

## MAKING THE RIGHT IMPRESSION

**First impressions do count. So take advantage of the opportunity the interview gives you to make a good one. Here are nine of the most commonly offered tips**

### **1) Be Prepared**

To a large extent, how successful you are in the interview depends on what you do before you even leave the house. The person interviewing you is looking for someone who can do the job. So before you go, make sure you know what the job is. Take time to prepare how you are going to show that your experience and training will enable you to do the job. Be prepared to answer questions about how you see yourself fitting into the organization.

An important part of being prepared is knowing who you are going to see and bringing with you any material that will be helpful in demonstrating your abilities. Always ask for the name of the person you will be seeing when you are called for an interview. Also ask what you should bring with you, such as extra copies of your resume. And be sure you have clear directions for getting to the right place at the right time.

### **2) Dress as if You Want the Job**

You know there is more to you than the clothes you wear. Give the person who is interviewing you a chance to find that out. Dress professionally. If you don't look as if you care enough to make a good impression, the person who interviews you does not have much incentive to pay attention to what else you have to offer.

### **3) Be on Time**

There is never any excuse for being late for a job interview. Allow yourself enough time to arrive 5 to 10 minutes early. And don't forget to allow for the unexpected traffic jam. If you arrive too early to go in, you can always get a cup of coffee and come back. If you arrive too late, you might not even get the chance to meet the person you are supposed to impress.

### **4) Be Confident and Smile**

There is plenty of research to show that a smile goes a long way. One study, for instance, showed that traffic violators who smile at the policeman who stops them are more likely to get off with a warning than those who don't. A smile shows that you are happy to have the opportunity to interview for the position and indicates that you are confident that you are the right person for the job.

Don't be afraid to make eye contact with the person who is interviewing you. And sit up straight with a slight forward lean to show you are eager to hear what the person has to say.

### **5) Ask the Right Questions**

Be ready to ask questions when you go for an interview that show you have been thinking about the job. Ask about the level of responsibilities the person in the position you are applying for will have. Ask about the resources that will be available and about how the person in the position can contribute to the resources for others in the organization.

But don't ask questions you should not ask. Nearly all experts on looking for a job say that questions about money, benefits, and time off are not only inappropriate but can actually work against your getting an offer. Wait until a job is offered or until the employer brings them up before talking about such things.

### **6) Answer Questions in a Positive Way**

Your last boss may have been an ogre. The institution you worked at

may have been the model used for Hell in the movie "What Dreams May Come." But keep that information to yourself. The person interviewing you has no way to judge whether what you say is accurate or not. For all that person knows, negative comments about your former position may simply be showing you to be a complainer who has trouble fitting into an organization.

When you are asked why you are looking to change positions, focus on the opportunity a new job can offer.

### **7) Leave the Interview on a Positive Note**

Before you leave, be sure you know what the next step in the process is. Ask what the time frame for making a decision is. If there is someone else you need to see, ask if there is anything you can do to facilitate the process. Can you send additional information, or should you call at a particular time? But also take advantage of this opportunity to show that you can work within the system. Never give an ultimatum or say you have another offer pending if you don't.

Thank the person for meeting with you, and let the person know you are definitely interested in the position and feel confident about your ability to do the job.

### **8) Review What Just Happened**

After you leave the interview, sit down somewhere quiet and review any notes you have made and try to fill in the details. Be sure you know what happened and what you are to do next. Then get ready for your next interview. Whether it's a follow-up to the one you've just had or it's an interview with another organization, the things you learned in the interview that just ended should serve you well.

### **9) Send a Thank You**

Send a thank you note to the individual(s) you interviewed with.