The Successful Interview

1. Research Yourself
   - Know what is on your resume, know what you want, know your skills and qualifications that relate to the job you are applying for

2. Research the Company Before Your Interview
   - Visit the company’s website, ask around, visit the store/company

3. Think of Answers to Common Interview Questions
   - Practice giving examples

4. Prepare Questions for the Interviewer (3 – 4)
   - What would my job responsibilities be? What hours would I be working?, what would a typical day look like for someone in this position?, when will a decision be made regarding this position / next steps?

5. Find the Perfect Interview Outfit For the Job You’re Applying For

6. Arrive on Time
   - 15 – 30 minutes before is ideal

7. Be In The Moment
   - Use power poses and positive self-talk before the interview (don’t be on your phone!), be confident in the interview and stay in the moment so you can actively listen to their questions.

8. Follow-up
   - Call them if you have not heard from them by the specified time and send a thank you e-mail

Prepare!  Prepare!  Prepare!
INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Pre-Interview

☑️ Learn as much as you can about the company and the job
  - Research
  - Business directories
  - Internet web pages
  - In store
  - Information interviews
  - Ask around

☑️ Be prepared to tell them how they can benefit from hiring you

☑️ Prepare a list of questions to ask during the interview

☑️ Plan your clothing in advance, dress appropriately and appear well groomed

☑️ Know where you are going – map out or even travel the route beforehand

☑️ Arrive early

What to Take With You

☑️ A stick pen (no click pens!) - make sure it works

☑️ Extra copies of your resume and a list of references

☑️ Training or other certificates related to the job

☑️ A list of questions you want to ask the employer

Just Before the Interview

☑️ Check your breath - brush your teeth or chew a mint (no gum or coffee)

☑️ Stay calm! Try to think about something other than the interview

☑️ Practice Power Poses and positive self-talk

☑️ Review the job posting and your resume

During the Interview

☑️ Introduce yourself to the interviewer and shake hands firmly

☑️ Sit only when asked. Be relaxed but look alert and interested

☑️ Keep eye contact with the interviewer, but be careful not to stare at them

☑️ Answer questions clearly, distinctly and to the point

☑️ Focus your qualifications and skills related to the job

☑️ Always show a positive attitude and make the employer aware of your interest in the position

☑️ Ask the interviewer YOUR questions

☑️ Be alert for signs that the session is ending (i.e. the person stands up)

☑️ Arrange to call back in a few days

☑️ Thank the interviewer and shake hands

After the Interview

☑️ Send a thank you note (or email) to the interviewer within 24 hours

☑️ If you have not heard from them by the designated time, call them back to see if they have reached a decision
THE INTERVIEWER’S QUESTIONS

The list below provides some "standard" interview questions you may be asked. The best way to reduce your stress is to be prepared!

Read over the questions and think about how you would answer them during an interview. Try to add an example to for each answer.

Also take the time to research the company you are being interviewed for. That way you'll be ready with answers for the job interview questions that specifically relate to the company. (E.g. “I applied for this job because I enjoy interacting with new people and I know your company is committed to great customer service.”)

*Please note, every interview is different and you may be asked different questions than the ones below.

Some Common Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why did you apply for this job?
3. Why did you leave your last job?
4. How does your past experience/education prepare you for this position?
5. Why do you want to work for this company?
6. What are your hobbies?
7. What are your career goals?
8. Where do you see yourself in two years?
9. Do you plan to further your education/training?
10. Describe the work environment that suits you best. Would you rather work independently or as part of a team?
11. What are your major strengths?
12. What are your major weaknesses or areas that need improvement?
13. What have you done that shows initiative?
14. What have you done that shows good organizational skills?
15. What kinds of people do you have trouble getting along with?
16. What rate of pay are you expecting?
17. What do you have to offer us?
18. If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?
19. What would your last employer say about you if asked for a reference?
20. What did you like best about your last job? What did you like least about your last job?
21. Why are you the best person to hire for this job/position?
22. Do you have any questions for us?

BE PREPARED: to discuss specific information from your resume.
   e.g. I see you have experience in ____________, can you tell me more about this.

BE PREPARED: to answer specific questions related to your job choice.
   e.g., What kind of office equipment are you familiar with?
   What kind of hand and power tools have you used?
   What kind of welding equipment have you worked with?
BEHAVIOURAL JOB INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A behavioural interview is when an interviewer asks you questions about how you handled (or would handle) specific work issues. Interviewers like asking these types of questions to see how you would behave if you were hired.

Look over the questions below. Try to think about a positive example from your past work (or volunteer) experience that would answer the question and show your skills. If you can’t think of one, you may give an example from school or your personal life. If you have not been in that situation before, you can tell the interviewer how you would handle the problem if it were to happen.

Examples:

1. Give an example of a specific problem you faced at work or school, and tell me how you solved it?

2. Tell me about a time when you had to use your communication skills in order to get a point across that was important to you?

3. Tell me about a specific example of when you followed a rule/policy even though you did not agree with it.

4. Give an example of a time you had to go above and beyond in order to get a job done.

5. Describe a time you had a conflict at work and how you solved it.

6. Tell me about a situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.

7. Tell me about a time where you had to work as a team to accomplish a task.

To respond to Behavioural Questions, use the CAR formula:

C – Explain the challenge / situation / issue that they asked about

A – Describe the action that you took

R – Explain the POSITIVE result that happened (don’t use examples that end poorly)
Sample Answers to the Most Common Interview Questions

Many interview questions are predictable – whether it’s Dairy Queen or Bob’s Fine Furniture, chances are you will be asked some or most of these. Practice your answers ahead of time and you’ll be ready! Try to also think of an examples of the work you’ve done so when the question is asked, you can give an answer with specifics, not generalities.

Tell Me About Yourself! This is usually the first question you’ll be asked. How do you sum up the best parts of who you are in a couple of sentences?! Mention your qualities, skills, interests, education, and background as they pertain to the job. Don’t mention religious affiliation, your age, or any personal stuff. Your answer should be around 30 seconds.

What is Your Biggest Weakness? A weakness is just the flip side of a strength taken too far. Great customer service may mean being too talkative. Ability to concentrate for long periods may result in seeming unfriendly. Strengths and weaknesses are situational. If you can, try to choose a “weakness” that has very little to do with the job you are apply for. Also talk about what you are doing to improve on this area.

What do you have to offer us? Practice this: “As I understand the requirements of the job, you are looking for a creative, organized person with a thorough knowledge of painting furniture. I am that person. I know and understand how to paint furniture and I am excited to apply my skills to this position.”

Why Do You Want to Work Here? The interviewer is listening for signs that you know something about their business or company. For example, “I’ve always loved the cool stuff you sell here at Green Earth. The atmosphere has always been helpful and friendly. I think I’d fit in well here.”

What Are Your Goals? It’s easiest to talk about short term goals rather than future ones. For instance: “I’m looking forward to having a really enjoyable work experience and learning a lot.”

Why Did You Leave Your Last Job? If you were fired, never EVER say that! Even if you and your boss didn’t get along, and you got fired for that, DON’T SAY SO. The last thing an employer wants to hear is that you were hard to get along with! Say you were let go, down-sized, or that you moved on to other opportunities. You could say that the direction they were moving in did not align with your personal goals or philosophy. It was time to move on.

Can You Tell Me About a Time You Had a Problem at Work? How Did You Handle It? Choose something short and sweet that you managed through respect and open communication. Make sure it shows what a good listener and problem-solver you were. If they ask you about a time you were in a personal conflict with someone, try going with the “we agreed to disagree” line – works nicely for this tough question.

So. Why Should We Hire You? What the employer is REALLLY asking is “what can you do for us that other candidates can’t? What makes you so special?” The best response shows that you are eager and excited about work. “I am dependable, dedicated, and completely ready to throw myself into this work. I cannot wait to get started!” Again, keep it short and sweet.

Do You Have Any Questions For Me/Us? Come prepared with questions: “when will you be making a decision?” “Is there anything else you need from me?” “What training do you offer?” “What would my key job responsibilities be?” Don’t ask questions that could easily be found on their web site or ask about the pay (you can ask about this when they are offering you the job). Always try to ask at least one question, and ideally 3 – 4.
Working Joe

141 Dundas Street
London, Ontario
N6A 1L3
(519) 555-1212

January 12, 2016

Ms. Ellen Winegarden, President
Cosmic Accessories
144 Richmond Street
London, Ontario N4G 5H4

Dear Ms. Winegarden:

Thank you for meeting with me on Monday, January 11 regarding the Sales Associate position you are hiring for.

As I mentioned in the interview, I am very interested in the position and excited about becoming part of the Cosmic Accessories team. If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Sincerely,
Working Joe
Sample Questions YOU Should Ask If You Accept the Job

1. What is my starting date and time?
2. Do I need to bring or buy anything? (i.e., work boots, tools, uniform, etc.)
3. What is the dress code here? Am I able to wear jewelry/show my tattoos?
4. What are the rules / regulations / everyday procedures?
5. What are my hours of work? How does the scheduling work?
6. Who would be my supervisor?
7. What is the pay rate? What are the benefits?
8. What training will I need to complete?
9. May I have a tour of the office / facility?
10. Is there anything else I need to know before I start?

Final Thoughts...

1. In interviews, don’t get too comfortable and “overshare” even if the interviewer is really informal. Some interviewers are informal because they want you to feel at ease so they see the “real you.” You can be genuine and friendly, but don’t be too casual and share too much personal information. Remember, when it comes to interviews, you always need to maintain your professionalism.

2. If you can, find out the name and position of the person or people interviewing you. You can ask this when you get the call for the interview. Also get their contact phone number in case of an emergency on the day of the interview so you can reach them.

3. Get all your questions for the employer, resume and reference sheet copies and your outfit ready the night before so you don’t have to stress about them the day of the interview.

4. Practice your interview skills with a friend, family member or YOU staff. You do not need to memorize the answers and recite them parrot-fashion. This would seem fake. Instead just think of examples for each and practice answering them with these in mind. Remember, it always pays to plan!