

Interview Tips

How well do you meet criteria when compared to other candidates?

The employer looks for a person who is technically qualified to do the job. You must focus on the employer's wants and needs. Remember, there will be more than one candidate who meets this first test. Therefore, the things the employer is subconsciously looking for become as important as the qualifications, perhaps even more important.

The employer looks for optimistic statements and positive reactions to questions.

Negativity never won a job offer for anyone. The idea in interviewing is to elaborate on those things that you can discuss optimistically. If you are optimistic and positive about any facet of the position, don't fail to show it.

The employer looks for an interest in the company and the position.

If you like anything related to the available position; do not be afraid to enthusiastically say so. The employer looks for someone who has a high opinion of the company and position. It's up to you to let them know that you're interested.

The employer looks for indications of longevity of service.

No one wants to hire someone who will leave after a few months. For this reason, the employer looks for someone who indicates that he or she will stay with the company for a reasonable time. The problem is that employers seldom ask direct question about longevity. Instead they ask: "Why are you looking for a position?" or "What are you looking for in a new position?" It is important to realize that these questions, or variations of them, are seeking a response that indicates what the prospective employee's longevity might be. When answering these questions, you must indicate an intention to remain on the job.

"Why don't you begin by telling me about yourself?"

This is not an invitation for a long biographical discourse. This is the interviewer's way of starting the interview and getting organized for the interview process. You should confine your answer to three or four well-chosen sentences outlining career highlights.

"Do you have any questions?"

The temptation here is to ask "me" questions (salary, benefits, etc.). Don't. You should only ask questions that are job-related prior to the offer. Instead use this time to ask question that you may have about the company or the position.

"Why do you want to work for our company?"

This is a wide open question – perhaps you like its location, people, and products. This could be an opportunity to pay the company a few compliments.

"Why are you considering leaving your current position?"

This is the classical query that seeks an indication as to your willingness to stick with the position. If your job history shows that you've moved around quite a bit, you should turn a negative into a positive statement – that longevity in a job is one of your goals. You should also avoid "bashing" your current employer at all costs.

Salary Questions.

Some of the most important questions are related to salary. Salary is extremely important, but it not the sole consideration. Other facets, including opportunity, benefits and potential for growth may outweigh starting salary as a consideration. When responding to a salary-related question, you should avoid committing to a specific salary level. A figure too high or too low may end in unsatisfactory results for you.

Send a follow-up letter thanking the interviewer for his or her time.

Use the letter to summarize key points of the interview that highlight the suitability of your skills and experience. Express you enthusiasm about the position, the company and the reasons for your interest. Limit the letter to one page and be certain that it is error free. Mail your thank-you note directly following your interview.