



ACE YOUR INTERVIEW

How to **impress** with your
first impression

GET TO WORK

before getting the job

You may think your interview begins when you get that first exciting call from the recruiter, who sets a date, time and place to meet with you. But in reality, your interview is already under way – it began the minute you submitted your resume.

To make the best impression, you need to prepare. Preparation means understanding the positions for which you are best suited, as well as details about the company, such as their products or services, their history and recent news items.



Preparation also means being ready for a phone call from a potential employer. Many employers conduct phone screens and phone interviews before they invite a candidate into their facilities. To make sure your pre-interview skills are up to par, follow these simple tips:

- **Check your outgoing message.** Is it professional, friendly and concise? A message like the following always works: *“Thank you for calling John Smith. Please leave your name, number and a brief message, and I’ll get back to you shortly.”* You can always replace your message with something more personal once you have completed your interview process or accepted the position.
- **Keep it clear.** Try to minimize background sounds and potential distractions prior to answering your phone. You will want focus all your energy and attention on the call.
- **Be enthusiastic!** Interviewers can sense your energy over the phone.

INTERVIEW SMART

The most critical preparation begins once you have lined up an in-person interview. If you don’t want your first impression to be your last, follow these important interview tips:

- **Know names.** When greeted by the receptionist, ask directly for the person or people who will be conducting your interview.
- **Bring copies.** Always bring extra copies of your resume. Have at least one copy for each person you expect to meet.
- **Arrive 15 minutes early.** Nothing irks a hiring manager more than a person who is late to an interview. Being late gives the impression that you may not be a dependable employee. Plan your route in advance, and give yourself extra time to account for things like traffic and construction. If you arrive more than 15 minutes early, wait in your car or nearby café until you can walk in at the 15-minute mark. If you do run late, call ahead to inform the hiring manager.
- **Dress to impress.** This isn’t a cliché! Hiring managers pay attention to how you look, and this first impression can set the tone for the rest of the interview. Dress conservatively. Dark suits work best, and make sure your outfit fits well, is ironed or dry-cleaned.
- **Be aware of body language.** During an interview, your body also communicates messages. To help keep your body and your words aligned, *smile*. Smiling will help you relax while making you appear confident. Make eye contact to reinforce your integrity and show the hiring manager that you are interested in what he/she has to say. Sit up straight, and don’t slouch or lean to the side.
- **Answer with CAR (Context, Action, Results).** Try to frame your answers within the context of a specific situation. Your answers should demonstrate the action steps you took or the contributions you made to resolve an issue. The results should show the outcome of your actions and the impact they made.
- **Keep it relevant.** Make sure your answers are related to the questions asked. Give enough detail to demonstrate that you understood the question while showing the interviewer how you can contribute to the company. Do not be so long-winded that you – and the interviewer – forget the question that was originally asked.
- **Ask questions.** Have a list of questions you’d like answered. Ask about the type of training available; the strengths that make a person successful in the job; the company’s successes in recent years; and the position’s most immediate challenges that need to be addressed. Asking questions demonstrates your interest in the position and will help you gauge if you are truly interested in the opportunity.
- **Say thank you.** When the interview reaches its end, thank the interviewers for their time. It is okay to ask about next steps or about when you can expect to hear from them. Follow up with a thank-you note or email that expresses your interest in the position.

Taking the time to follow these steps and fully prepare for your interview will make you a standout candidate and bring you one step closer to landing your ideal job.

BE PREPARED

With each question interviewers ask, they are attempting to gain insight into your experiences as well as what type of employee you will be. Think about your answer and respond clearly, articulately and with confidence!

What the interviewers ask ...

In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?

What they really want to know ...

Will you make a positive contribution to the organization? Are you growth-minded, detailed, collaborative and process oriented?

What the interviewers ask ...

Do you feel you did your best in school? If yes — what motivated you? If no — what held you back?

What they really want to know ...

Are you going to put your best effort into this job? Are you going to take credit or blame for your good or bad performance?

What the interviewers ask ...

What extracurricular activities did you participate in? Why? What was your specific role?

What they really want to know ...

Are you enthusiastic? Can you multi-task? Are you a leader?

What the interviewers ask ...

Tell me about a time you made a mistake.

What they really want to know ...

We all make mistakes ... do you learn from yours? Do you adapt to situations well and are you open to constructive criticism?

What the interviewers ask ...

How do you think your peers would describe you?

What they really want to know ...

Do you examine your professional working relationships and think about how people see you? Do you see yourself as positive, collaborative, easy to get along with?

What the interviewers ask ...

Why should we hire you? What can you do for us that other candidates can't?

What they really want to know ...

Can you think on your feet? Do you have a good amount of self-esteem and some courage and enthusiasm? How do you differentiate yourself from other candidates?

What the interviewers ask ...

What is the one accomplishment you are most proud of and why?

What they really want to know ...

What have you accomplished, and how were you able to be successful at it?

What the interviewers ask ...

If you get the job with us, in what way would you like us to assist you in your job?

What they really want to know ...

What do you need from us in order to be successful?

At HireElements, we know what it takes to make a great first impression. As talent acquisition specialists, it is our job to find our clients the right candidates to fill their open positions – and to find our candidates the right employers to fulfill their goals and aspirations.

Learning how to interview smart is a key component to acquiring your dream job. If you'd like to learn more about how HireElements can help you reach your potential, contact us today.



2 Pearson Way
Enfield, CT 06082

☎ 800.858.2026
hireelements.com

hireelements.com