

11 Must Know Tips to Crack a Job Interview

You only have one chance to leave a first impression when you meet someone for the first time. When you are interviewing for a new job, preparing for the interview will help determine your probability of success. In the current economic conditions, even college graduates are having a hard time finding a career after a solid education. Just like studying for your last final in Algebra, being prepared will ensure your success in an interview.

Tip 1: *Research the company*

An employer can easily tell if you know nothing about the organization. When you don't know about the organization, the employer can assume that you have either blindly been applying for several over positions at other companies or you simply didn't care enough to do your homework.



In this day in age, it is very easy to find out about an organization. One great resource is www.glassdoor.com. There is extremely valuable information about an organization including history, product/services, employee reviews, salary, etc. Virtually all organizations have a company web site that has information about its culture, vision, mission, and other pertinent information. This information is usually found under the "About Us" section.

Social media is another medium that you can find information about a company, You can become a fan on Facebook or a follower on Twitter to learn about the company and see how they handle their customer relations. [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/) is a great professional social media tool and you may find out that a connection actually works . This is a great opportunity to find out firsthand from a current employee what is important to the organization.

Tip 2: *Match the job description to your skills*



This is really a two-part step. You must read the job description very carefully and pick out key words like “detail oriented”, “result-driver”, and “organized” to pick away what the actual job will entail. This is also where your social connections via LinkedIn or job reviews on www.glassdoor.com can come in handy. Using these tools, you can learn about the organization from people who have worked there. This could be invaluable information that you can use to your advantage during your interview.

Once you have a good understanding of what the employer is looking for, you can then match up your skills with their needs. A good way to prepare for this is to write down the key abilities, skills, etc. that the employer is looking for and writing down underneath each skill, an example (story) of how you have used each particular trait in previous positions. This question will most probably be asked in your interview. Also, please save your time and the employers time by not applying to jobs where your skills don't match what they are looking for.

Tip 3: *Prepare your portfolio*



Investing in a good quality binder to keep copies of your resume, references, awards, list of questions, and notepad will be worth the money. Although in most cases, an employer will already have a copy for your information, it will show them you are an organized individual when you come prepared to supply it. Ensure that you have each document in filed in an organized manner so you can quickly reference it during your conversation. Otherwise it may cause you to become a bit nervous when you are fumbling through your portfolio to extract the necessary documents.

Tip 4: *What not to bring....*



It is important that you keep unnecessary items in at your home or in your vehicle during an interview. Chewing gum during an interview is distracting and unprofessional, so discard it before the interview. Do not bring your cell phone will you to your interview under any circumstances. Even if you leave it on silent or vibrate, it is a source of distraction. Truly, the only items that you should carry with you to the interview is your portfolio and your car keys.

Tip 5: *Get directions and plan your route*



If your interview is during peak traffic hours, make sure you plan to leave your house accordingly. It is nerve-racking to be stuck in traffic or an accident that causes you to be late for an interview. A good rule of thumb is to plan your arrival ten minutes prior to the interview. GPS on phones is reliable, but not without error. You should look up directions via Google maps or Mapquest, especially if you are unfamiliar with the area. If the interview location is a bit tricky to find, don't hesitate to ask and write down directions during your conversation with your potential employer prior to the interview.

Tip 6: *Dress for success*



No matter what the position is that you are applying for or what the company culture is, dressing professionally is necessary. Other than the unlikelihood that the employer specifies otherwise, a business professional outfit is appropriate in almost every situation. Be aware of strong cologne, perfumes, hair spray, and other smells. Any such product should be used sparingly as to not distract the interviewer. Details are important so make sure your shoes are dirt-free and shiny and your clothes are ironed and laundered. Makeup and jewelry should be kept to a minimum.

Tip 7: Practice!!!

There are plenty of sources on the internet that you can find in regard to what kind of questions to expect and examples of answers to give (including our site :)). Its important to study these questions and know how you will answer many of them. Another great tool is to role-play an interview. While many people may feel uncomfortable pretending to be at an interview, this can make the real thing a whole lot easier. Have a family member, friend, or someone you are comfortable with to practice with. Its important to not only practice the question and answer portion, but to include the introduction and ending as well.

Tip 8: Prepare - Your new career depends on it

Get a friend or family member to help you prepare for your interview through **role-plays**. Practice answering questions that you may be asked. This may feel awkward, but through this practice, you will feel a lot more comfortable during the actual interview.

Make sure you **have a clear idea of what the position entails** before setting foot in the door to your interview. At this point of the process, you should have had the opportunity to ask some questions to clarify what you will be doing on a day to day basis. By knowing what they are looking for, you can focus on matching your own skills to the position.

You should also **research the company** itself. Basic facts such as what the company sells, how long they have been in operation, and any recent milestones is all available on the internet. In fact, you may be asked during your interview what you know about the organization. This is a great opportunity to dazzle them with your knowledge or show your way out the door because you didn't take the time to know your facts.

Most of your own work history will be typed up in a resume that you will bring with you to the interview. Make sure you refresh your memory about where you worked and what you were responsible for. Nothing is worse that forgetting your own experience and not being able to articulate it to the hiring manager.

OK, now you have done everything possible to prepare yourself for your face to face interview. So now you are ready to walk through the door and meet your new boss.

Tip 9: *Dos and don't during your interview*

- **Do stay calm** during your interview. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to make it to the interview during the scheduled time. This will ease your mind in the end. To help keep you calm during the actual interview, take deep breaths of air. By doing this, you will feel more relaxed.
- **Don't ramble** off topic when asked a question. Keep your answers direct and to the point. The more you ramble, the further you will drive away from answering the actual question. You may not be able to find your way back.
- **Do share examples** when answering a question. This will show the hiring manager that you have dealt with situations in the past that are similar to what the position would experience. In general, people tend to remember stories that they are told much more vividly than when there are no stories told. You will be a much more memorable candidate than the rest.
- **Don't ask about job security.** With the harder economic times, people are more worried about losing their jobs. Hopefully at this point you have already done the research to know that the position you are applying for is a viable position. If you even hint at questioning the security of the position during the interview, the hiring manager could hit the "reject" button in a heartbeat.
- **Do focus on the current position** you are applying for. Most people are interested in advancing their careers or getting their foot in the door. But if ask too many questions about promotional opportunities or seem more interested in climbing up the ladder, an employer will be immediately turned off. Remember, they are looking for someone to fill a current need in their business. An employer wants to hire someone that will fill the position for an adequate amount of time.
- **Don't ask too many generic questions** or questions that you should already been told. It just shows the hiring manager that you lack listening skills, didn't do your research, or both.
- **Do focus on the interviewer.** Most of the interview will be about the company, position, and how you fit in. It pays to find out more about the interviewer. Everyone loves to talk about themselves so learn more about the person sitting across from you. It may help pay off with a job offer in the end.
- **Don't bring in your personal life.** There is no reason to tell the hiring manager about the horrible traffic you got stuck in on your way to the interview or the hectic scramble to find a babysitter last minute to watch your two kids. The hiring manager is not interested in your hobbies or life story. Keep the conversation as professional as possible.
- **Do ask when you don't understand the question.** There is nothing wrong with asking for clarification. You don't want to be in a situation where your answer completely misses what the hiring manager was trying to find out.
- **Don't forget to prepare a list of questions for the interviewer.** It could hurt you to not ask any questions. The employer may look at your lack of questions as a sign that you are not invested in that position. Try to think of deeper questions about the position to ask and avoid ones that have obviously been answered through your process.
- **Do follow up with a thank you note** to the interviewer. Nowadays, it is acceptable in most cases to also follow up with an e-mail, especially if they are going to be making a decision relatively soon. In the letter, you can once again highlight your skills and match them with the opportunity.

Tip 10: Time to wait for that callback

You should be well on your way to an exciting new position. You have the skills and the experience that make you a great fit to the organization. You have used these tips and tricks to make you the front-runner. So congratulations, you can kick up your shoes and end your job hunt...for now!

Tip 11: Stuff To Bring To an Interview

For somebody who has been in the joblessness cold for a long time, getting an interview is one of the best things. Finally, the interview comes, and all the interviewers want to impress the panel, whatever it takes. Surely, it takes quite some tact and effort to please interviewees these days. How you present yourself is vital, but there are things that are relevant to consider as you enter the interview room.

- **Enough Resume Copies**

First of all, never forget to take copies of your resume to the interview. By now, the panel has your resume but do not assume this. By estimation, you might want to have at least 10 copies of the resume to give to those who will be present. As the interviewers ask all those hard questions, you may be required to refer to the resume. Therefore, carry along another copy for your own use. Of course, this does not mean you place it on the table and read it like a novel. There are things you may not know off head for instance the specific dates of employment so the resume copy will help a lot.

- **Nice Folder or Handbag**

A resume is particularly significant, and how you carry it into the room matters a lot. It is advisable to invest in a nice folder in which to carry your resume and other testimonials. Make sure you arrange everything so well that you will not spend a lot of time looking for this or that document. In the olden days, men used to carry a briefcase, and today, you are just okay with an attaché case. For ladies, a simple but professional handbag is recommendable for an interview. You may want to stay away from your flashy designer handbag when you are going to face an interview panel.

- **Note Taking**

Some people might argue that the interview scenario is so charged up that there is no chance of taking notes. However, the tension in the room is one of the main reasons why you need to take a pen and notebook to the interview. It is common for interviewees to be overwhelmed by the stage and lose track of some questions. Writing down will help you respond to each of the questions adequately. Other than that, it shows how organized you are thus adding you some points.

- **Water**

It is also wise to bring in some drink into the room, preferably water. Those who have been in lengthy interviews will tell you how demanding it can be to answer questions for hours. Since you are not sure whether the panel will have some water, carry some bottled water to take care of the throat. Interestingly, drinking water also reduces anxiety, or at least hides some of it.

- **Provide References**

Resume references are sometimes the deal breakers when it comes to getting that job. Some time, the company will not ask for those references. However, it shows how serious you are about the job when you provide the references before you are asked.

- **Breath Gum**

Carrying breath mints to the interview is one of the best ideas. However, this is not for use during the interview. You will have to throw away the gum just before the interview starts.

- **Contact Information**

Even if, you have made a visit to the interview site some days before, chances are you might lose direction on the d-day. To avoid last-minute problems with the direction to the interview, print out the map or contact information, and carry it. You do not want a scenario where you get lost and enter the interview room late. In addition, it is also a good idea to have the contacts of your prospective interviewer, just in case you get stuck somewhere.

- **Questions**

Have you ever been in an interview where you are not asked if you have any questions? Though it is common to be given this opportunity, not many of us are armed with the questions. By this, I mean, questions properly written down on a piece of paper. Just think of potential questions, and write them down so that you will remember when the time for your questions comes.

- **Examples Of Reviews And Awards**

Are you surprised? Since your main aim in an interview is to present yourself as the best candidate, proof of work and recognition in the past is a big plus. By providing proof of people recognising your efforts, you are telling the interviewer that you are a person capable of accomplishing things.

- **Several Copies of Reports, Designs, Plans, Proposals etc.**

These days, proving your worth is what differentiates you from the other candidates. You do not just want to say about all your wonderful achievements; you want to prove this to the panel. If you demonstrate your ability, there is no way the interviewer will overlook you for somebody who just writes their accomplishments in the resume.

Carrying these items to the interview room will play a huge role in determining whether you get that job.

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