

How to prepare for a job interview

Take some time to review these successful strategies and techniques to learn how to prepare for a job interview to help you make a positive impression and maximise your career potential.

BE PREPARED.

Find out as much as possible about the company through newspapers, annual reports and websites. Your preparation will let a prospective employer know that you are motivated, hardworking and proactive. Practice for your interview the way you would for a major presentation to a large audience, such as a company's Board of Directors.

ANSWER KEY QUESTIONS WITH CONFIDENCE.

Practice your responses to such questions as, "What are your strongest skills?" and "Why would you like to work for this company?" Well thought-out answers to these questions show confidence and competence. Don't be afraid to interject your own relevant ideas or insights. Successful interviews are the result of two-way conversations.

ASK GOOD QUESTIONS.

Prepare a few good questions from the research you've conducted. Two or three strategic questions will demonstrate your intelligence and analytical skills.

SELL YOUR STRENGTHS.

Identify five or six of your main attributes/skills and be prepared to talk about them in very specific terms, such as ways in which you saved a company money, increased its revenue or trained a co-worker. This is often the defining reason one person gets the job over another. The strengths you focus on should also be aligned with the traits the employer is seeking for the available position.

OFFER BRIEF, FOCUSED RESPONSES.

Your ability to communicate is critical during an interview. Answer questions briefly, yet thoroughly, providing specific examples about your experience, skills, etc. Stay on target with your answers, maintain eye contact with your interviewer and offer enthusiastic responses whenever appropriate.

DRESS ACCORDING TO THE COMPANY'S CULTURE.

Check with your company contact prior to your interview to find out about the company's dress code. If you're not certain, formal business attire is the safest choice.

ARRIVE EARLY.

Arrive 15 minutes early to allow for parking and to find your way around the building. You should also give yourself a few minutes to relax before the interview. Remember, your punctuality tells a prospective employer that you're conscientious and dependable.

BE FRIENDLY AND ENTHUSIASTIC.

Smile and say hello to company employees. A positive impression goes a long way, especially when others, such as the support staff, often influence hiring decisions.

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KEEP A POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE.

Never talk negatively about prior employers or co-workers, regardless of your experience with them. Maintaining a positive attitude shows a prospective employer that you're a team player.

STATE YOUR INTEREST.

Let your interviewer know that you are interested in the position, and inquire about the next steps in the process. Asking a question such as, "Do my qualifications match the needs of your company?" gets right to the point and lets the interviewer know you're serious about employment.

DON'T FORGET THE THANK-YOU LETTER.

A prompt thank-you letter exhibits your professionalism and interest in the position. Send a letter to the company's key decision-makers as well as to the person with whom you've interviewed. It is also acceptable to email a letter to your interviewer, which provides instant feedback regarding your interest, but determine if this kind of response is acceptable. Some managers view the email approach as "too easy." A short, hand written note demonstrates you have taken the time to say thanks.

For more job interview tips, visit the my career centre at www.kellyservices.com.au.