

preparation: the first step toward having a successful interview.

Interview Dos.

- Research the company.
- Look your professional best. Wear business attire in neutral colors and be conservative in your use of fragrance, cosmetics and jewelry.
- Get organized the night before.
- Know your resume and have several copies of your resume and list of references with you.
- Arrive on time or a few minutes early.
- If presented with an application, fill it out neatly and completely.
- Greet the interviewer by last name if you are sure of the pronunciation. If not, ask the employer to repeat it.
- Project energy and enthusiasm. Smile and shake hands firmly.
- Wait until you're offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright, look alert and interested at all times.
- Listen carefully and respond succinctly and articulately. Look the hiring manager in the eye while speaking.
- Early in the meeting, try to get the interviewer to describe the job and the duties to you so you can focus your responses on your background, skills and accomplishments that relate to the position.
- Prepare to answer behavioral based interview questions. Rather than just the typical interview questions on your background and experience, you will need to be prepared to provide specific examples of your work experiences.
- Be sincere and truthful while focusing on communicating your specific professional achievements that relate to the job opening.

interview Don'ts.

- Don't answer with a simple "yes" or "no." Explain whenever possible.
- Don't have your cell phone with you or be sure to turn it off before your interview.
- If you don't understand a question - or need a moment to think about it - say so. Never pretend to know something or someone when you don't.
- Don't rely on your application or resume to do the selling for you. Interviewers will want you to be convincing.
- Don't make negative remarks about present or former employers. When explaining your reasons for leaving, communicate your rationale professionally.
- Don't ramble. Keep your answers to the point and focused.
- Don't inquire about salary, vacations, benefits, bonuses or retirement on the initial interview unless you are sure the employer is interested in hiring you. If the interviewer asks what salary you want, give a range based on your research of the job market, but indicate that you're more interested in the opportunity for continued learning and professional development than in a specific salary.

phone interviews: the next step.

Preparing for a Phone Interview.

Prepare for a phone interview just as you would for a regular interview. Compile a list of your strengths and weaknesses. Also, plan on being prepared for a phone conversation about your background and skills.

- Keep your resume in clear view to refer back to.
- Have a list of your accomplishments available to review.
- Have a pen and paper handy for note taking.
- If the time isn't convenient, ask if you could talk at another time and suggest some alternative times you are available.
- Clear the room and turn off the stereo and the TV.
- Consider using a landline rather than your cell phone to avoid a dropped call.

During a Phone Interview.

- Don't smoke, chew gum, eat, or drink.
- Smile. Smiling projects a positive image and will change the tone of your voice.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
- Don't interrupt the interviewer.
- Take your time - it's acceptable to take a moment to collect your thoughts.
- Give short answers.
- Your goal is to get a face-to-face interview. After you thank the interviewer ask if it would be possible to meet in person.
- Take notes about what you were asked and how you answered.
- Remember to say "thank you." Follow with a thank you note which reiterates your interest in the job.

after the interview: finish strong.

Waiting for a Decision –

Companies can take along time to offer a job. Some companies will conduct more than one interview before choosing a candidate.

Follow Up –

Keep in touch to stay informed about the interview process and also to stay fresh in the recruiters mind. Typically waiting time before following up is a week. When you do follow up reiterate your interest in the position and ask what the next step is if you don't already know, or ask if they have a time frame before a decision is made.

Keep Searching –

Don't rely on just this one job interview. Even if you are confident that a job offer is coming, keep looking. This may also increase your chances of getting another job offer which may be helpful to you in negotiating job offers.

Stay Positive –

If you don't get the offer, don't think of it as wasted time. You have been able to make contacts within the company. This may lead to an offer at a different time. It doesn't hurt to send a brief note to the recruiter and hiring manager to thank them for their time and to keep you in mind for future openings.