

ROCK YOUR INTERVIEW



Congratulations. You've got the education you need to launch your career. You've done the job search and sent out a killer resume. Now you've landed an interview with the company of your dreams. This is IT, the first step on your path to fame, fortune and a steady paycheck. Here's how to rock the interview.

RULE #1 – DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Your interviewer expects you to know about the company, organization or government department. Easy enough, since you did this in your job search. No? Then get online at home, school or your local library and find out as much as you can about your prospective employer - what they do, where they work, what their environmental philosophy is and anything else you can find.

RULE #2 – BE PREPARED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS

Your interviewer wants to know if you'll fit into their corporate culture. They're going to ask probing questions – yes and no answers won't work. Write down practice answers to these common questions:

- ☒ **Can you tell me a little about yourself?**
Highlight your education, career goals, experience and skills.
- ☒ **Why do you think this is a good job for you?**
Stress how you think the job matches the above.
- ☒ **What are your strengths?**
This is where your research pays off: illustrate 2 or 3 strengths you think will fit the company, like being a team player, detail-oriented, strong communicator, etc.
- ☒ **What are your weaknesses?**
Ah, the trick question. Be honest, but pick 1 or 2 examples that do not impact the job. Don't say 'I'm bad at multi-tasking' (even if you are), say 'I need to get better at saying no to people so I don't take on too much work'.
- ☒ **Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**
When you're unsure or really haven't a clue, focus on skill or career development. 'I hope to have my journey person ticket' or 'I hope to build my experience and be an asset to the company.'

TOP 5 QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK

1. **What does your company do?**
See Rule #1.
2. **Are you going to do a background check?**
Hmmm, do you have something to hide?
3. **When will I be eligible for a raise?**
Wait till you've caught the ball before running into the end zone.
4. **How soon can I take vacation time?**
See above.
5. **Do you have any other jobs available?**
If you don't think you'll like the job, wait for the right opportunity.

RULE #3 – BE PREPARED TO ASK QUESTIONS

Just about every job counsellor will counsel you to never, ever leave an interview without asking at least one question of your own. If the interviewer hasn't filled you in on the job particulars (for example, what the job involves, what the wage & benefits package is) ask about that. But if this territory has already been covered, try things like 'what opportunities do you offer for ongoing training and development?' or 'what is a typical workday like?'

RULE #4 – LOOK THE PART

Whatever type of job you are applying for, the first rule of thumb is to present a neat, clean appearance. The second rule of thumb is to dress conservatively – not too colourful, trendy, sexy or casual. Show the interviewer you can fit in with the team.

RULE #5 – ACT THE PART

Self-confidence is very attractive. Even if you're nervous, offer a firm (not painful) handshake, sit up straight, keep your hands out of your pockets, make eye contact and smile.

THE FOLLOW-UP

If you're not hired on the spot, don't panic – few people are. Ask when you can expect to hear back. If you haven't heard back by then, phone the interviewer and ask if they have made a decision. Remember, interviewers respect persistence (calling after a given deadline has passed), not impatience (calling every day).

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