



Interviewing Tips

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Securing a job or scholarship is oftentimes a two step process. The first step requires a written application/resume and if the reviewer has been “wowed” then the second step is the interview. The interview should not be underestimated. Just as one would go over their application or resume for typos, the preparation for the interview should be given the same care and attention. Below are tips to secure that job or scholarship through the interview.

Before the Interview:

- You only get one chance to make a first impression so take care with appearance. Points to consider:
 - Overdress not underdress. Men should wear a suit and tie (if applicable), khakis, tucked in shirt, etc. Women should wear dresses, slacks, or a skirt. When wearing skirts or dresses, women should hold their arms down at their sides and where the fingertips touch thighs is the magic reminder to appropriate length. All skirts and dresses should come down further than fingertips to be appropriate. Iron all necessary garments so they are wrinkle free.
 - Remove any physical distractions (extra ear piercings, tie back hair if it will be played with, etc.).
- As the interviewee, learn your strengths and weaknesses. An interviewer is bound to ask questions related to these qualities so study yourself. Sit down and write these out. Ask friends and family to come up with some answers. Think about the “buzz” skills that interviewers may look for: organized, punctual, reliable, team player, creative, etc. Use a thesaurus to find adjectives that describe these skills to help generate ideas.

Know the logistics of the interview:

- Who is the interview with and what is the interview for? Do the homework and research to learn a little bit about the company hiring or the foundation, individual, etc. giving away the scholarship. This helps to provide talking points during the interview and makes the interviewee sound more interested and prepared.
- Where and when is the interview? Give plenty of time to arrive at the destination and if it is an unfamiliar area, do a trial run and find out the location ahead of time. Find out how long it takes to get to the location. It is always better to be early than late. That five minute tardiness may stand out between candidates.
- Don't hesitate to call the day before and verify the interview information.

During the interview:

- Come to the interview with a copy of the application and resume submitted. The interviewer should have that information, but it doesn't hurt to have your own copy, just in case.
- Be early, turn off your cell phone, and put away the distractions.

- Be prepared with a firm, strong handshake. Another first impression, a good handshake signifies being prepared for the task and taking it seriously. It represents a strong candidate whereas a weak handshake could signify a timid candidate.
- During the interview, be aware of your body position and stance. Sit or stand up tall, feet firmly planted on the ground, and arms at sides. Be careful not to slouch or cross arms. These represent unfavorable or defensive body positions. If legs are to be crossed, make sure to do so discretely. Sometimes leaning forward slightly shows interest and engagement in the conversation.
- As the interviewer asks questions, try to stay calm. When nerves arise, one way to buy time is to repeat the question the interviewer asked, then answer it. Try to give a variation of the answers that may have been present in the resume and application. The interviewer has already seen the application and resume, add to what they've learned and keep them interested.
- Be prepared with questions to ask the interviewer. Simple questions such as “what do you enjoy about working for this company” or “what is your affiliation with this scholarship or foundation,” go a long way on an interview. Always ask questions! How much money will I make is not an appropriate question. It shouldn't even be asked until after a job has been offered.
- Submit a handwritten thank you note at the conclusion of the interview. Mail this within one week following the interview. This could be what sets two interviews apart, the interviewee that send a note versus the one that didn't.

Although most job and scholarship interviews will give advanced notice and request a time to meet, it is possible during application submittal to be given an interview on the spot. Be prepared by having a resume on hand, dressing the part and being ready to answer questions about yourself.

With these tips anyone can be ready and excel at the interview process. Good luck and remember to be yourself and be prepared.