

SEVEN RULES FOR A SUCCESSFUL JOB INTERVIEW

1 – Make a great first impression

First impressions are critical to a successful job interview and most employers know if you're a good fit within the first several minutes of meeting. Important elements of a first impression include your attire, smile, handshake, eye contact, posture, attitude, communication style and introduction or elevator speech.

Be ready: you only get one chance to make a positive first impression

2 – Answer the interviewer's question

Unless the question is inappropriate or illegal, you should always provide a response to the question. We can't emphasize this enough – answer the question you're asked, not the question you wanted them to ask. If the question is unclear, ask them to repeat it. If you need to think for a few minutes, do so and then answer as best you can. Responses that don't address the question asked can make a hiring manager think you're avoiding their question or hiding something. Neither of these increase your chances of success.

3 – Be prepared

Successful interviews require preparation and managers can tell when you haven't done so. The bottom line is that your level of preparation reflects your level of effort and commitment to the position. Candidates that don't adequately prepare are telling the hiring manager they aren't willing to do what it takes and don't really want the position. Don't make this obvious interviewing mistake and demonstrate that that you're committed.

4 – Be professional

Remain professional at all times during the hiring process, regardless of the situation. Your goal is to land the job, not to get a date or become buddies with a potential co-worker. Don't allow an off-the-record discussion, a rude individual, inappropriate comment or a mistake while answering a question derail your efforts. Stay focused and be professional at all times throughout the interviewing process.

5 – Be yourself and be confident

Be yourself and have confidence in your abilities during the hiring process, even if you don't feel it. Get rid of filler words such as "like", "um", and "ah", and don't fidget. While confidence is critical, be careful that you don't go overboard and appear arrogant.

6 – Ask good questions

Successful interviews should be more of a dialog than a one-way conversation. You need to come up with multiple questions beforehand and always be thinking of relevant and appropriate questions during the interview. Lack of questions can signal that you're unengaged or desperate, neither of which is good.

7 – Show how you will add value

This is an important and often overlooked rule of interviewing. Remember, the only reason an organization goes through the hiring process and conducts interviews is because they have a need. During an interview, you need to show them how your qualifications (education, skills and experience) align with their needs and how you will add value to their organization. Anything less may result in failure.