. You've done this before.

8. Be authentic

Be yourself -- your best self -- that's who's most interesting to the interviewer. Remember, you need a job where you can be who you are.

9. Speak of your "weaknesses" in terms of "areas for growth"

Apologizing for your weaknesses just raises questions in the interviewer's mind about your self-confidence. If asked about your weaknesses, describe them in terms of areas of growth -- and give specifics about how you have grown.

10. Follow up with a thank you letter. Restate your key points

Express your appreciation for the time the interviewer took with you. Highlight once again the top reasons you feel you are the best candidate to meet the employer's needs. Answer any lingering questions. Saying thanks is the easiest way to set yourself apart from the crowd. Only one in a hundred does so.

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