Tips on Interview

1. **BE ON TIME.** This means ten to fifteen minutes early.
2. **KNOW THE INTERVIEWER’S NAME AND HOW TO PRONOUNCE IT.** Know whether you should use Mr., Ms., Miss, or Mrs. If you don’t know the proper usage, ask the receptionist or switchboard operator.
3. **BRING A SPARE COPY OF YOUR RESUME IN A BRIEFCASE OR FOLDER.** This demonstrates that you are prepared. It also gives the interviewer something to take notes on.
4. **EXPECT TO SPEND SOME TIME DEVELOPING RAPPORT, because personal chemistry is a main ingredient in the hiring process.** Try to get comfortable with one another. This will help the rest of the interview go well.
5. **WATCH YOUR NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION.** Pay attention to your physical posture. Maintain appropriate eye-contact (don’t stare). Attempt to be at reasonable distance from the other person, not too far or too close. Feel free to place your chair at an angle in order to get comfortable.
6. **DON’T BE EMBARRASSED BY YOUR NERVOUSNESS.** Interviewers are human and are probably nervous too. In fact, nervousness is a good sign - it shows that you are taking the interview seriously. Avoid nervous mannerisms, such as tapping your fingers, feet, playing with pens, etc.
7. **DON’T PLAY COMEDIAN OR TRY TO ENTERTAIN THE INTERVIEWER.**
8. **DON’T EXAGGERATE OR LIE.** It may come back to haunt you.
9. **FOLLOW THE INTERVIEWER’S LEAD.** Don’t try to take over the interview. Stick to the subject at hand but don’t dwell too long on one point. It is better to deal with many questions than just one or two in depth, unless that’s where the interview leads.
10. **BE PREPARED FOR PERSONAL QUESTION, EVEN SOME INAPPROPRIATE ONES.** Some Interviewers may not be aware of what they can ask, legally. Anticipate how you will handle personal questions without blowing your cool.
11. **BE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION.** Feel free to ask for clarification.
12. **EMPHASIZE YOUR POSITIVE.** Act natural and dwell on the positive. Be frank and honest, but never apologize for lack of experience or weaknesses. Be self-confident but don’t be overconfident or cocky.
13. **DON’T INTERRUPT THE EMPLOYER.** A few interruptions are natural, but if you catch yourself always doing it, be careful.
14. **WAIT FOR AN OFFER TO TALK ABOUT SALARY.** Let the interviewer bring up the subject.
15. **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR TIMING OF ANSWERS.** Use silence and intentional pause to your advantage. Time is occasionally needed to think and reflect.
16. **EMPHASIZE WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THE ORGANIZATION.** This means emphasizing your transferable skills. Employers are concerned most with what you can do for them. Focus on your ability to learn quickly and easily, your communication skills, interpersonal abilities, analytical thinking talents, and other skills developed while in college.
17. **DON’T TRY TO GIVE THE "ANSWER HE OR SHE WANTS".** Most recruiters and employers know a 'set answer' when they hear one.
18. **BRING A PEN, PAPER, AND THE UNIVERSITY CAREERS OFFICE’S INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM (if applicable), BUT DON’T TAKE NOTES DURING THE INTERVIEW.** Immediately following the interview, write down as much as you can remember, as well as jotting down your feelings and impressions. After a number of interviews, you will be glad you didn’t trust your memory to remember everything.
19. **AVOID DEBATE.** Arguing with an interviewer will shorten the interview... and your chances.
20. **NEVER SLIGHT A FORMER EMPLOYER, COLLEAGUE, TEACHER, OR INSTITUTION.** It only reflects on you. If there were problems with previous experiences, try to put your answers in the positive rather than the negative. If you slight a former employer, the interviewer may assume that you will someday do the same to him or her.
21. **IF YOU CATCH YOURSELF MAKING AN ERROR OR CONTRADICTION, CORRECT YOURSELF.** It’s better to tumble (and appear honest) than to get caught later.
22. **DON’T OVERPLAY YOUR TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE.** Avoid sounding didactic.
23. **TRY TO BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE.** Never say "I’ll do anything!" Take charge of your own life, or someone else will take charge of it for you.
24. **WATCH YOUR GRAMMAR.** Employers are interested in candidates who can express themselves properly. Even if you have to slow down to correct yourself - do it!
25. **HAVE SOME QUESTIONS PREPARED.** When asked for comments or questions, have some - this shows that you’re prepared.
26. **DON’T BRING IN A PILE OF EXHIBITS OR SAMPLES UNLESS ASKED.**
27. **IF YOU ARE IN IOWA CITY, IOWA AND APPLYING FOR A JOB IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, SUGGEST A HALF HOUR TELEPHONE INTERVIEW.** Some employers, particularly non-profit, have hired candidates after examining written materials and talking on the phone for a while. It’s the next best thing to being there. Even a preliminary telephone interview can help you assess whether or not it would be worth your time and expense to travel for a personal interview.
28. **DON’T EXPECT AN OFFER ON THE SPOT.** Offers usually follow the interview, sometimes two or three weeks later. If, by any fluke, you would be offered the position on the spot, it is appropriate for you to ask for one or two days thinking time before responding.
29. **BE CAREFUL WITH THE CLOSING.** If you are not good at closing conversations, don’t linger. End quickly and courteously.
30. **MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL: BE YOURSELF!** You don’t want to get hired on the basis of something you’re not. You want to be hired for who you are. You!