

Interviewing Skills Handout



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<u>Before An Interview Make Sure To:</u>	<u>Don't Forget To:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a good night's sleep • Take a shower • Shampoo your hair • Shave • Brush your teeth • Use mouthwash • Use deodorant • Comb your hair • Trim and clean your nails • Wear clean and pressed clothes • Wear the proper clothes • Avoid flashy colors • Avoid loud fashions • Clean and shine your shoes • Avoid excessive jewelry • Avoid strong perfume/cologne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring your resume • Bring your work permits • Bring your social security card • Bring a photo id • Bring your portfolio • Bring your references • Bring money • Arrive 15 minutes early • If late, call the manager • Have your calendar with you • Use blue/black ink only on applications • Bring an ink eraser – do not use whiteout.

Appearance

Both your appearance and presentation during an interview are important factors. The employer will make a decision about the job seeker as a potential employee in the first few minutes of the interview. While an employer should not select or reject you on the basis of your clothing and mode of dress, it happens frequently. This may seem unfair. However, many employers screen or eliminate candidates who do not dress appropriately for the interview. Remember, the employer is attempting to visualize you as an employee of his/her company. If you do not dress properly for the interview, then you will probably not dress properly when you are meeting the company's customers.

When preparing for an interview, you might want to divide jobs into two categories:

- **Dress-up Jobs** - these positions require traditional dress for the interview. For example: hospital positions, office sales positions, etc.
 1. Men - a suit or dress pants and a sport coat, dress shirt and a tie are appropriate.
 2. Women - A dress, skirt and blouse, blazer and skirt or pants are appropriate. Overall, attire should be conservative. Be careful not to wear too much jewelry or makeup.
- **Dress-down Jobs** - Interviews for these jobs require a neat casual look. Overdressing could be detrimental to the interview. Examples of dress-down jobs include landscaping, mechanics, waiters, waitresses and maintenance positions.
 1. Men - Dress pants and shirt, shoes (no sandals or tennis shoes) are appropriate.

2. Women - Dress pants and blouse or skirt and blouse are recommended. Jewelry and cosmetics should be conservative.

General Dress Guidelines:

- Be sure your clothes are clean and ironed.
- Wear shined shoes.
- Wear minimal amounts of jewelry.
- Be sure hair is neat and you have showered to feel fresh and prepared.
- Check your hands. Fingernails should be clean and manicured. If you are wearing nail polish, make sure that it is a conservative color.
- Wear appropriate clothing.
- Do not wear T-Shirts, tennis shoes, hats, sunglasses, open-toed shoes or sandals.

<u>Job Type</u>	<u>Dress Description</u>
Janitorial, Factory, Domestic, Machine Operator, Mechanic, etc.	Dress pants, shirt or blouse, durable fabrics, neat work shoes, no heeled shoes or sneakers. Keep it simple.
Orderly, Nurse’s Aide, Clerk, Waitress, Cook, Messenger, etc.	Dress pants, shirt or blouse, Avoid loud colors. Low heels, dress shoes. Keep jewelry simple.
Typist, Sales Work, Receptionist, General Office, etc.	Suit, dress slacks, shirt and tie. Skirt and blouse. Medium heels.

Interviewing Tips and Techniques

The interview is the most important step in getting a job. In many cases, the interview is the first contact you will have with an employer. During the interview, the employer will try to assess your abilities and attitudes. The rating you get will determine if you get the job. One thing to try to keep in mind, though, is that 90% of all interviewers are not trained to be interviewers. In other words, they are as nervous as you are about the interview. Below are some general tips and guidelines to keep in mind during your interview.

- Go to the interview alone. If you take a friend or relative the interviewer will think you are insecure.
- Be on time for the interview. Be ten minutes early. If you are late, the interviewer will wonder whether you will be on time for work if hired.
- Be neat and clean. The employer will notice your hair, teeth, hands, fingernails, shoes and clothes. Wear appropriate dress clothes. You can always dress down once you get the job.
- Do not slouch or lean. The employer will notice your posture. Poor posture creates negative reactions. Stand and sit straight at all times without being stiff.
- Speak in a clear and pleasant manner. Try to be yourself and act naturally. Be pleasant. Smile during the introductions and at times during the interview, but don’t wear a grin all the time.

- Introduce yourself in a quiet, easy and confident way. Pronounce your name clearly and tell why you are there.
- Shake hands firmly.
- Stand until you are asked to sit down. Say thank you as you take your seat.
- Listen! Do not interrupt the interviewer. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. Do not bluff. Talk positively at all times.
- Don't fidget. Try not to act nervous by playing with keys, pencils or rings. If you act relaxed, the employer will think you are confident. But if you overdo it, you will appear too confident or not interested.
- Do not smoke or chew gum during the interview.
- Show an interest in what the interviewer is saying. Use eye contact. Look at the employer when you are talking. You can glance around once in a while, but do not stare into space. Eye contact is very important, but not too much. Do not look out the window.
- Learn what you can about the company. The employer expects you to know what type of job you would like to have with the firm. He/she may also ask you "what do you know about the company?" or "why would you like to work here?" You have to know some facts about the company.
- Use the interviewer's last name when possible (for example, Miss Jones). Use it at the beginning, the end and at least once in the middle of the interview. Be careful not to overuse it, however.
- Be informative. Answer the questions that are asked of you.
- It is very important to ask questions about the job (duties, hours, overtime, etc.).
- Wait until the last part of the interview to ask about wages or salary, unless the employer brings it up sometime during the interview.
- Stress your strong points: similar work experiences, related training, previous responsibilities, and your value as an employee.
- Play down your weaknesses. Do not describe problems you have that would affect your performance on the job.
- Do not be afraid of silence.
- If you are an older person, stress your maturity. If you are a younger person, stress your enthusiasm.
- Remember: what you wear sometimes speaks louder than what you say

Common Interview Questions

1. Did you enjoy school?
2. Tell me a little bit about yourself
3. Do you plan to continue your education?
4. In what school activities have you participated?

5. Which did you enjoy the most?
6. How do you spend your spare time?
7. What are your hobbies?
8. In what type of position are you interested?
9. Why do you think you might like to work for our company?
10. What jobs have you held?
11. What do you know about our company?
12. How did you rank in your graduating class?
13. What extracurricular activities did you participate in? Do you think they were worth the time you devoted?
14. What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
15. Why do you think you would like this particular type of job?
16. Are you looking for permanent or temporary work?
17. Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?
18. Have you ever had trouble getting along with people?
19. Can you take constructive criticism without feeling upset?
20. What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?
21. What are your career goals?
22. What is your idea of a good worker?
23. Do you like routine work?
24. What jobs have you enjoyed most? Least? Why?
25. What are your greatest weaknesses?
26. How do you handle rude or pushy customers?
27. Do you mind working overtime when your help is needed?
28. What skills and qualifications are essential for success in the position of ____?
29. How would your colleagues describe you?

30. How would your boss describe you?
31. What do you think of your present or past boss?
32. What would you consider to be the most significant accomplishment so far?
33. Can you work well under deadlines or pressure?
34. What was wrong with your current or last position

Before Leaving:

- Thank the interviewer. Use his/her name.
- Express interest in the position and the company.
- State when you will call back and why.
- Say good-bye to the interviewer. Use his/her name.

Following Up Tips:

- **If You Go Back to the Company:** (This is preferred because it helps the employer become more familiar with you.)
 - If you are first approached by a secretary, say something like this:

“I’m Joe Smith and I had an interview with Mr. Jones last Tuesday. He told me to come in today to find out his decision.”
 - If you go directly to the employer, say something like this:

“Hello Mr. Jones. I’m Joe Smith and we met for an interview last Tuesday regarding a welding position. We ended that conversation with the agreement that I would check back with you today to find out your decision.”
- **If You Call the Company:**
 - If you first talk to the secretary, say something like this:

“Hello my name is Joe Smith. I was told by Mr. Jones to all today to find out his decision about a welding position at (company name).”
 - If you talk directly to the employer:

“Hello, Mr. Jones. This is Joe Smith. We met last Tuesday for an interviewing dealing with a welding position at (company name). We agreed that I would call back today to discuss you decision.

Thank You Notes:

After every interview, it is wise to send a thank you note to the interviewer. This will let the interviewer know again that you are interested in the position. Plus, it’s a polite thing to do and it

keeps your name in the interviewer's mind longer. (It will help him/her remember you more positively!)

When writing thank you note, remember the following:

- Keep the note short.
- Thank the interviewer for the opportunity you were given to interview.
- Mention something specific about the interview.
- Tell the interviewer that you are interested in the position.
- Address the letter to the person with whom you interviewed. Address the letter "Dear Mr." or "Dear Ms." Do not use the interviewer's first name unless he/she is a personal friend.
- If your handwriting is excellent, you may write the note on a small, conservative note card. If not, type your letter on 8 1/2" by 11" stationery. Use matching envelopes.
- Sign your formal name.
- Send the letter or note very soon after the day of your interview.
- Be sure that everything is spelled correctly.
- Be sure that the letter is neat.
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Sample Thank You Note

Andrea Howser
165 Lincoln Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15210
(412) 555-0101

Mr. Jeffrey Abrams
Burlington Coat Factory
4728 Sixth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Dear Mr. Abrams:

Thank you for the interview on Wednesday, January 15, 1997, for the sales associate position.

I appreciate the information you shared with me about your store. Working in my field of retail sales in a respected establishment such as Burlington Coat Factory greatly appeals to me.

Sincerely,

Andrea M. Howser