

Preparation: The Key to Success in a Job Interview

Preparing and doing the research on an organization before the job interview will help to you become more informed, interesting, and relevant to the organization. Here are a few things you can do to prepare:

Dress Code

1. When you are called to schedule the interview, take the chance to ask about the dress code of the organization.
2. If you can't get an answer through #1 above, make a separate call to the organization and ask the receptionist what the appropriate dress code would be.
3. If you still do not know the proper dress code, play it safe, according to your understanding of the organization and job position, based on the rest of your research.

Information on the Organization

Equip yourself with as much information as possible about the organization, the job, and the interviewer by:

1. Visiting the organization's website and reading about its mission, vision, accomplishments, specialties, history, and people.
2. Googling the name of the organization and reading anything you can find on it, including press coverage and, yes, even the gossip.
3. Researching what people have to say about the organization on LinkedIn.com.
4. If you are working with a recruitment firm, asking the recruiter for information on the organization, interviewer, and what they are looking for in a candidate.

Important note: Remember to use the information that you gain wisely – that is, in the right place, at the right time, or not at all. For instance, it would be inappropriate to mention an embarrassing quote by the company president as a joke. But it would be appropriate to mention the history of the company as context when asking about the future direction of the company.

Questions for the Interviewer

Being prepared with your questions can help make the interview more of a dialogue between you and the interviewer. Having questions ready during the interview will allow you to:

1. Obtain more detailed information about your potential new role that will help you with your decision about whether you want to work in this particular organization, in this particular role.
2. Find out why the position you are applying for is currently open.
3. Discover the interviewer's attitude and opinions about the organization.
4. Perform a more informed, balanced reality check on the organization before reaching a decision to accept or decline the position.

Preparing Answers to Common Interview Questions

Because many questions in interviews are fairly standard and widely known, you can prepare yourself for them in advance. When preparing, write out the answer to each question for yourself, giving yourself time to formulate clear answers and tailoring each answer to the targeted job position. However, even with detailed preparation, you might still have some doubts. For example:

- How 'correct' or 'good' are your answers to these frequently asked interview questions?
- How do you answer those questions that you just do not know how to answer? What kind of answer will increase or decrease your chances in the interview?
- How can you overcome the worries, nervousness, or concerns that you have about the job interview?
- How do you decide on what and what not to say, or what to focus on in the conversation?
- How do you approach the issue of compensation in the conversation?

If one of the above questions continues to worry you, you could consider hiring a personal interview coach. A personal interview coach works with you to prepare for the job interview and ensure that your first impression will be a good one. A personal coach is an objective partner who can identify the parts that you need to work on, and give you feedback on how you sound and the impression you create.

Personal coaching can help you gain the confidence you need, learn the skills you need to present yourself in a genuine and empowered way, and give yourself the best chance possible of acing that interview.