



## **Preparation Is Key To Interview Success**

The interview might be the single biggest factor in determining whether or not you get a job. Your resume gets you in the door but it's your performance during the interview that will get you the job. Knowing the importance of the interview, it's foolish not to put in some preparation time. There are a few key areas where preparation will help you in getting the job.

The first area where preparation is required is in clothing and appearance. Whether or not you agree with it, the way you dress plays a big role in overall performance in the interview. This doesn't mean you have to go out and buy a new outfit or suit (unless you want to do so). If you're a man you'll want to wear (at a minimum) dress slacks, a dress shirt with collar, tie and dress shoes. It's highly recommended that you also wear a suit jacket or sports coat (but for many positions you can get away without wearing one). For women, a nice top and skirt, tailored dress or suit will serve your purpose. Make sure your hair is combed and your clothes in good condition, clean and free of rips or tears.

Next, you'll want to do some research on the company. The easiest way to begin your research is to Google the company name. Some places where you can go on the Internet to find out more about the company include [Yahoo! Finance](#) and [Hoovers Online](#). You can also go to the online version of your local newspaper and search for articles on the company. At some point during the interview you're bound to be asked "what do you know about this company?" and a little research will have you ready to answer this question.

There are several "standard" interview questions that will most likely be asked in any job interview, regardless of the position. If you know they're going to be asked of you, it's a smart idea to have answers prepared for them. What are these questions? They include

the following:

\* What are your greatest accomplishments? \* What do you consider your greatest weaknesses? \* What do you know about our company?\* Why do you want to work for our company? \* Why are you looking for a new job? \* Where do you see yourself in five years? \* Why should I hire you?

You'll also be given the opportunity during an interview to ask questions of the interviewer. Don't make the mistake of saying you don't have any questions. This shows a lack of interest in the position and the company. Have a list of questions mentally prepared that you can ask the interviewer. Many of them will get answered during the course of your interview, so have about 10 to 15 questions ready to be asked. Some of these questions might include:

\* What are the three most important responsibilities associated with this position? \* What are the biggest challenges facing the person in this position? \* Why is this position open? \* How many people have held this position in the past five years? \* How do you evaluate employee performance, and when are performance reviews conducted? \* Why do you (the interviewer) like working for this company? \* What projects are scheduled for the future for this company?

You'll want to avoid asking questions about salary or benefits. If these are the only type of questions you ask, you'll look like you're only interested in money and not career potential.

Within a day of the interview be sure to send a thank you note to the people who interviewed you. It doesn't matter if you send your note via email or snail mail - just make sure you send one. In it you can thank the person for his/her time and reinforce your interest in the opportunity. If you would like to look at some sample letters, go to your favorite search engine and type in "interview thank you letters".

With a little preparation you can do well on your upcoming job interview. You'll set yourself apart from your competition and get a leg up on getting this new position.

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About the author:

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