

## STRATEGIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW

A face-to-face interview is your biggest opportunity to sell yourself to a prospective employer and gather critical information about the job. There are several important strategies you should use to prepare for this important meeting listed below.

### BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

1. **Learn About the Company** – This will not only show your interest and impress the interviewer(s), it will enable you to ask and respond to detailed questions about the company and how well-suited you are for the specific position.
2. **Review Your Resume** – Interviewers will use your resume to formulate questions about your previous work experience. It's important that you can expand on all the information listed on your resume and how that work experience can directly relate to the job you are interviewing for.
3. **Formulate Your Answers to Common Questions** – If you already know how to answer some of the most common questions, it will help you look and feel confident during your interview. Read through our Answers to Common Interview Questions document in the Job Seekers Resource section for a full list.
4. **Prepare Your List of Questions** – Asking questions shows your interest in the company and the position. Write down your list of questions to take with you to the interview.
5. **Prepare Your Samples/Portfolio** – If you are planning to bring a portfolio, make sure it is up-to-date with recent work samples that are relevant to the job you are interviewing for.
6. **Dress for Success** – The way you dress can say a lot about you, your professionalism and your attitude. It's important to dress in a professional and conservative manner. You usually can't go wrong in white shirts or dark suits; avoid bright colors or anything too loud or distracting. Make sure your hair is neatly combed and that your fingernails are clean and trimmed.
7. **Leave Early for the Interview!** – You want to make sure you are either early or on time for your interview to show that you are committed and dependable. Leave 15 or 20 minutes earlier than you think you need to, especially if you have never been to the location. If you do get there significantly early, you can use the time to compose yourself and review your notes, resume and company-related materials. If for any reason you know you will be late, call and let your interviewer know immediately.

### DURING THE INTERVIEW:

1. **Give an Enthusiastic Greeting** – You can display your enthusiasm with a genuine smile and by leaning into a firm handshake. Since enthusiasm is frequently cited as a reason to hire someone, maintain this level of enthusiasm throughout the interview.
2. **Project Self-Confidence** – To do this effectively you'll want to sit up straight and avoid nervous habits like swinging your foot or leg, biting your lip, playing with your pen, etc. Look the interviewer(s) in the eyes as you slowly and clearly articulate answers to interview questions.
3. **Be Positive** – Always speak positively about yourself and your skills – this is no time for self-deprecating answers or jokes. Never say anything negative about your current or past employers. If you do touch on a negative work experience, frame it based on what you learned from the experience.

4. **Remember to Listen** – Communication is a two-way street. If you are talking too much, you could miss cues concerning what the interviewer feels is important.
5. **Reflect Before Answering Difficult Questions** – It is much better to take a few moments to think about your answer, or to ask some clarifying questions before you immediately respond. For example, if interviewer asks you what salary you'd expect, you can answer by saying, "That is a great question. What are planning on paying the best candidate?" If you get a broad question about one of your previous roles or projects, you can say, "That is a great question. Are you more interested in the technical aspects of that project or the final results?"
6. **Relate Your Experience to Their Needs** – When discussing your previous work experience, remember to relate it to the needs of their organization. For example, if you successfully managed a project similar to one you'd be managing in this new role, make sure to mention it. Discuss what other functions you can perform that would benefit the company, giving details on how you've used your experience to help past employers.
7. **Use Personal Questions to Your Advantage** – As you discuss aspects of your personal life (i.e. what you do in your free time), try to bring your answers back to job-related topics whenever possible. You can discuss how well you balance your personal and professional life, how you've used job-related skills for charity work or pet projects, etc.
8. **Ask Questions You've Prepared in Advance** – These questions show your initiative and interest in the job. Focus on questions about the company or the position that have not been answered through your research. Some of these questions could be surrounding who you would report to and who you would work with in the role.
9. **Do Not Ask "Red Flag" Questions** – Do not ask any questions about benefits, vacation or sick leave during the interview. You do not want to give the impression you are more interested in the benefits associated with the job than the job itself.
10. **Express Your Interest and Thanks at Closing** – Make sure to thank the interviewer for his/her time and briefly reiterate your strong interest in the position so you leave the interview on a positive note. You can say, "I really appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me today. I am extremely interested in this position and look forward to meeting with you again soon."

#### AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

If you have the email address of your interviewer(s), email a short thank-you note immediately following the interview. Also, send a hand-written thank-you note via mail that reiterates your interest in the position and what qualifications you have that can benefit the company. Make sure the mailed note will arrive before the hiring decision is made.

For more tips on preparing for a successful interview, please contact Prism Group today.