

It takes a lot of work to land an interview, but your ultimate goal is to land a job. That's why it's so important to work on your interview skills and take full advantage of your opportunity.

We can help. We've interviewed thousands of aspiring professionals just like you, and we've helped millions of others prepare for successful interviews with businesses throughout the country. Based on our experience, we've got a pretty good understanding about what it takes to ace an interview, and we'd like to share our tips with you.

Acing the interview



Before the interview.

Do your homework.

Your interview is a test — of your skills, knowledge, professionalism and preparedness. And, like with any test, it really helps to do your homework and study up.

Research the company.

Find out as much about the company as you can — know its history, its future goals, and where it stands today. Sources to use include:

- Your recruiter
- Company websites
- Online resources like LinkedIn, Glassdoor and CareerLeak
- Annual reports and 10K reports
- Friends and business associates

Know the position as if it were already yours.

Have a thorough understanding of the position, the primary responsibilities and what is expected.

Be prepared to ask questions like:

- Who has been successful and why?
- Who has failed and why?
- Who does the position report to?

Review your resume.

Assess your career history thoroughly:

- Review all dates, positions, responsibilities and accomplishments
- Make sure your presence on social networks like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn reflects positively on you
- Know your strengths and weaknesses

- Be prepared to cite specific examples of achievements and how these experiences can help the company solve some of its problems
- Concentrate on your most recent positions, but make sure to highlight your progress throughout your career
- Reflect on your successes so you can adequately impart your strengths when given the chance!

Prepare to pass the test.

Remember, the prospective employer will make his or her hiring decision based on these key factors:

- Attitude and business poise
- Image, presentation and communication skills
- Experience and skill set
- Education and certifications
- Industry and technical background

Acing the interview

Sharpen your social skills.

Social media isn't just for sharing embarrassing photos and updates on your current adventures. Sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are often the first place potential employers look when searching and screening candidates.

In fact, according to a 2011 study by Reppler, a social media monitoring service, 90 percent of businesses use social media to screen job candidates.

Long before you step into the interviewer's office, make sure your social media presence is putting your best foot forward. Here are some suggestions:

- Carefully set your privacy settings to ensure different content is available only to intended audiences
- Find the right balance of personality and professionalism to express your character without crossing a line
- If you are debating posting a particular picture, link or message, err on the side of caution
- Make your LinkedIn profile as comprehensive and engaging as possible, just like you would your print resume
- Participate in discussions on LinkedIn forums and professional networking sites to demonstrate your knowledge
- Review the people in your network and eliminate any connections that may paint you in an unfavorable light

- Never say anything false or unsubstantiated, as it could come back to haunt you and hamper your credibility
- Connect with the companies you want to work for through groups and communities
- Search for yourself and, if you don't like what you find, change the message by starting a blog or registering a website for your name and your portfolio

Rehearse...

A mock interview can help you hit the mark during your real interview. Ask a friend, family member, colleague or your Adecco recruiter to act as the interviewer and to provide constructive feedback.

...your answers.

Every interview is different, but there are some questions that you should expect. Make sure you have answers ready — being able to provide quick, honest, direct and positive responses can make your interview more memorable and more successful. Where applicable, make sure to tie your answers into practical examples that demonstrate the potential positive impact you can bring to the employer.

- What are your short-term and long-term objectives?
- What do you look for in a job?
- To you, what is the difference between a good position and an excellent one?
- Why are you leaving your current position?

- Can you explain any gaps in your employment history?
- Why did you choose to interview with my organization?
- What can you do for us that someone else cannot do?
- Why should we hire you?
- Do you work well under pressure, deadlines, etc.?
- What management style is most effective for you?
- How has your early career or background influenced your progression and/or current management style?
- How has your management style changed over the years?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- What are your five biggest accomplishments in your present or last job? In your career?

...and your questions.

A good interview should be a free-flowing conversation, not a one-sided speech or a jarring question and answer session. Be sure to ask questions that can help you learn more about the position, make you look informed and give you a better idea of where you stand with the interviewer. Here are some questions you could consider asking:

- How do you feel your major competitors stack up against you in terms of product, market share, marketing strategies, strengths and weaknesses?

Acing the interview

- Tell me about the history/growth of the company.
 - In the recent history of the company, what has been the biggest advance and what has been the biggest setback?
 - What is your highest priority in the next six months and how could someone like me help?
 - Can you give me an idea of what a typical day would be like if I were to get the position?
 - What characteristics do your best employees have in common?
 - Where do you see your company going in the next several years?
 - What are three main qualities you are looking for in a candidate?
 - What does your interview process entail?
 - Could I have an opportunity to meet some of the people with whom I would be working?
 - What are your personal satisfactions and disappointments since you have been with the firm?
 - Leave early: Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes before the interview.
- If possible, take a test drive to the interview location the day before to get a better idea of traffic and travel time.
- Take your stuff: Bring several copies of your resume, reference letters and your portfolio with you.
 - Keep calm: It's easy to get nervous, but remaining poised during your interview can set you apart from the competition.
 - Interact: Pay attention to what the interviewer says, maintain eye contact and ask relevant questions. If you prefer to take notes, do so sparingly and don't let the notes distract you from the conversation.
 - Close strong: Leaving a positive lasting impression is just as important as making a positive first impression. Thank the interviewer for the opportunity, reiterate your strengths and ask about any next steps.

Here are a few points to consider:

- Send the follow-up letter as soon as possible. This allows you to convey a sense of urgency and a high interest level in the opportunity. Ideally, your letter should go out the next day.
- A hard copy letter is preferred, but an email is acceptable.
- Be as brief as possible. It demonstrates respect for the interviewer's time.
- Within the body of the letter, make sure to:
 1. Thank the interviewer for their time.
 2. Reiterate your interest and enthusiasm in the company and position.
 3. Highlight your experiences and accomplishments.
 4. Ask what you can do to proceed to the next step.

Have someone carefully proofread your letter, then email it as an attached document to your recruiter for a final review. Together, we'll make sure that your follow-up letter represents you and everything you have to offer.

Your Adecco representative can help you develop your interview skills and give you a tremendous advantage over other candidates. We can also help you develop other valuable job hunting skills. **To learn more, or to explore thousands of exciting career opportunities, contact your local Adecco branch or visit adeccousa.com.**

The day of the interview.

Wake up and win the job!

It's your big day! Make the most of it with these suggestions:

- Get your rest: You need the energy to remain engaged and focused throughout your entire conversation.
- Dress for success: Wear professional attire — for men, that means a conservative suit with a tie; for women, that means a business suit in a subdued color.

After the interview.

Even after you leave the interview room, you still have room to improve your chances of landing the position. Send a follow-up letter to remind the interviewer about your skills and communicate things you forgot to say during your discussion.

These days, a follow-up letter is more than a courtesy, it is an imperative. Choosing not to send one will likely lead to someone else getting the position you worked so hard to attain.