

Ready to Rock Your Interview?

We've pooled years of time-tested tips from our recruiters that will make you stand out and move you to the front of the candidate line.

Preparation Will Raise Your Confidence Level

Your interview could be the most important test you ever take. Your interviewer will be scoring you on every answer you give and every action you make.

Study up on the Company

Learn about the company you could soon be working for. What does it do? What is its standing in today's marketplace. Learn about its history and future goals. Check several sources including:

- Your recruiter
- The company's website
- Online resources like LinkedIn, Facebook, Glassdoor, CareerLeak, local business journals and newspapers
- Annual reports and 10K reports
- Business associates and friends

Study up on the Position

Have a thorough understanding of the position. What are the primary responsibilities? Be prepared to ask specific questions like:

- Who does the position report to?
- What are the keys to being successful in this position?
- What has caused someone to fail in this position?

Study up on Yourself

Refresh your memory on what is on your resume.

- Look over dates of employment, supervisors, responsibilities, and accomplishments.
- Be prepared to discuss your strengths and weaknesses
- Be prepared to give examples of achievements and how your abilities can benefit the company
- Concentrate on your most recent positions, but make sure to highlight your progress throughout your career

Know the exact time and location of your interview and how long it takes to get there and park. Drive the route the night before if needed.

Looking Sharp for Your Interview

The first impression you make will determine the course of your interview, so keep in mind that you are meeting your prospective employer for the first time. Your appearance, conservative clothing, and relaxed attitude will all contribute to the overall impression you make.

We recommend the following, regardless of the office dress code.

FOR MEN

- Wear a conservative dark blue or dark gray suit with a long-sleeved white shirt and tie
- Your tie should be conservative but stylish
- Make sure you shine your shoes and wear dark socks
- Jewelry should be limited to a wristwatch & wedding ring
- Fingernails should be clean and trimmed
- Facial hair should be clean-shaven



FOR WOMEN

- A business suit (skirt or pants) in a subdued color is best for first interviews
- Dress in today's styles, but keep the hemline close to knee-length and keep blouses modest. Sleeveless is not recommended.
- Shoes should be polished and heel height should be moderate
- Jewelry should be minimal and in good taste
- Nails should be well manicured and polished in clear or light conservative colors
- Hair should be clean, trimmed and neat
- Makeup should be lightly applied
- A conservative dress or suit is fine for additional interviews



Create a Professional Image

Voicemail - It's important to have voicemail or a message inbox so that hiring managers can leave a message when you're not available. Be sure that your voicemail message is professional sounding. If you receive texts on your phone, you can note (texts accepted) next to your phone number in your contact information on your resume.

Email or Text - Set up a personal email address for your job search. Do not use your work email address. If you don't have a personal email account, sign up for a free email account. Check the email account frequently, so you can respond to employer inquiries in a timely manner. Be sure it has a professional feel to it, not cowboydude@gmail.com or hotchick@att.net.

Social Media - Strengthen Your Social Status

Sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, YouTube and Pinterest are not just for connecting with friends and posting pictures of family vacations; they are the platforms for your personal and professional brand. Now companies are paying attention to your online presence like never before.



Here are some suggestions:

- Carefully set your privacy settings to ensure different content is available only to intended audiences.
- If you are debating posting a particular picture, link or message, err on the side of caution.
- Make your LinkedIn profile as comprehensive and engaging as possible, just like you would your print resume.
- Participate in discussions on LinkedIn forums and professional networking sites to demonstrate your knowledge.
- Review the people in your network and eliminate any connections that may reflect on you in an unfavorable light.
- Connect with the companies you want to work for through groups and communities.
- Search for your name on the Internet. If you don't like what you find, change the message by starting a blog or registering a website for your name and your portfolio.

Create the right balance of personality and professionalism to express your character without crossing a line.

Never say anything false or unsubstantiated, as it could come back to haunt you and hamper your credibility.

Practice for Your Interview

Consider how you would answer this sampling of typical interview questions. Where applicable, make sure to tie your answers into practical examples that demonstrate the potential positive impact you can bring to the employer.

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your geographic preferences?
- What type of work do you want to do?
- Why did you choose your field of work?
- Is working overtime a problem?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What do you know about our company?
- What do you want to know about our company?
- Why should we hire you?
- Tell me about your current position?
- Why are you leaving your current position?
- Why are you interested in making a job change?
- What did you like most about your previous jobs?
What did you like least?
- Can you explain any gaps in your employment history?
- What is most important to you in your next company/position?
Or, what do you plan to be doing in 5 or 10 years?
- What do you consider to be your strong points or greatest strength?
- What do you consider to be your weak points or greatest weakness?
- How would your co-workers describe you? Your employer?
- How do you describe yourself?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- Do you prefer working alone?
- Do you work well under pressure, deadlines, etc.?
- What management style is most effective for you?
- How has your early career or background influenced your progression and/or current management style?
- How has your management style changed over the years?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- What are your five biggest accomplishments in your present or last job? In your career?
- What is the most difficult experience you've ever had to deal with and how did you handle it?
- Who had the greatest influence on your life? Why?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Ask a friend, colleague or your recruiter to conduct a practice interview with you and provide constructive feedback.

Prepare the Questions You Want to Ask

A good interview should be a two-way conversation, not a one-sided interrogation. Be sure to ask questions that can help you learn more about the position, make you look informed and give you a better idea of where you stand with the interviewer. Here are some questions you could consider asking:

- What are the main qualities you are looking for in a candidate?
- What are the prospects for growth and advancement?
- How does one advance in the company? Are there any examples?
- Do you feel my background is a good fit for the job?
- In the recent history of the company, what has been the biggest advance and what has been the biggest setback?
- What is your highest priority in the next six months and how could someone like me help?
- Where do you see your company going in the next several years?
- What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
- Is this a new position? If not, what did the previous employee go on to do?
- How would you describe a typical week/day in this position?
- Who does this position report to? If I am offered the position, may I meet him/her?
- Who will review my performance? How often?
- How many people work in this office/department?
- What characteristics do your best employees have in common?
- What does your interview process entail?
- Could I have an opportunity to meet some of the people with whom I would be working?
- Could you describe your company's management style and the type of employee who fits well with it?
- How much travel is expected? • Is relocation a possibility?
- What is the typical work week? Is overtime expected?
- What do you like about working here?
- Could you explain your organizational structure?
- What is company's policy on providing seminars, workshops, and training for employees to keep up their skills or acquire new ones?
- What particular computer equipment and software do you use?
- Would you like a list of references?

- If I am extended a job offer, how soon would you like me to start?
- When can I expect to hear from you?
- Are there any other questions I can answer for you?

The Salary Discussion

Part of your recruiter's job is to handle sensitive negotiations and help both parties come to an agreement on a fair and acceptable compensation package. This often requires extended negotiations. While you should never start discussions about salary during your interview or ask for more than the job pays, the interviewer may bring up the topic. If they do, here are some points to consider:

- Most employers offer a salary level that provides incentive to change jobs and excel. Employers also need to remain consistent with their existing salary structure for the position they are filling.
- Manage your expectations. Speak with your recruiters to get an accurate understanding of what the position should earn in your specific location.
- No amount of money will make up for a bad match. You will want to evaluate the company, the job and the environment. A position that affords you the opportunity to work with people in a dynamic work environment offers many rewards that money cannot buy.
- Talk with your recruiter about the total compensation package. This can consist of salary, bonuses, benefits and more. These elements can be arranged and rearranged to satisfy both the individual and the company.
- If you are asked directly what salary you are looking for, try to avoid quoting a specific figure. Instead, offer this response: "I am very interested in the opportunity and I feel I can make a meaningful contribution. I am currently earning \$___ per year. I am flexible and open to a competitive offer."
- Remember to discuss all relevant salary and benefits issues with your recruiter. If you are asked again later in the interview process, you may want to restate what you are earning, cite your research and ask what a person with your experience level is worth in their company.
- Keep your recruiter involved.

Video Interview

A growing trend is to use a video in place of a traditional in-person interview or as an initial screening tool in place of telephone pre-screens.

Some of the most successful organizations in the world conduct video interviews with potential candidates.

There are two very different types of video interviews.

Interactive Interviews - These function much like a traditional interview, in that questions and answers are spontaneous.

On-demand Interviews - These involve a series of previously recorded questions and all answers are recorded for review and comparison to other candidates.

Be sure to invest time in preparation before the camera starts rolling.

BEFORE the Video Interview

- Prepare your surroundings that will show in your video.
- Clean and unclutter the area.
- Remove inappropriate photos, artwork and unnecessary equipment or furnishings.
- Eliminate distractions. Close your windows. Turn off ceiling fans. Advise anyone else in your home not to create distractions or noise. Confine pets in another area or outside.
- Turn off your cell phone, computer, television and radio.
- Disconnect from chat programs, Facebook and Twitter. to eliminate notification sounds.
- Review any directions for your equipment so you are comfortable using your webcam, computer, software, etc.
 - Test everything. Turn on your computer and verify that your Internet connection is working and the interview program is running as it should. Also, test your webcam, speakers and microphone.
 - Turn off any virus or maintenance scans that may be scheduled in order to avoid delays.



- Prepare your lighting. Have ample lighting in the room to ensure a good picture quality. The light source should come from behind the webcam (shining onto your face), not from behind you. Open windows can wash out your picture, so close your blinds if you can.
- Make sure your webcam has a clear, unobstructed view and that your head and shoulders are in the frame. It is better for the webcam to be pointing down at you than looking up at your chin.

DURING the Video Interview

- Look at ease. Make eye contact at all times, watch your body language and avoid displaying signs of fatigue or nervousness.
- Speak naturally. Be mindful of your tone, speak clearly and be sure to project confidence. Be enthusiastic, engaging and deliver your key points with emphasis.
- Don't panic over technical difficulties. If something goes wrong, let the interviewer know and ask for assistance. Whatever you do, remain calm and poised; after all, the interviewer wants to see how you act under pressure.

AFTER the Video Interview

- Shut off your camera.
- Send a thank you letter or email, just like you would after a face-to-face interview.



Tip: Thinking about a video resume? Keep it short, a minute or two, and explain your background in a story-like fashion. Also specify why you are the best person for this job and what value you would bring to this organization with the skills you possess.

Leave a Lasting Positive Impression

If the interviewer has failed to elicit some important information about you, make that information known before you leave. Lastly, always find out what the next steps will be and when they are likely to occur. Even after you have shaken hands and said goodbye, the interview process is not over. Instead, you must continue to sell yourself and reinforce your qualifications.

Sending a follow-up letter or email is imperative.

This is your chance to remind the interviewer about your skills and to include anything you forgot to say during your interview. Don't lose your position to someone who takes the time to send a follow-up letter.



Here are a few points to consider:

- Send the follow-up letter as soon as possible. This allows you to convey a sense of urgency and a high interest level in the position. Ideally, your letter should go out the next day.
- A hard copy letter is preferred, but an email is acceptable.
- Be as brief as possible. It demonstrates respect for the interviewer's time.
- Within the body of the letter, make sure to:
 1. Thank the interviewer for their time.
 2. Reiterate your interest and enthusiasm in the company and position.
 3. Highlight your experiences and accomplishments.
 4. Ask what you can do to proceed to the next step.

Have someone carefully proofread your letter, then email it as an attached document to your recruiter for a final review. Together, we'll make sure your follow-up letter represents you and everything you have to offer.



Sample follow-up letter for you to personalize.

Date

Mr. John Smith
XYZ Company
1234 South Street
Anywhere, XX 12345

Dear Mr. Smith:

I appreciate the time spent with you discussing ABC Company and the _____ position. It was a pleasure meeting with you, _____ and _____. I feel my qualifications and skill set in _____, _____ and _____ reflect those necessary to be successful at ABC Company.

At XYZ Corporation, I successfully implemented an in-house training system that resulted in a 25% increase in sales the first year. I also managed a sales team of 30 professionals. I am confident that I have the experience and drive to successfully manage the _____ Department.

I feel an even greater excitement level about the opportunity because it will allow me to attain my goals of _____, _____ and _____.

I look forward to our next meeting to discuss this in greater detail.

Sincerely,
Your Name

Resignation

While resigning from your current position can be emotional and stressful, there are several things you can do to make the process go smoothly.

- Put it in writing. Handing your boss a resignation letter is the most effective way to avoid escalating an already uncomfortable situation. Written resignations are formal and will become part of your permanent record. This is for your own protection.
- It will help you keep the focus on the positive aspects of your career move, rather than any negative aspects of your old situation.
- It relieves the pressure of having to speak first.

The sooner you leave the company, the better. When you resign, you should give fair notice. You can ask if the company would like for you to leave earlier if your new company wants you to start earlier. If your current employer wants the full two weeks stay until your last day.

Sample resignation letter for you to personalize.

Former Manager's Name
Title
Company

Date

Dear {Former Manager's Name}

It is with mixed emotions, yet with firm conviction, that I write this letter of resignation from XYZ Company.

My association during the past (#) years with this excellent firm and its many fine people has been a wonderful part of my professional and personal life.

Please understand that I have made my decision after considerable deliberation. An outstanding opportunity presented itself that will significantly enhance my career and assist me in achieving my goals.

I am therefore resigning from XYZ Company effective (date). This will allow sufficient time to complete current commitments prior to commencing with my new employer on (date). In the interim, I will work with you and the staff to provide a smooth transfer of my current

I hope you will understand and accept my decision. I will support you in making this change as easy as possible for the staff and department.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Counter Offers

There are many significant reasons for not accepting a counter offer.

Ten Reasons for not accepting a counter offer - *The Wall Street Journal*

1. What kind of company are you working for if you have to threaten to resign before they pay you what you are worth?
2. Where is the money for the Counter offer coming from? Is it your next raise early? All companies have strict wage and salary guidelines which must be followed. Are they going to make your increase retroactive in order to compensate for underpaying you over the last several years?
3. Your company may immediately start looking for a new person at a cheaper price. You could be training your replacement.
4. You now have made your employer aware that you are unhappy. From this day on, your loyalty will always be in question.
5. When promotion time comes around, your employer will remember who was loyal and who was not.
6. When times get tough, your employer will begin cutbacks with you.
7. The same circumstances that now cause you to consider a change will repeat themselves in the future even if you accept a counter offer. Things about your position and company rarely change.
8. Statistics show that if you accept a counter offer, the probability of voluntarily leaving in six months, or being let go within one year, is extremely high — 85% of people who accept a counter offer are gone in six months, and 90% of people who accept are gone in twelve months.
9. Accepting a counter offer is an insult to your intelligence and a blow to your personal pride, knowing that you were bought.
10. Once the word gets out, the relationship that you now enjoy with your coworkers will never be the same. You will lose the personal satisfaction of peer group acceptance

During Your Interview Be Sure To

1. Bring several copies of your resume as you may meet more than one interviewer.
2. Arrive early. We recommend you get there at least 15 minutes early.
3. Treat other people you encounter with courtesy and respect. Their opinions of you might be solicited during hiring decisions.
4. Fill out all applications neatly and completely. This shows you can follow directions and allows the interviewer to find information they seek on a form they are familiar with. In many companies it is company policy to fill out their application.
5. When greeted by your interviewer, offer a firm handshake, make eye contact, and have a friendly expression.
6. Listen to be sure you understand your interviewer's name and the correct pronunciation.
7. Even when your interviewer gives you a first and last name, address your interviewer by title (Ms., Mr., Dr.) and last name, until invited to do otherwise.
8. Maintain good eye contact during the interview.
9. Ask specific questions from your "homework" research.
10. Avoid "yes" or "no" responses when appropriate. Be thorough in your responses, while being concise in your wording.
11. Stress specific facts, figures and measurable accomplishments. Let your interviewer know that you have a history of making a positive impact.
12. Be positive about your reason for leaving your current job. The key word to remember is "more." You want more challenges, more responsibility, more opportunity, etc.
13. Be honest and be yourself. Dishonesty gets discovered and is grounds for withdrawing job offers and for firing.
14. Answer every question, even the tough ones. Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question.
15. Ask for the position — be proactive at the end of the interview.
16. When the interviewer concludes the interview, offer a firm handshake and make eye contact. Thank them for their time.

During Your Interview Be Sure NOT To

1. Don't make excuses. Take responsibility for your decisions and your actions.
2. Don't make negative comments about other companies, previous employers, co-workers or professors (or others). Doing so can make you look petty or difficult to work with.
3. Don't falsify application materials or answers to interview questions.
4. Don't treat the interview casually, as if you are just shopping around or doing the interview for practice. This is an insult to the interviewer and to the organization.
5. Don't give the impression that you are only interested in an organization because of its geographic location.
6. Don't give the impression you are only interested in salary; Avoid discussing salary or benefit packages. Remain open. Let your recruiter handle these sensitive negotiations.
7. Don't act as though you would take any job or are desperate for employment.
8. Don't make the interviewer guess what type of work you are interested in; it is not the interviewer's job to act as a career advisor to you.
9. Don't be unprepared for typical interview questions. You may not be asked all of them in every interview, but being unprepared looks foolish.
10. Don't exhibit frustrations or a negative attitude in an interview.
11. Don't go to extremes with your posture; don't slouch, and don't sit rigidly on the edge of your chair.
12. Don't assume that a female interviewer is "Mrs." or "Miss." Address her as "Ms." unless told otherwise. Her marital status is irrelevant to the purpose of the interview.
13. Don't chew gum or smell like smoke.
14. Turn off your cell phone off before your interview! Don't take a cell phone call.
15. Don't take your parents, children, your pet (an assistance animal is not a pet in this circumstance), spouse, fiancé, or friends to your interview.

We're here for you!

We're here to assist you through the job search process.

1. We want to get to know you. What are your goals, strengths, and career aspirations? In what type of work environment will you thrive?
2. We want to match your skills and preferences with our current job openings. Or, we want to market you to our client companies where we feel you would make a great addition to their staff.
3. We want to prepare you to sell yourself during a dynamic interview. This includes both your visual appearance and verbal presentation.
4. We want to support you during each stage of the hiring process.
5. We want to negotiate a great compensation package on your behalf. This includes salary and benefits.
6. We want to stay in touch with you to be sure you continue to be pleased with your position.
7. We want to be your knowledgeable, friendly, supportive, helpful recruiters.

Please let us know whenever we can assist you with your career advancement. We also encourage you to refer your friends, family members and colleagues. Placement of your referrals can result in a referral fee paid directly to you. Personal referrals from people we have placed in great jobs comprise our No. 1 source of candidates.

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