
AN INTRO TO

Effective Job Interviews



7 Tips for Interviewing Success

SANDY GEROUX, M.S.



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Introduction

Setting the Stage



Introduction

You're on stage... the moment you arrive!

It is increasingly tough to get a job interview, so when you do get that all-important call, be sure to make the most of the opportunity.

This means that, **from the moment you arrive at the building** for the interview **to the moment you leave the parking lot**, you are ON STAGE! Anyone and everyone can observe your behavior, manner, tone of voice, facial expressions – everything! And they may also have input into the final decision. So, never make the mistake of thinking that the interview starts when you get into the office of the interviewer.

I've heard of interviewers who intentionally keep candidates waiting in the lobby for 30 minutes or more, just to see how they handle an unexpected curve. I've heard of airlines that fly candidates to their home office for an interview, but the interview starts as soon as the candidate arrives at their home airport to fly out of town, rather than at the designated appointment time. This means that you are actually “on stage” almost before you even begin the trip!

You must be prepared for anything... and that means your mindset must be that you are already in the interview **the moment you leave your home** for the appointment.

TIP

1

Appropriate Dress



Appropriate Dress

Know the Organization!

When talking about appropriate, professional dress, some say you cannot over-dress for interviews. This is true in most cases, but the most important thing to keep in mind is the importance of knowing the organization and its norms. Professional dress really means *appropriate* dress for the organization and the position you seek.

For example, if you're looking for an office job and are used to wearing a business suit, but your interview is in a location where everyone dresses more casually (even in the office), you can leave the suit behind, as long as you still wear clean, neat, pressed, business casual attire (no jeans, t-shirts, sneakers, flip-flops, etc.).

If you can get a little information about the organization's culture ahead of time, do so. If not, err on the side of caution and dress more formally. You will be more easily forgiven for dressing formally in a casual organization than you will be for dressing casually in a formal one!



Appropriate Dress

Be True to Yourself!

One of the most important factors in determining your attire is to be true to who you are. Don't try to be someone you're not because that's who you think they want to see. You won't be comfortable during the interview, and if you're hired, you will either show up as someone they don't recognize (and didn't hire), or you may be forced to try to be someone you're not while on the job.

So, just be yourself. Don't be afraid to let some of your personality shine through.

However, depending on who you are and what position you seek, you need to be mindful of the first impression you will make. Therefore, consider the following guidelines for any interview.



Dress Professionally

General Guidelines

The following are a few “best practices”

CLOTHING

Should be:

- Neat;
- Clean;
- Well-fitting; and
- Flattering – find out what style and colors flatter your body type and skin tone.

Should NOT be:

- Wrinkled;
- Ripped;
- Frayed;
- Stained; or
- Too revealing or immodest
 - ◆ While you may be very proud of your body and appearance, the interview should focus on your skills, rather than your appearance. If your clothing gives the impression that your presence will be a big distraction in the office, you will NOT get a job offer!

Dress Professionally

General Guidelines

The following are a few “best practices”

TATTOOS & BODY PIERCINGS

Being true to yourself is important, but first impressions are made in an instant. Large or numerous tattoos and piercings are distracting and sometimes off-putting, especially to those in a position to hire you. Therefore, most experts agree that it is best to conceal them. You may not agree with this policy, and it may not seem “fair” to you, but we must deal in the real world... and this is the way the real world works.

Think about this: if you want people to focus on your skills, and not on your appearance, you must not give them anything to focus on but your skills and your ability to handle any situation – even “unfair” ones. The way you handle yourself in this situation says a lot about your maturity level and ability to cope.

Dress Professionally

General Guidelines

The following are a few “best practices”

TATTOOS & BODY PIERCINGS

That said, ear piercings are so familiar that any small earring is acceptable; small nose piercings (not nose *rings*) are also becoming commonplace. If your ear or nose piercings are unusual (for example, large rings or blocks “embedded” right into the ear or nose), remove them.

If displaying your tattoos and piercings is very important to you, ask your interviewer about the company’s policy on tattoos and piercings. If the policy is unacceptable to you, you can make an informed decision of whether or not to pursue a job at that organization.

The most important thing to remember is that the interview situation is an unknown quantity... therefore, proceeding with extreme caution is advisable.

Dress Professionally

General Guidelines

The following are a few “best practices”

TATTOOS & BODY PIERCINGS

Should be:

- Concealed or removed; and
- Small and unobtrusive (if visible and cannot be concealed or removed).

Should NOT be:

- Of an offensive nature (I know... what is “offensive?” The fact that this question is so subjective tells you why it is so important to conceal or remove anything questionable when going into unfamiliar situations); or
- The focus or a distraction during the interview.

Dress Professionally

General Guidelines

The following are a few “best practices”

COLOGNE & PERFUME

IF you wear any cologne or perfume at all (which most experts say to avoid during the interview because many people are allergic or sensitive to it):

DO:

- Apply it very sparingly, if at all.
- Use light scents.

DO NOT:

- Choose heavy floral or musky scents.
- Apply it just before the interview; apply it an hour before, so it has a chance to dissipate.

Dress Professionally

General Guidelines

The following are a few “best practices”

OVERALL HYGIENE AND APPEARANCE

DO:

- Carry gum, mints or mouthwash with you, just in case you need to freshen your breath before the interview.
- Carry a stain remover product, just in case you need to remove a stain from a coffee spill or lunch mishap (e.g., Shout Wipes).
- Carry a small lint roller to remove lint, hair, or other particles from your clothing.

DO NOT:

- Chew gum or mints during the interview (discard them before the appointment!).
- Wear new, “fussy” or uncomfortable clothes or shoes to the interview, or you’ll be fidgeting with them and breaking them in during the interview... which will translate to your interviewer as nervousness or discomfort.

TIP

2

The Handshake



The Handshake

No limp hands, no bone crushers!

When shaking someone's hand:

DO:

- Establish eye contact, but don't stare them down.
- Smile enthusiastically.
- Offer your full hand.
- Use a firm grip.
- Release their hand quickly when the shake is over (give three gentle pumps, then release).

DO NOT:

- Look elsewhere (down at the floor, around the room, or at others in the area).
- Force them to shake just two fingers, rather than your full hand.
- Hold the handshake too long.
- Use greasy hand lotion on your hands just before the interview, which could cause your hands to be sticky or greasy when shaken.
- Crush their hand.
- Pump their hand too vigorously, hard or fast.

TIP

3

Posture



Posture

Remember Mom's Advice

Many people are either too relaxed or too stiff in interviews, while others don't realize they are slumping or slouching, even when they walk.

DO:

- Sit fully back in the chair, with your back against the backrest.
- Be sure your shoulders are back (straight) without jutting your chest out too far.
- Relax your shoulders.
- Rest your hands in your lap or on top of papers in your lap.
- Keep your legs together, either with your feet flat on the floor or ankles crossed.

DO NOT (too casual):

- Rest your elbows on your thighs or knees.
- Cross one leg over the other so your ankle is resting on your knee.
- Clasp your hands around one knee while crossing your legs.
- Slouch down in the chair.

DO NOT (too eager/intense):

- Lean your body too far forward.
- Lean your head far forward.

TIP

4

Eye Contact and Body Language



Eye Contact & Body Language

Don't give inadvertent messages

Eye contact and body language are so important that if you don't pay attention to them, you could be sending messages you don't intend to send.

DO:

- SMILE! There is almost nothing that is as powerful as an enthusiastic and genuine smile.
- Establish eye contact; allow them to break eye contact first, unless it goes on too long (then find a way to gracefully break it without just looking down at the floor... look for a chair and ask if you can sit or notice and comment on something on the wall or their desk).
- Keep your voice at a reasonable level – not too loud, but don't whisper, either.

DO NOT:

- Look around at other people in the area (especially to ogle good-looking associates) – (disrespectful).
- Look at your watch – (shows impatience).
- Tap your fingers, hands, or feet... or bounce in your chair – (shows nervousness).
- Jiggle your knees, legs or feet – (shows nervousness).

TIP

5

General Guidelines and Tips



General Guidelines & Tips

“Best Practices”

DO:

- **Be on time!** This is your first opportunity to show how responsible and reliable you are. By the way, “on time” really means about 10-15 minutes EARLY.
- **Check your resume, cover letter and Skills Portfolio for typos!** Typos in this critical piece of documentation shows carelessness that employers worry will carry over into your job.
- **Know your facts:** if the interviewer asks questions about your background, be sure what you say matches what is on your resume; review it (it’s easy to forget your own history over time... do not let this blind-side you).
- **Research the company ahead of time:** nothing makes a worse impression than having to admit you know absolutely nothing about a company. If you want them to take an interest in you, you must take an interest in them.
 - ◆ Visit the company website
 - ◆ Look up their executives on LinkedIn
 - ◆ Google the company
 - ◆ Find out if you have any connections there and talk to them
- **Be prepared to give detailed examples of how you behaved in a certain situation.** Employers want to know *how* you would handle problems... not just that you *say* you can handle them.

TIP

6

Following Up
Appropriately

Thank you!



Following Up Appropriately

Timing, Methods, Permission

Following up with a thank you note is considered good etiquette. Here are some tips for effectively doing so:

DO:

- Thank them (BEFORE you leave) for the opportunity to meet with them.
- Ask if they have a date by which their decision will be made.
- Ask permission to follow up.
- Ask which method they prefer for follow-up (phone, e-mail, text).
- Follow up IMMEDIATELY after the interview (within one day).

DO NOT:

- Wait a week or more to follow up.
- Forget to follow up if you have told them you would do so (this would be considered a “broken promise” if you are seriously in the running for the job).
- Be a pest! Follow up to thank them and then let them contact you.

TIP

7

Following Up With a

WOW



Following Up With a WOW!

This tool will differentiate you!

If you receive their permission to e-mail them, there is a fantastic FREE tool that will allow you to send a video e-mail, rather than just a plain text e-mail. This tool allows you to use your webcam to create a short video of yourself thanking the interviewer for the opportunity to meet with them and accomplishes several goals, and:

- differentiates you because it's so unique and different – just like your Skills Portfolio;
- allows them to see your face again, which creates a strong reminder of who you are and how different you were in the interview;
- allows you to connect on a deeper level than your words could do alone; and
- video e-mails have a much higher “open rate” (the percentage of e-mails that are opened rather than simply deleted) than text-based e-mail because they stand out from the rest and are more interesting to view. In order to ensure they know the e-mail contains a video, be sure to put the word VIDEO in the Subject Line (e.g., “Video Thank You for Your Time”).

The video e-mail tool is called EyeJot and you can get it at the following link: www.EyeJot.com. (For this purpose, the free version is all you need; if you decide to customize the template, you would need to purchase the paid version... this is more appropriate for companies whose salespeople wish to follow up with potential clients.)

“

The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential... these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence. ”

- Confucius

Remember: practice make perfect!

START NOW

Practice with someone else by having them ask you questions an interviewer may ask you; this allows you to think ahead and talk through each answer you'd like to give.

Record yourself to see how you sound, how smoothly your words flow, and to uncover hidden issues, such as the frequent use of “um’s” or “ah’s” in your speech patterns.

Relax – and be yourself!

Congratulations... once you've accomplished this, you're ready!

When combined with using your professional Skills Portfolio, you can create a winning combination of professional presentation, self-confidence and proof of performance that will give you the BEST CHANCE of getting a great job!

GOOD LUCK!

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