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The Secret Formulae for Successful Job Interview | Aparna Sharma | Senior HR Professional & Certified Corporate Director | Editor's Collection

Even when you have appeared for more interviews than you can count, preparing for a job interview never seems to get any easier. With each job interview, you are meeting new people, selling yourself and your skills, and often getting an insight into your own knowledge capabilities as a result of the interactions. And, you need to stay positive, upbeat and enthusiastic through it all. This can be a challenge, especially when you're interviewing for a job you would love to get hired for.



That said, there are ways to make a job interview feel much less stressful. Just a little preparation time can go a long way. The more time you spend in getting ready by preparing, the more comfortable you'll feel during the actual interview. Remember, though, that a job interview is not an exam: you don't need to study for hours on end. Rather, you just need to do due diligence in researching the company, understand exactly what they are looking for in a new hire, and ensure that you're able to discuss your experience and what makes you a great fit for the job.

Here are a few useful tips on how to prepare for the Big Day before you head out the door:

- 1) Prepare what you will wear to the interview ahead of time. Lay out your clothing, right down to your shoes. You don't need a last-minute surprise like finding a stain on your shirt or scuff marks on your shoes when you have 30 minutes to get out your door in the morning.
- 2) Know where you are going and how to get there. Map out your route to the company whether you are driving or taking public transportation. If you have time, make a dry run. Always allow extra time to get to your meeting, taking into account the possibility of traffic jams, a late bus, or other unexpected problems.
- 3) Arrive early at least 10-15 minutes before your interview time. This gives you a few minutes to relax and compose yourself or to stop in the rest room to be sure you look your best.
- 4) Greet your interviewer appropriately with warmth and confidence. Studies show that within 30 seconds, you will leave a lasting first impression on the person. Make the most of that half minute by being mentally prepared before you walk through the door.
- 5) Think before you speak. A brief pause (2-3 seconds) before you respond to a question will make you appear thoughtful and composed. When you speak, do so clearly in complete sentences. Answer each question completely, but don't speak needlessly.
- 6) Be aware of your body language. Don't look or act casual during the interview. Remain at your formal best. Present a welcoming, attentive expression. Leaning slightly forward indicates you're interested in what your interviewer has to say. Do your best to appear calm and confident don't cross your arms against your chest or wring your hands, but keep them naturally when you speak.
- 7) Stay positive throughout the interview. Show a positive attitude and enthusiasm for the position you are discussing. Even if given the opportunity, don't say anything negative about your former employer or the company you currently work for.
- 8) Ask questions. At some point during the interview, you will likely have an opportunity to ask questions. Be careful here. You don't want to ask something you should already know (if you have done your homework well). And you don't want to ask about money. Stay on safer ground. Ask about the company's future plans or what additional opportunities for professional growth might be available to you in the future.
- 9) Say thank you. At the conclusion of the interview, thank the interviewer, shake hands confidently and don't be afraid to say "I hope to hear from you soon regarding the position..." Write a brief thank you email as soon as you return home. In the email, express even greater enthusiasm for the job now that you have met the interviewer and learned even more about the position.

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