

INTERVIEWING

Preparation and Etiquette

Research the Organization

It is best to gain as much information as possible about the organization before your interview. This knowledge may give you an advantage over other candidates. As you conduct your research, seek answers to the following questions:

- What are the organization's products or services? What is unique about them? Who are their competitors?
- What does the annual report reflect?
- Has the organization recently experienced any acquisitions or mergers?
- Is the organization expanding services or products?
- Have any divisions or departments been expanded or dissolved in the last year?
- Is the organization part of a larger (multinational) corporation?
- How quickly has the organization grown? How long has it been in operation?
- How involved is the organization with community or charitable organizations?
- What is the work atmosphere like at this organization? Conservative? Liberal?

Interview Attire

A conservative, professional approach to dress for an interview will help you avoid being screened out before you get a chance to sell yourself in the interview. While you might not agree with the following, all are considerations for being screened out of a job interview, depending on the organization, your career field, and the perspective of the person interviewing you. When in doubt, be conservative, be professional, and be aware that you are selling a total package. Appearance may be the reason you do not get a job offer! Follow the suggestions below for best results.

<i>Recommendations for Men</i>		<i>Recommendations for Women</i>		<i>Recommendations for All</i>	
• Dark dress shoes, polished and buffed (no loafers)	• Dark suits, properly fitted, preferably wool or wool blend	• Dark coordinated suits, properly fitted, with matching dress blouse (no plunging neckline)	• Skirt length no more than one inch above the knee	• No heavy cologne/perfume	• No visible tattoos
• Dark dress socks	• No long side burns or long hair	• Natural looking make-up	• Neutral colored hose	• No visible body piercing	• Fresh breath
• No earrings or other jewelry (wedding or class ring permitted)	• Well-groomed facial hair; cleaned and trimmed nails	• Polished matching dress shoes with moderate heel (no open toe/heeled shoes)	• Hair past shoulder length pulled away from face	• No purple, green, orange, etc., colored hair	• Freshly pressed, appropriately fitting clothing
• Conservative neck tie (no bright colors or loud patterns)		• Minimal conservative classic jewelry (no flashy, dangling earrings)	• Clear or conservatively colored nail polish, no chipped nail polish	• Freshly bathed/showered (no body odor, use deodorant)	• Dress watch

Make a Positive First Impression

Confirm the interview time, place, and with whom you will be meeting, including titles. Be sure to get directions and ask about parking. Arrive about 15 minutes early so you are not rushed and have time to collect yourself. Show respect and courtesy to ALL employees with whom you interact, as they may be asked to provide input on the candidates.

Relax, be Yourself, and Listen

Introductions and handshakes, dress, eye contact, enthusiasm and that initial small talk with the recruiter all help to create the first impression of you as a potential employee. Relax, be honest, and remember that an interview is a conversation. Many hiring decisions are made based on personality and fit, since several candidates may actually be well qualified for the position. Follow the lead of the interviewer, do not interrupt, and be sure that you understand the question asked, or ask for clarification. If you need to pause to collect your thoughts before answering a question, do so.

Ask the Right Questions

Be ready to ask intelligent questions during the interview. DO NOT bring up issues related to salary and benefits until the employer initiates these topics. Although money may be a high priority for you, asking about salary indicates to the employer that you are more interested in what the job pays than the work itself.

The Closing

If you like what has been discussed in the interview, let the employer know that you're excited about what you've heard and are still very much interested in the position. Before leaving, be sure to thank the interviewer for his/her time. Find out about the next step in the hiring process and when decisions will be made.

Thank You Letter

- The thank-you letter does make a difference and can help you stand out among prospective candidates.
- The letter should be addressed to the person(s) with whom you interviewed. Ask for your interviewers' business cards, or write down the interviewers' titles and the proper spelling of their names before leaving the interview site.
- Prepare your letter using a business letter format on high quality linen or bond paper. Tailor your message to the company culture and relationship established. Mail your letter in a matching envelope ideally within 24 to 48 hours following the interview. Although less formal, a handwritten note on a thank you card may also be an option.
- If you have previously corresponded with the employer by email, it is acceptable to also send your thank you "letter" via email. However, post mail often conveys a more personal touch.
- Keep your letter brief and concise. Mention the date of your interview and your continued interest in both the position for which you interviewed and the organization.
- Reiterate your most important skills and qualifications, how you expect to contribute to the organization, and any unique points of interest discussed during the interview.
- Express your appreciation for the opportunity to interview, tour the facilities, meet other employees, etc., and confirm follow up procedures.

Sample questions for you to ask...

- How does this position fit within your organization's structure?
- How will I receive feedback about my performance, and how often?
- Where can a position of this type lead to within your organization?
- How did this position become available?
- What does your orientation/training process entail?
- What are the long-term goals or growth plans of the organization?
- What type of continuing education or training does the organization provide?
- What are you looking for in the ideal candidate?
- What are some of the challenges this organization/department faces?
- What do you like about working here?
- What kind of day-to-day supervision is provided for the person in this position?
- Can you describe the daily, office environment of your department/organization?

Common Reasons for Applicant Rejection

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| • Poor appearance | • Lack of purpose, career goals | • Poor eye contact, extreme nervousness |
| • Poor voice, diction, grammar | • Negative attitude | • Lack of poise, lack of confidence |
| • Little enthusiasm, passive, indifferent | • Couldn't sell him/herself to the employer | • Condemnation of previous employer |
| • Evades, hedges answering questions | • Overbearing, aggressive | • Lack of leadership skills |
| • Late for interview, disrespectful | • Unwilling to start at the bottom | • Didn't ask for the job |
| • Talks too much, rambles | • Lack of courtesy, proper etiquette | • Talked about salary |
| • Unable to handle silence | | |

For more interviewing tips, visit www.kent.edu/career