

Top Tips for Interview Essentials

1. Do your homework

Research the company and the department/team you want to work in. What is the Mission/Purpose/Values of the organisation? Plan all your examples of past experience that prove how well matched to the job you will be for typical interview questions. Use the job description/person specification to work out the sort of questions they will ask you.

Ensure you have any copies of certificates or any other evidence the employer has asked to see and have extra copies of your CV with you, just in case.

2. Look professional

The way you present yourself speaks volumes to a manager. Dress to impress with appropriate attire but play it safe with your choice of colour and cut of your clothes. The sector you are moving into will have a dress code but err on the side of caution and stick to understated, smart, clean and professional.

3. Body language

The interviewer will be constantly reading your non-verbal behaviour cues from the minute they meet you. Your non-verbal communication ie your body language is as important as what you say so smile, make eye contact and think about your posture. Simply sitting up straight, looking at who is speaking to you, smiling, acknowledging comments by nodding your head shows you are listening and engaging positively.

4. Practice make perfect

Get some support eg from family or friends to practice answering questions out loud because you don't want to stumble when the interview finally comes.

5. Be on time

In fact, don't be on time, be early! This is a huge indication on what you will be like as an employee.

6. Get a good night's sleep

A good night's sleep makes a world of difference the next day; well-rested minds help make you feel confident.

7. Social Media

Yes, you may look adorable in that selfie but your future employer may look you up online so think about the impression your social media gives about you. Clean up all social media or deactivate it so they can't see last night's mistake!

8. Personality is key

You were able to land an interview based on your application so you know you match the requirements for the job. You now need to demonstrate that you fit in person as well. Don't be afraid to show off some of who you are during the interview.

9. Always listen

Listening is the key to life. If you listen properly, you answer properly.

10. Every question counts

A good interviewer will relax you because they want you to perform to the best of your ability but don't get too relaxed; stay sharp and ready to answer hard-hitting questions.

You will be assessed/scored on your responses to every question and this will be used to compare you to other candidates so you need to make every answer count. If you aren't sure what the question is really getting at, don't waffle and hope for the best as you'll score poorly and you've lost a vital opportunity to get ahead. There is no problem in asking the interviewer to check your understanding or request them to rephrase a question so you can ensure your answer is the right one to the question.

11. Be confident

Never under estimate how valuable you are; be confident in your work, personality, and your skills but remember - if you don't say it, the interviewer doesn't know it! This is especially important for internal candidates who assume that their track record will be taken into account or that the interviewer knows exactly how good they are. Don't make any assumptions, you must tell the interviewer what you want them to know about you.

12. Write things down

It's generally fine to take notes into an interview but just check with your interviewer and in fact can demonstrate your preparation. During the interview and you're listening to the interviewer, note key points, you may have a question or it may be important for you to remember at a later point. To write things down you will need to take a notebook and a pen.

13. Positive Attitude – Smiling is important

Smile; if you act happy, you'll be happy, and they will like your positive attitude.

14. Share your ideas

You've done your research so let them know your thoughts on the position you would be doing and how you would approach it. Bring some future thinking to your ideas. How might things in the sector change going forward?

Interviews often finish with a question that enables you to summarise why they should employ you rather than any of their other candidates. Plan your answer to this question. It is a gift of a question and you should use it to demonstrate how you meet their person specification and more! This question is often wasted due to lack of preparation.

15. Follow up

Follow up with a thank you email. If you know a time frame as to when they will get back to you, follow up again if it's taking a little longer to let them know you are still interested.