

Interviewing Etiquette

There is more to an interview than simply sitting and answering questions. You have to be able to sell your strengths and skills both verbally and non-verbally. It is important to realize that your physical appearance, mannerisms, vocalics, and gestures all have an impact on the impression and overall picture you present of yourself to a potential employer.

The first step to a successful interview is wearing the proper attire. Whether it is an accurate impression or not, interviewers will make judgments and formulate impressions based solely on your attire. Initial impressions are made within the first minute of seeing someone. By properly dressing for an interview, you will start the process on a positive note.

Everyone should own at least one well-constructed, tailored conservative suit. In addition to trying on the suit prior to the interview to ensure that it fits properly, you will want to make sure to have all parts of the suit cleaned and pressed before the interview. Think about what kind of image you are projecting if you arrive in a dirty or rumpled suit.

Also, be very aware of body odor, animal fur, and cigarette smells. Avoid wearing perfumes or colognes on the day of the interview. If you own a pet, be sure to remove all hair from your attire. Finally, never smoke immediately before your interview. You may be nervous, but the smell is very pungent.

The following are some tips for both men and women on how to dress for success. You may not agree with everything listed, but it is always wise to err on the side of caution. Once you are hired you will be able to let your personality show more through your attire. During an interview you want to be remember for you wonderful qualifications, not your tongue ring.

Both

1. No facial jewelry. Take out all tongue, eyebrow, lip, cheek, chin, etc. jewelry
2. Dark, conservative suits in navy, black, or grey. Either solid color or subtle pinstriped.
3. White, cream, or light colored long sleeved shirt or blouse.
4. Dark, polished dress shoes.
5. No body spray, perfume, or cologne.
6. Clean, well shaped fingernails .
7. Well trimmed and groomed hair.

Women

1. Flat or low heeled dress shoes. Avoid very high heels, sandals, “chunky”, or wedge heeled shoes.
2. Suits with skirts are considered more professional than slacks. Skirts should be no more than 1 inch above the knee while seated.
3. Always wear hosiery.
4. Minimal, conservative jewelry (no more than 5 articles). Jewelry should not be distracting.
5. Clear or light colored fingernail polish.
6. Natural, light make-up.
7. Long hair should be pulled back in a conservative style.

Men

1. Solid or conservative tie.
2. Dark, matching dress socks.
3. Any facial hair should be well-groomed.
4. Watch, wedding and class rings should be the only visible jewelry.
5. Hair should be neat and styled conservatively. Long hair should be pulled back in a ponytail.

Once you portray a competent person that is professional and in well-groomed attire, you must be able to non-verbally express yourself well. You will want to keep that positive impression with you is not to say you should be so rigid that you look stiff, but good posture makes you look taller, leaner, and more confident.

Also, you should be very aware of any nervous habits, such as hand wringing or foot tapping. You want to exude confidence and you don't want your body language to indicate otherwise. You should maintain good eye contact. Remember that there is fine line between an engaged person's eye contact and the malicious stare of a serial killer. You should also remember to blink. Some people become so nervous and conscious of their eye contact that they forget to do this simple thing.

Unless you are given a specific place to sit, you should choose a seat that allows you the most eye contact with all the interviewers. You should wait for everyone to be seated before taking your seat, unless indicated otherwise by the interviewer. Once seated, you should lean forward with interest and have your hands neatly folded in your lap. Your legs should be crossed at the ankles and slightly tucked under the chair. When answering, a question, it is okay to use hand and body gestures. You should never be swinging your arms and hands wildly or using overly large gestures. Your facial expressions should match your vocal tone. If you are speaking enthusiastically about a project then your face should match this.

General Interviewing Tips

DO

Arrive before the appointed time. This will give you a chance to collect your thoughts and relax.

Be polite, but not overly so to the point of insincerity.

Shake hands firmly with everyone and stand until offered a chair.

Thank the employer for interviewing you.

Maintain good eye contact.

Be honest.

Ask questions.

Take copies of your resume, reference list, and any other pertinent documents.

Stress your strong points and experience.

Write thank you notes to everyone that interviewed you.

Call or e-mail the employer to check on the status of your application and to inform them that you are still interested in the position

DON'T

Smoke or chew gum.

Use the interviewer's first name, unless otherwise indicated.

Watch the clock.

Ask to use the company telephone.

Apologize for lack of experience or training.

Plead for a job.

