

The Interview

by Stefanie Fishman, Project Assistant

The application can get you an interview. A successful interview will get you the job.

Above all else, the applicant must convey that he or she wants the job. Making a good first impression is extremely important. To impress the interviewer, dress appropriately and be prepared.

The Dress

The interviewer first notices how the interviewee is dressed. It is important to be clean with neatly groomed hair and fingernails. The attire worn should be appropriate for the job position. For example, a suit should be worn for a Public Works Director interview, but chinos and unwrinkled button down shirt or sweater are suitable for a laborer. Appropriate dress is always more formal than what is normally worn for the job.

Know Your Stuff

Learn about the department before interviewing. Information can be found from websites, newsletters, and info sessions held by the department. Ask friends and family who work in or with the department for information.

Applicant's should know the department's purpose, responsibilities, and key employees. It is also important to discover the culture and values of the department.

Purpose and Preparation

There are two main purposes of the interview one is for the interviewee to sell him or herself and the other is for the interviewee to interview the department to find out if this is a good place to work. The interviewee should be prepared to:

1. Discuss his or her strengths, skills, accomplishments and what he or she can bring to the department through this position.
2. Elaborate on his or her resume and always bring an extra copy
3. Ask questions to make sure this is the right job for them.

Because one cannot predict what the recruiter will ask, the best approach is to think of the worse questions and practice answering them. The interviewer is interested in involvement in projects so be able to give examples.

Do's and Don'ts

Do learn about the duties of the department beforehand.

Do practice with someone or in front of the mirror.

Do allow plenty of time to get to the interview.

Do act natural.

Don't answer with a simple yes or no, elaborate on as many answers as possible.

Do be honest.

Do ask questions related to questions asked.

Do wait for the interviewer to ask if there are any questions.

Do ask the interviewer for a business card and send a thank you note or email as soon as possible.

Don't ever cut the interviewer off.

Interview Day

Applicants must be on time and should arrive at least ten minutes early. They must get good directions to the interview site. It may be helpful to drive there a day or two before to ensure the directions are correct and determine how long it will take.

The interviewee should act naturally and not pretend to be what they think is wanted. The interviewer must get an accurate portrayal of the interviewee. Both can eliminate misunderstandings by asking for clarifying or repeating of information.

Attitude is usually more important than experience. Interviewees should give themselves a pep talk to feel positive and comfortable.

Sources

The Art of Interviewing Well. Planning Job Choices 4th Edition , National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2001.

Tips for Interviewing. PageWise, http://ny.essortment.com/interviewtips_pvt.htm

Being Interviewed Chapter 10: System Administration: The Occupation, UNIX Hints and Hacks, <http://linux.tomsk.ru/docs/unix/unix-tips-hacks/19270143.htm>, 2000.